



Sermon Notes | What Is the Gospel: Part II | Romans 1:2-7

INTRODUCTION

Last week we opened Romans with the first verse:

Romans 1:1

"Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God."

And we looked at the man, Paul, who God used to deliver the God-breathed Word, the Word of God. Paul was a 'slave' of Christ Jesus, owned completely by Christ, purchased and bought by Him. And Paul was 'God-called'. Paul was 'called' by God to be an 'apostle'. Paul did not call on God; his 'apostleship' was initiated by God. It was God who 'consecrated' Paul, who 'set apart' Paul for 'service'. Paul was 'consecrated' for the things of God, and for the people of God. Paul was 'consecrated' unto the LORD. And, Paul points out, he was 'set apart' for the 'gospel of God'. In Romans, the 'gospel of God' is the vehicle for the 'righteousness of God', revealed and worked through 'salvation' by way of the 'gospel of God'.

So what is it? What is the 'gospel of God'? How would you answer this question? This is the question that begs to be answered. Everything that flows out from verse one leads to the answer. These opening verses set the table for the book as a whole, the 'gospel', which He promised.

Romans 1:2-7

"(The gospel of God) which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints."

The 'gospel', God-breathed words, given providentially and supernaturally, for the purpose of study, given for our eyes and hearts to receive, and for our hands and feet to live them. The 'gospel' is what this letter to the Romans contains, in all of its parts. We will see man for who he truly is. We will see God for who He truly is. We will see Christ, and where He enters into the 'relationship' between God and man. And we will be 'called' to make a response. Our 'gospel' understanding will be both 'exposed' and 'enhanced',

'exposed' for the deficiencies it has, 'enhanced' from what is currently known about it, and God will be grown from there.

So what is 'The Gospel'? The 'Gospel' today is so abandoned, so misunderstood and so lost, so trampled on. And so we embark, today, on a rediscovery expedition, for our own understanding. We dig into it, because we need it today so that our lives will reflect 'the glory' and 'the commission' that flows out of 'the gospel', especially in light of the kind of 'righteousness' that exists in the world today.

To begin, Romans identifies the name of the 'Gospel' at the end of verse one. It is 'the gospel of God'. It is not just any 'gospel', it is 'the gospel of God'. Grammatically speaking, there is possession noted, there is 'relationship' noted. The word 'gospel', and the word 'evangelical' come from the same original Greek word 'euangelion', its meaning to be 'of good news'. Many evangelical churches misuse the word 'evangelical' today, applying other meanings, but it should be used to mean, 'of good news'.

Paul does not just say that he was 'set apart' for the Gospel. No! As he opens this letter, Paul is making a precise and authoritative 'declaration' and a 'clarification' about this 'good news'; it is not just 'the good news' and not just any 'good news'. It is the 'good news of God'. The 'good news' is from God, and is about God. He notes that by 'source' and by 'content' this 'good news', this 'gospel', is both from God and about God.

So where do we fit in? We do not! Man has nothing to do with it. We need this reminder. Man only makes it a 'gospel of confusion'. The 'gospel' is not about doing 'good things'. The church is not a 'gospel' church because they do good things or because they help society (the Lion's Club, the Rotary Club; they do 'good things' for society, but they are not spiritual groups). The church is not a 'gospel church' because they are relevant, or because people want to enter their doors, or because they meet the culture. The church is not a collection of people doing 'good things'. This is not the 'gospel', nor is it a 'gospel' church. The 'gospel of God' is 'offensive' to many. It is not a 'once upon a time' story, it is not an experience, nor a personal God moment. It is not a warm feeling or sensual experience. No! The 'Gospel' applied to the flesh today is not something that must be 'felt' and must make people want to enter the doors. Sharing a personal story about how God's grace came upon your life is a 'testimony' but it is not the 'gospel'. Nicodemus and Paul each had a personal 'testimony'. They were different in content, yet they were based on the same 'gospel'. But this 'confusion' today about the 'Gospel' creates mis-associations and misunderstandings. It was true back then in Paul's day, and it is true now. The true 'gospel' is not just any 'good news'. It is 'the good news of God!' There was all manner of 'good news' around in the big city of Rome, but this 'good news' was different, and not pedestrian, not ordinary. It was 'distinct'. It was the 'good news of God'. And thus this big 'gospel' clarification that Paul presented, was needed.

