

## Three I AMs of the Apostle Paul

**Text:** Romans 1:14-17

### Introduction:

1. Brief review of previous lesson: Paul has unveiled his heart to the Roman believers in the longest salutation in any of his Epistles.
2. This lesson: Paul concludes his introductory salutation (Vs. 14 & 15) and then launches into the great theme of the Epistle (Vs. 16 & 17).
3. All three of Paul's "I Am" statements are connected to the Gospel and reveal his sense of responsibility to it (the Gospel)

### I. I Am A Debtor (Vs. 14)

#### A. A Debtor to God (14a)

1. 'debtor' = one who owes another a debt. Paul had a sense of indebtedness to God for His salvation.
2. 1Cor. 9:16 *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for **necessity is laid upon me**; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"*
3. The wonder of his salvation was never far from the Apostle Paul's mind and heart.
4. 1. Tim. 1:12-17 *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord..."*

#### B. A Debtor to Souls (14b)

1. "Greeks...wise" = all civilized nations included under this term (Haldane).
  - a. Referred to those who spoke Greek and were knowledgeable of the arts and sciences.
  - b. Greek language was thought to be the language of the gods!
2. "Barbarians...unwise" = those who did not speak Greek properly.
  - a. The term 'Barbarian' was a nickname given to those who spoke other languages considered inferior to Greek. They would mimic them by saying "bar, bar, bar", hence the term Barbarian.
  - b. It was a word mocking the way 'uncouth' foreign languages would sound to Greek ears.
3. Note: Paul sees both groups of people as equal – he was a debtor to them all. Whether rich, poor, educated or uneducated, mankind's need of the Gospel is the same.

### II. I Am Ready (Vs. 15)

#### A. Preparation (15a)

1. 'ready' = willing and eager. Implies a degree of forethought and preparation

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2. “as much as in me is” = with all the strength and might that God supplies

### B. Proclamation (15b)

1. “preach the Gospel” = proclaim good news, glad tidings.
2. The Gospel – 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
3. 1 Cor. 1:18 & 21 *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of **preaching** to save them that believe.”*
4. Mark 16:15 *“...Go ye into all the world, and **preach** the gospel to every creature.”*

## III. I Am Not Ashamed (Vs. 16-17)

These verses are Paul’s thesis, the main theme of the Book. He announces the grand subject which occupies the first five chapters of this Epistle, namely, the doctrine of justification by faith. (Haldane)

### A. What he is not ashamed of (Vs. 16a)

1. “not ashamed” = not embarrassed or bashful about the Gospel.
2. “gospel of Christ” = Christ is its author and theme (subject)
3. Historical context: “By the Pagans it was branded as Atheism; and by the Jews it was abhorred as subverting the law and tending to licentiousness; while both Jews and Gentiles united in denouncing the Christians as disturbers of the public peace, who, in their pride and presumption, separated themselves from the rest of mankind...The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him. **They run counter to his most fondly-cherished notions of independence; they abase in the dust all the pride of his self-reliance, and, stripping him of every ground of boasting, and demanding implicit submission, they awaken all the enmity of the carnal mind.**” (Haldane)
4. “The unpopularity of a crucified Christ has prompted many to present a message which is more palatable to the unbeliever, but the removal of the offense of the cross always renders the message ineffective. An inoffensive gospel is also an inoperative gospel.” (Geoffrey Wilson)

### B. Why he is not ashamed (16b-17)

1. Because it is the power of God unto salvation (16b)
  - a. Supernatural Power!
    - i. ‘power’ = the mighty power of God. God is the source of this power. Same word used to describe Christ’s resurrection (Eph. 1:19-20).
    - ii. Our English word ‘dynamite’ comes from this Greek Word.
    - iii. “The Gospel carries with it the Omnipotence of God.” (Macarthur)

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- iv. Paul has witnessed the power of the Gospel to transform lives all over the world. He has seen Satanic strongholds blown to pieces by the Dynamite of the Gospel!
- b. Saving Power!
  - i. “unto salvation” = The saving power of God is embodied in the Gospel message. ‘salvation’ means deliverance or rescue
  - ii. “to everyone” = universal invitation to all men
  - iii. “that believeth = salvation received through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). ‘believeth’ = trusting in, relying on, having faith in
- 2. Because it reveals the righteousness of God (17)
  - a. ‘therein’ = in the Gospel
  - b. ‘revealed’ = to unveil and uncover. Title of the Book of Revelation from same Greek word (apocalypse). The full and perfect revelation of the righteousness of God was made by the Gospel.
  - c. **“the righteousness of God”**
    - i. Key phrase almost exclusively found in Romans.
    - ii. Refers to righteousness connected with salvation and the Gospel
    - iii. Refers to the righteousness of God that is imputed (credited) to the sinner by faith. “The righteous standing which God gives.”
    - iv. The second half of the verse clearly shows this is what is in view.
    - v. The use of the term elsewhere in Romans also confirms this
    - vi. Romans 3:19-28 *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith...”*
    - vii. Romans 10:9-10 *“That if thou shalt confess...”*
    - viii. Phil. 3:8-9 *“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. **And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:”***
    - ix. Question: Are you clothed in your own righteousness or in God’s righteousness?
    - x. Isaiah 64:6 *“...all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...”*
    - xi. Isaiah 61:10 *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; **for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”***

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- d. “from faith to faith” = faith and nothing but faith can put us into a right relationship with God (Moo). Faith from start to finish (Hendriksen)
- e. “as it is written, The just shall live by faith” = first direct quotation from O.T. There will be at least 60 direct quotations from the O.T. Scriptures in this Epistle. Paul again demonstrates that this truth of God’s imputed righteousness has its roots in the O.T. Scriptures. Righteousness is only to be attained on the basis of faith.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Christian: What is our attitude to the Gospel? Do we have a sense of duty to serve the Lord by proclaiming the Gospel? Are we ready and willing? Are we bold and unashamed?
2. Unsaved: What are you trusting in to put you in right standing with God? Is it your righteousness or God’s righteousness? Are you clothed in your own filthy rags or in God’s perfect righteousness?