

December 4, 2022

This week we continue with the Romans series; Romans 1:11-15(READ) *I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—12 that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. 13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. 15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.*

This passage contains an example of the power of the gospel message. I mean the lessons and reminders contained in one scripture often remind us of something else beyond the specific intent of the context. Look again at verse: 11 *I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—* It reminds me that we are in the season of the incarnation of the Holy Christ Child destined to be the Savior for all mankind. So when we read 11 *I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—* That message of eternal truth that leaps off the page beyond the context of Paul's letter reminds us that our Savior Jesus - from His majestic throne in heaven may very well have expressed those same words before He left the tranquility of heaven to come to earth! "*I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strength*" And what a gift Jesus brought to the world!

That sentiment is what the Christmas season reveals to us of the Christ child's message and mission to come to earth to make us strong – He came to make us strong for this short earthly journey portion of our lives - in preparation for eternal life. Thank you Jesus.

But now back to the specific context of Paul: *I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—* The apostle to the gentiles, reinforces and adds his blessing and confirmation of spiritual gifts that we studied last week. In fact at least 25 New Testament scriptures refer to spiritual gifts.

Let it suffice for now to know that every believer has spiritual gifts. Some of them imparted by Paul to his contacts then and others imparted and identified through his instruction as to what and why spiritual gifts are given and essential for all believers.

Just like Paul expressed of himself, //what you and I do for others strengthens our faith and endurance in our spiritual life. Did you ever think about it before that **your spiritual gifts and their service to others makes you spiritually strong and physically productive for personally growth in faith** and thereby able to share and model righteousness in your life? If you never thought about it before, now you have!! :-).

As we examine God's Holy inspired scripture and are given reminders or new insights, we must ask ourselves this question: Just how honest am I willing to be before God in applying His revelation to my life experience? Every day the indwelling Holy Spirit will "tweak" us for our faith maturity// as we honestly receive and practice it.

From last week here is the way the Apostle Peter expressed it: 1 Peter 4:10-11 *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. **11** If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

And he says it again in Romans 1:**12** *that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.*

That is a revelation for the ages that has been hidden and counterfeited by the devil to make people think a bottle, a pill, pornography or a million other counterfeit things will encourage you and fulfill your desires **instead of** growing your righteous faith. – it is a truth revealed and taught over and over that psychologists, mental health workers, persons suffering from depression and a host of other maladies must learn Listen to that eternal truth again! Romans 1:**12** *that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.*

Most of those practitioners of mental well-being would readily agree to the benefits of encouragement from others, //but the most important and essential part of the formula 'FAITH' is left in limbo! So the question - where does each others faith come from that is such an incredible tool and essential for the healthy person?

Romans 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. KJV*

And Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. KJV*

Brothers and sisters, - Christmas celebrates the greatest gift conceivable for mankind. It is **the** truth, and Jesus is **the** truth. The truth revealed comes from faith and faith comes from hearing, accepting, living truth. **Faith** is essential for mental health strength and assurance of eternal life. satan has kept the truth of faith disguised, with every diabolical substitute, counterfeited, to the point of confounding even the very elect according to Matthew 24:24 *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. KJV*

Listen again to Paul's explanation of his inspiration to serve the church in Rome and overflow to us: Romans 1:11-12 *I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—**12 that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.***

Stop whatever you are doing or thinking about! Look all around this room – stand up if you need to so you can see everyone...these are the ones you are first to encourage! ///Two things to be aware as you strive to encourage each other:

1. **FIRST** - You are instructed and if I may be so bold, commanded by scripture to encourage each other. That means you and I must be - becoming more and more like Jesus so that what others see in us is a reflection of Jesus and not the world. When others see

Jesus in us, they can be encouraged, which their encouragement in turn will encourage you and grow your faith. Again these are the folks to start encouraging by your faith, then your families and everybody else you encounter.

2. Secondly, recognize and admit that the world and tradition are tricking believers by deceiving some persons to worship Jesus on their own terms rather than on the terms of His Bible revelation. This mutual faith encouragement is thereby obstructed! Examine the record of Paul in Ephesians 4:22-24 *put away the old person you used to be. Have nothing to do with your old sinful life. It was sinful because of being fooled into following bad desires. 23 Let your minds and hearts be made new. 24 You must become a new person and be God-like. Then you will be made right with God and have a true Holy life.*

Come on Paul cut us some slack!/// after all we are all just sinners saved by grace! That is quite a challenge you are giving us!! ///- You might be saying, I thought being a Christian was going to be a continual holiday celebration of every good and delightful thing of heaven given to us on earth without all this learning, serving, and growing in faith!!!

But Paul has an answer for that too in the next verse: Romans 1:13-15 *I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. 14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. 15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.*

Romans 1:13 *I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters,* That is why this Bible has been translated and protected through the years, so people of every age will not be unaware of what the Christian life really is all about./// It is all too obvious from Paul's wording that being unaware is a viable, and dangerous possibility, a present reality, and a tool the evil one uses to blind the eyes and harden the hears of innocent

and naive victims of satanic deceit. In fact Paul continues in verse 13 *that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now)* Who do you think prevented Paul's trip to Rome? Oh yes one can argue that it was not in God's timing, but that doesn't fit because it was God who went ahead and orchestrated Paul's letter and later trip because of Paul's passion and God's power was greater than all that evil can amass against him!

Encouragement, strength, increase and maturity of faith is Paul's further explanation of his desire to see them and be conveyed to us: Romans 1:13c *in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.* Oh my,/// Paul's inspired heart feeling was overflowing for those who have not received the gospel and are inevitably destined for an eternity away from Heaven's glory. Paul's purpose driven life was what we call evangelism and includes discipleship. And you can be sure we are or have been (~~but have been prevented from doing so until now.~~ Just as Paul experienced! Now we know, and now Paul tells us what to do about it in this model Paul taught us 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." What Paul was instructed from heaven he instructs to us: Romans 1:14-15 *I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. 15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.*

This word obligated from the Greek means to be "legally or morally bound." As you and I model Paul we accept the truth that we too are "legally and morally bound" to the truth of the gospel message.

We are legally bound from the idea that when we confessed Christ and were baptized we committed to the new covenant or contract presented in the New Testament. The fact that it was a personal and deliberate decision is why we do not practice infant baptism because the child did not make the decision. Dedicating a child to the proposition of

being raised in a Christian atmosphere to allow them every opportunity to learn of and become a Christian is not to be confused with infant baptism.

And from the meaning of “morally bound” instructs we have by the truth of being a human the duty to care for and nurture those with whom we are given acquaintance.

The phrase *obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish* means everyone inclusively. If they are born of human parents, we are obligated to them to share the gospel and Paul expresses like this:

Romans 1:15 *That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.* Be careful with that verse! It is NOT an excuse for not sharing the gospel because you are not called preach like Paul... I love the old cliché that explains that “everyone is called to preach the gospel and if necessary use words.” Your life is a sermon to others to encourage them and strengthen each others faith in the process.

Paul was eager to get on with getting on. A singularly beautifully descriptive verse that describes how to be eager and focus your experience and reap your jubilation is Colossians 3:1 we should all commit to memory: *Since, then you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God..* That is what Paul was motivated by and he is teaching and modeling for us: Galatians 3:27 *For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

Use this Christmas season as reinforcement for your faith to encourage each other and thereby be strengthened yourself. Work hard on getting into the habit of passing every thought through the filter of righteous truth from the Bible revelation.

Merry Christmas is second only to Easter for the Christian and as Paul was obligated to his generation so we who are privileged beyond the hope or imagination of most of the populace of the earths creation - to encourage each other in faith overflowing to everyone around us.