Paul has 'longed to go to Rome' but as of yet, has not yet been there. He has already been sent on three missionary journeys, has been to Asia Minor, to Macedonia, to all the places eastward, but still no Rome. He hopes it will happen soon though. The work in the east is done, and Rome is now on the horizon. His next goal is to go to Spain, which has

not yet received the 'good news', and he hopes to see Rome on his way. Rome is to be a 'spring off' place, for his western tour.

Romans 15:24

"I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while."

But first, Paul has one order left to do before he begins his western tour. He must first go to Jerusalem to drop off a special offering for the saints there. Paul makes a number of mentions to this offering in his writings.

Romans 15:25

"At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints."

I Corinthians 16:1-4

"Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me."

II Corinthians 8:9

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich."

II Corinthians 8:1-5

"We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the LORD and then by the will of God to us."

II Corinthians 9:5-7, 10-12

"So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction. The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ... He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God."

Paul plans that he will go to Rome, therefore, by way of Jerusalem. And indeed, he does get to Rome, though not in the way he anticipated. He gets to Rome, but in chains.

While in Jerusalem, Paul, who was visiting the temple, was attacked and falsely charged by a Jewish mob, and was arrested by the Romans. A plot against his life prompts the Romans to send him to the governor in Caesarea, where Paul appeals to Caesar.

Acts 21:27b-28, 30-36

"... the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, 'Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place. ... Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done. Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, for the mob of the people followed, crying out, 'Away with him!'"

Paul is kept in custody for a number of years, the chief priests and principle Jewish men still seeking Paul's death. They brought forth many serious charges against him, none that could be proved.

Acts 25:8-12

"Paul argued in his defense, 'Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense.' But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, 'Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?' But Paul said, 'I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die. I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar. Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, 'To Caesar you appealed; to Caesar you shall go.'"

Finally, after much time and upset, Paul finally arrives in Rome in chains.

Acts 28:16, 20, 23, 30

"And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him. ... 'For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain.' ... From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. ... He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance."

Paul had desired to get to Rome, his purpose twofold:

1. To declare 'gospel authority'
2. To secure 'gospel unity'

The book of Romans was a 'preview letter' to the Roman saints of his upcoming mission to them.

The big Roman Church was a large group of diverse people, a big varied group, likely with many new converts, still fleshly, opinionated, and largely Gentile; Raw, young, and new. Paul wanted to build 'unity'. They needed 'unity', not just in terms of receiving the 'good news', but 'united rightly' in the 'good news of God'.

This was true for Rome, and it is still true for us today. It has been said, "Only loyalty in the 'gospel' can secure 'unity' in the Church." And this is true. As 'called out ones' we are not gathered together by 'a piece' of 'good news'. We are not here to worship because of 'something good'. We are not a collection to give opinion and interpretation by our fancy. No! We gather by way of the 'gospel of God'.

Galatians 1:11

"For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel."

We gather, not by man's gospel, not by man's words, but by the 'good news that belongs to God'. It is by His Gospel, His inspired Words.

Today we will look at three aspects of the 'gospel of God'.

I. THE PROMISE OF THE GOSPEL OF GOD: (v. 2)

Romans 1:1b-2

"[The gospel of God] which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures."

The 'gospel of God' was 'promised beforehand'. The word 'beforehand' is one word in the original language. Attention must be paid to this word 'beforehand'. It was promised 'beforehand'. 'Beforehand' is explained. The word points us to the Old Testament. It explains how the 'beforehand' happened. It came through/by His holy prophets, not man's prophets, but by His holy prophets, as recorded in the Holy Scriptures. The book points back to "God's holy prophets", 'set apart' prophets who wrote God's Holy Old Testament Words: Holy Scripture, Holy Writings, the established body of writings, already recognized as Scripture, as 'sacred writings'. They were not just fancy writings. They were not 'new' writings. Paul is referring to 'God's gospel' that is found in the Old Testament Writings. It is therefore not new news, for it is old news. It is not a new 'New Testament' declaration. This is the old news, from God. This old news has always been the message of the Old Testament. Paul is falsely accused of preaching 'new news', of stirring people up with 'new news'. Consequently, Paul is arrested and

charged for spreading 'new news'. However, Paul repeatedly communicates that this is not 'new news'; it is the same 'old news' that God has always proclaimed.

