

## A Burning Heart

**Text:** Romans 1:8-13

### Introduction:

1. Review of theme: Romans 1:16-17 – The Gospel (righteousness)
2. This lesson: Paul unveils His heart towards the Roman Christians. Paul, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, had a special love for them and a desire for their spiritual advancement in Christ.

### I. Paul's Praise (Vs. 8)

#### A. The Habit of Praise (8a)

1. 'first' = in order and importance
2. "I thank" = present tense. Habit and practice of His life.
3. "my God" = personal attachment
4. Thanksgiving, an important aspect of the Christian's life
  - a. Colossians 1:10, 12 *"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord... **Giving thanks unto the Father**, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."*
  - b. Psalm 100:4-5 *"Enter into his gates with **thanksgiving**, and into his courts with **praise**: be **thankful** unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."*
  - c. Luke 11:2 *"...When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name..."*

#### B. The Mediator of His Praise (8b)

1. "through Jesus Christ" = Christ is the Mediator of our prayers
2. Thanksgiving can be offered to Christ directly as in Paul's case in 1 Tim. 1:12. However, the N.T. emphasis is on thanksgiving offered to the Father, through the Mediatorial ministry of the Son.
3. Colossians 3:17 *"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks to God and the Father by him.**"*

#### C. The Focus of His Praise (8c)

1. Paul was thankful for the testimony of the Roman Christians.
  - a. 'faith' = the fact they were Christians and were living godly lives
  - b. "spoken off" means to publically report. Something proclaimed as a thing of public interest (Moule). Word often translated 'preach' in N.T.
2. The fact there were Christians in Rome living pure lives was a powerful testimony to the truth of the Gospel. Roman historian Tacitus referred to Rome as a city "into which flow all things that are vile and abominable, and where they are encouraged." (Wuest)

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3. The Gospel had even reached Ceasar's household (Phil. 4:22)! Due to the rapid spread of the Christian faith, Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome in A.D. 49.

### II. Paul's Prayers (Vs. 9-10)

#### A. Reliable Prayers (Vs. 9a)

1. "God is my witness" = similar to an oath. Lest the Roman Christians should doubt the genuineness of the Apostle's prayers for them, he summons the Highest witness to validate His claims.
2. "serve with my spirit" = service of a distinctly spiritual kind . Not carnal & fleshly. Paul knew the emptiness of external religiosity (e.g. his background as a Pharisee). His service was from the heart (Haldane)
3. "in the Gospel of His Son" = the primary sphere of Paul's service. Christ is the focal point of this Gospel

#### B. Regular Prayers (9b)

1. "without ceasing" = incessantly & persistently. Same Greek word was used by Jewish Historian Josephus for the continual hammering of the battering rams against the walls of Jerusalem in the Roman conquest of Jerusalem (Linguistic Key).
2. "make mention" = to have in remembrance. He brought them regularly before the throne of grace.

#### C. Specific Prayers (10a)

1. "making request" = specific prayer
2. "prosperous journey...to come unto you" = Paul was asking God for an open door to minister to the saints at Rome

#### D. Submissive Prayers (10b)

1. "by the will of God" = Paul's prayers were in subjection to the will of God (1 John 5:14-15)
2. This is what it means to pray in Jesus' Name. It means that we are asking for those things that Jesus would approve of. It is like giving someone your checkbook and telling them to purchase something for you. They are making that purchase in your name, and they must only purchase that which you would approve. (Cloud)

### III. Paul's Passion (Desire) (Vs. 11-13)

#### A. That they might be Equipped (Vs. 11)

1. 'long' = to greatly desire, to yearn. Translated "earnestly desiring" (2 Cor. 5:2), "desiring greatly" (1 Thess. 3:6) & "greatly long after" (Phil. 1:8)
2. "spiritual gift" = not a reference to a special Apostolic gift, but ministry that will see them further grounded in the faith, spiritual strengthening in general.

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3. “to the end” = goal and aim of the gift

### B. That they might be Edified (Vs. 12)

1. Paul recognizes the mutual benefit of Christian ministry. He does not have the attitude that He is the only one who has something to give. He recognizes that as he ministers to the Roman Christians, he will also receive a blessing from them.
2. Speaks of the humility of the Apostle Paul. No spiritual pride or arrogance.
3. ‘comforted’ = broad word. Means to encourage, comfort, exhort and strengthen.
4. Paul’s attitude was, “I am coming to teach and also to learn.”

### C. That there might be Fruit (Vs. 13)

1. “I would not have you ignorant” = Paul wants them to be aware of this important fact (same phrase in 1 Thess. 4:13)
2. “was let hitherto” = He was hindered/prevented from fulfilling his purpose. Reason for this hindrance seems to be given in 15:22. Paul was detained due to the work of the ministry
3. “might have some fruit” = Paul desired to bear fruit for God’s glory in Rome. John 15 – fruit produced by Christ and for God’s glory. Would include the thought of fruit amongst the believers at Rome but more specifically, fruit in the conversion of souls in the Roman capital.

### Conclusion:

1. How thankful are we to our God? Do we take time to praise Him?
2. Are we regular in lifting up others before the throne of grace in prayer?
3. Do we have a heart to see other Christians grow in their walk with God?