Acts 21:28

"... Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place..."

Old Testament news is not first century news. It did not come with Jesus. The 'Gospel' is the message that the One true God is bringing salvation to man. This salvation of God is the only hope for man. Old Testament and New Testament, this is the message from God. Man cannot bring salvation. Man is incapable of saving himself. Man, left to himself, faces ruin. God Alone is doing what He alone can do. He does what man cannot do for himself. This is Old Testament news. This is New Testament news. God Alone: His work, His plan, all to save the helpless sinner. The 'Gospel of God', Old Testament and New Testament, always is the message of God's salvation to His people.

The first 'good news' was presented back in Genesis, back in the Garden, embedded in the curse.

Genesis 3:15

"I will put enmity between you and woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

God promises the helpless Adam and Eve that He will destroy Satan, that He will provide a saving plan. Genesis 3 is 'good news' and is the 'good news of God'. And more 'good news of God' follows, as in the 'good news' by the prophets in these wonderful proclamations:

Isaiah 45: 22-33

"Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn: from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return."

Isaiah 61:1

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound."

The latter Messianic verses are repeated in the New Testament when Jesus visits the synagogue and stands up to read, He Himself being the fulfillment of that 'good news'.

Luke 4:18

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed."

And from the prophet Jeremiah comes more 'good news'.

Jeremiah 15:20

"And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you for I am with you to save you and deliver, declares the LORD."

And the 'good news' of Jonah from inside the fish, that salvation belongs to the LORD, is also established in the Psalms.

Jonah 2:9

"But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!"

Psalms 3:8

"Salvation belongs to the LORD; your blessing be on your people! Selah."

So, the 'gospel of God' is promised in the Old Testament, and more, the Apostles recognize this, and the New Testament confirms the same message. The 'good news' has always been. Paul points out this message of truth as he ministers to the Corinthians. Christ died and rose again according to the Scriptures.

I Corinthians 15:3-4

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve."

From Genesis to Revelation, it has always been that God saves. Salvation comes from God, and is by God. It is declared so in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament. And Paul, picks up this 'gospel' message of 'promise', and expands on it now that Christ has come.

II. THE PERSON OF THE GOSPEL OF GOD (vv. 3-4)

Romans 1:3-4

"... concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord."

These two verses provide the content of the 'Gospel'. Paul is merely introducing his topic. He is indicating that there is more to come. He will be expanding the message. It is all still the 'gospel' and it is all still tied to God, but it is also tied to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The 'Gospel' concerns Christ. Christ is tied to the second person of the Trinity, the triune God, in plan and in person. The 'Gospel' refers to Him! It refers to His ministry which leads to the cross and resurrection (v. 3). Jesus Christ, the God/Man, the Son, descended from David, according to the flesh, from one line, being the 'promised' Seed. At the heart of the 'good news' there has always been a Son, a Seed, the connective tissue going back to Genesis, and weaving through the Old Testament.

Genesis 3:15

"I will put enmity between you and woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

From the beginning there was always this Jewish expectation of the Seed. This was nothing new. There was expectation that through the Seed, and through David's line, and from the tribe of Judah, would come 'good things'. God had declared it would be so. John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus, questions if Jesus is 'the One' they have been waiting for.

Matthew 11:2-3

"Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciple and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'"

Genesis 49:10-11

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. Binding his foal to the vine and donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes."

II Samuel 7:8-9, 16

"Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth ... And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me, Your throne shall be established forever."

Isaiah 11:1-2

"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD."

One shall be coming, Messiah Himself, from the line of David. A shoot from the stump of Jesse, Jesse being David's father, shall bear fruit, and the Spirit will rest upon Him. This clearly points forward to the Baptism of Christ when God the Father declares Jesus to be His Son. This is God fulfilling His 'promise' (the expectation) in Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Messianic King and the Son of God!

Matthew 3:13, 16-17

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ... And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased'."

Matthew 1:1

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

From Genesis, through the prophets, the 'promise' is proclaimed, and now the New Testament confirms the Son of David, the line of David, declaring the descendants, for now Jesus Christ is born, 'born of the flesh' under the providence of God. It was God orchestrating all through the line, all through the years, until the time was complete and the Son of God was born in human form. Paul the Apostle confirms this truth.

Philippians 2:6-8

"[Christ Jesus] who, though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Romans 1:3

"...concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh..."

It must be noted: Jesus Christ, this Seed, this Son; He came to earth 'in flesh' and suffered humiliation, but He did not stay there.

Many perverse misunderstandings exist about Christ in false religions. He is considered to be a great man, is referred to as a moral teacher, is deemed a likeable man, but just a man, for example. But we must not stay in this place. Jesus was so much more. Jesus came down from heaven with divine purpose: HE BORE THE SINS OF HIS PEOPLE. He was crucified, died, and was buried.

II Corinthians 5:21

"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

But Christ was more yet. By the Spirit of Holiness, which is the Spirit of God, Christ was declared to be the Son of God in power, according to, and by His resurrection.

Romans 1:4

"... and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord."

Christ always was the Son of God, but when He left the grave, the tomb, on the third day, He went from the 'humiliation' of His death and burial, to being the 'Son of God in power'. He rose from that grave as the Son of God. He rose, grave defeated, grave conquered. He rose from Seed, from Messiah, from the anointed Jesus Christ; He rose to Jesus Christ Our Lord! How did this happen? Through the Holy Spirit, through the third person of the Trinity. The three persons of the Godhead are present in this 'Gospel'. We note 'the plan' of God the Father, to send The Seed, God the Son, to save sinners who could not save themselves. The Son lived a perfect life, and then laid down His life in

order to atone, a price attested to by God the Holy Spirit, and then in power, the Son is raised from the grave. This was 'salvation' from God, by God, fully and completely. The 'purchase' was complete. The 'Gospel of God' was complete. The resurrection of the God Son, by the God Spirit, once 'promised' to Israel by the prophets, which was the signal from God the Father that the 'saving program' had begun. And now, Paul is declaring that this 'good news' is being preached everywhere, for all; 'euangelion' for all! The results of the 'Gospel of God' are evident.

III. THE PRODUCT OF THE GOSPEL OF GOD (vv. 5-7)

Romans 4b-7:

"... Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Through Him, through Christ Jesus our Lord, we receive 'grace and apostleship', specifically, 'God's grace of apostleship', free of unmerited favour. Our apostleship comes by 'grace undeserved', yet we have gotten it even so. It enables the very breath that we breathe. We receive 'the grace', and 'the grace' sustains us. It is 'grace' from God, and with it comes 'peace with God'. It is God's gift and more.

Ephesians 2:8-9

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

He also gives 'sending grace'. We were not saved to sit still, to do nothing, to simply feel secure for when we die. No! We have been given 'the grace of apostleship' which means we are 'sent'. It is 'the grace that 'sends' in its simplest form. Like Paul, we are 'sent' to bring the 'good news' to others.

In the 'sending' there are three 'products' of the 'Gospel of God' that we find in verse 5.

Romans 1:5

"[Jesus Christ our Lord], through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations."

1. The Grace of Apostleship "To Bring About the Obedience of Faith":

The verse does not declare 'obedience of the Law', but rather, 'obedience of faith'. It is a gift. It is not obedience that is necessary for the faith; In other words it is not a requisite. It is not faith conditioned by obedience. No. This refers to 'obedience that is faith!' True obedience is not obedience without faith. We look to Abraham's life as one of obedience that was based on faith, and because of his faith he obeyed God. Obedience is not external compliance. You can claim to be a believer in Christ, but without obedience, there is no real faith. Not just any news is 'good news'. 'Euangelion' news is news that

'changes lives'. Paul is not calling people to faith in isolation, but to the 'obedience of faith'. Faith is not faith without obedience. This has always been the call of God, not to faith, but to the 'obedience of faith'. The 'good news' changes lives; not any news will/can do this. To receive God's gift of salvation is 'obedience of faith' so that we will live the way we should, the way we were created to live. Thus we receive Christ as Saviour and Lord 'in obedience of faith'. He is not your Saviour if He is not your Lord in every dimension of life. He becomes Lord of your life. You become His servant 'slave'.

2. The Grace of Apostleship "For the Sake of His Name":

For the sake of 'His Name'! We have lost the sense of divine 'privilege' that is involved in being 'called' and 'sent'. This is no ordinary mission. We've been 'called' to proclaim the 'gift of God'. Yet we are prone to act ashamed, not as 'ambassadors' called for His honour.

Evangelism is the proclamation of 'His Name'. It is not about us. It is about Him. It is about the 'gift' of God. We proclaim Him! We proclaim 'the solution', His solution. We personally have nothing to offer. Our message, our motives, are not part of the equation. We set the bar far too low, and we are not out on a selling mission. We have, in ourselves, nothing to offer. Ours is to 'proclaim', to herald the 'good news' for what it is, 'the glory of God', for the sake of 'His Name'.

Theologian, John Stott, in a commentary on Romans, states precisely what is going on with many.

"We should be jealous as Scripture sometimes puts it, 'for the honour of His name'. We should be hurt when it is ignored, we should be indignant when it is blasphemed, and all the time anxious and determined that it shall be given the honour and glory which it is due. The highest of all missionary motives is neither obedience to the great commission, important as it is, nor love for sinners who are alienated and perishing, strong as that incentive is, especially when we contemplate the wrath of God coming, but rather zeal, burning and passionate zeal, for the glory of Jesus Christ."

That's it! There is no higher motivation than 'glorifying the Name of Jesus'! None!

3. The Grace of Apostleship 'Among All the Nations':

Paul (formerly Saul) was a capital 'A' Apostle to the Non Jews, to the Gentiles. He himself a Jew, he was 'called' and 'sent' to be an 'apostle' among the nations. Paul, 'the Apostle', was sent to proclaim the Gospel of God so that other (small 'A') apostles would be called and sent. That first official office of 'Apostle', of the 12 and Paul, were called directly by Jesus, to go out in all the world, to preach the gospel and thus make disciples of others, called to thereby be 'sent ones', 'apostles' themselves.

Acts 9:15-19a

"But the Lord said to him (Ananias), 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food he was strengthened."

Paul's official designation/appointment of 'being sent' to the Gentiles was given/made directly by Christ. Paul was the last in line of those 'sent directly'. Luke explains in his introduction to Acts that Jesus spent His last days on earth with His 'chosen' apostles.

Acts 1:2-3

"...until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God."

Acts 1:8

"But you will receive power and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

And so Christ sent His apostles to the nations. "Go to the ends of the earth as My witnesses, and herald the 'good news' from Me, and about Me!" Paul and the other apostles, were 'sent' to the nations to attend to the Great Commission, to herald His 'grace'.

Paul reminds the Roman saints that they are included in this 'good news' plan of salvation. Yes, including you, Gentile saint. You too are now being 'called' to 'belong'. We have a 'cause' together in Christ Jesus. You once were 'far off', Gentile soul, but now you are called Roman saints.

Romans 1:6

"...including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ."

In Jesus Christ is the 'place' and the 'domain' of belonging. And this truth of where we are 'called' to, for the Romans then, and for us here, is a call to be 'set apart' and holy. This is what it means to belong to Jesus Christ. When we are loved by God, and when we are 'called' to be saints, we become His. This is the product of 'His Gospel', of 'His good news'. We are 'called' specifically to be holy ones, 'set apart' to truly be His own. He is omnipotent, and when He chooses and calls, the call to be loved by God is irresistible.

And now we are 'loved by God', saved in His love, the object of His affection, but this was not always so, and those who are not loved by God are in a very different place, and are hated.

Psalm 5:4-6

"For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man."

But not now! Through the 'Gospel of God', and because of His 'beforehand promise', and because we've been now 'called', saved, and regenerated by the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, by God Alone, now we can say that we are 'loved by God'. It is all God, not by anything we have done. There is no work, no cleanup, no action needed by us; it is from Him, made complete in Him, **ONLY BY CHRIST'S WORK!**

Psalm 5:7

"But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house, I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you."

This is our hope. Yet, **NO ONE** who does not bow down in fear before God can be called a lover by God.