

## Romans

Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish

May 15, 2024

Romans 1:7-15



### Vs. 7

- Paul closes his opening by addressing the recipients of his letter: the people of the church in Rome. He does so with affection and warmth. They are “beloved of God”. And just as he was called to be an Apostle, so too are they “the called of Jesus Christ” (vs. 6) and are “called as saints”, called to be “holy ones”, set apart from the world for the pleasure and purpose of God. So despite not having ever been to Rome or ever having met most of them, Paul draws a divine connection between the Roman believers and himself, as they were all called by Christ for His purpose.
- His last line of the opening is his standard line: Grace and Peace. In every New Testament letter we have of Paul’s, he wishes Grace and Peace to the recipients of his letter, except for the two to Timothy. Perhaps it was something special between the two of them, but in each of his two letters we have to Timothy he wishes his protégé “mercy and peace”. And indeed, as you are writing to those you love, what better greeting than to wish them the Grace, Mercy, and Peace of God the Father.

### Vss. 8-9

- Perhaps to further connect with the Roman church, Paul proceeds to praise them! He tells them that as he has traveled far and wide in the empire, he has heard of the great faith of the Roman church. There was a constant stream of people in and out of Rome and as these people traveled, they brought word of the amazing Christian church there. There must have been an excitement, a vitality, a richness in the life of the Roman Christians that caught the attention of everyone they came in contact with, both believers and non-believers alike. And Paul did not think less of them because he had not founded the church in Rome. There seemed to be none of the competition that we see in amongst churches today, where one congregation is often heard criticizing another or looking down on another because one is trying to one-up the other.
- Yet Paul knows too well what the Roman church is facing, there in the shadow of the Colosseum and the buildings of the Imperial Senate. He also knows just how important the church has become in the hearts and minds of the church the world over. So he tells

them, “as God as his witness”, of his “unceasing” prayers for them. The church there simply *MUST* prevail.

#### Vss. 10-12

- For this and other reasons, Paul would truly love to visit the Roman church. He says that he has been praying that it may be the will of God.
- His purpose for wanting to see them he says is that first, he may offer them “some spiritual gift” to establish/strengthen them. But at the same time he recognizes that such a church would have much to offer him, so that they both would be “encouraged together...each of us by the other’s faith”.
- What Paul meant by a gift we do not know exactly. In his opening he wished them Grace and Peace, two wonderful spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 13 he tells us that the greatest spiritual gift is love. As wise as Paul was, perhaps he had nothing specific in mind when he wrote this, desiring to be with them before asking the Father for anything specific. But for himself he may have been looking to receive some of their inner strength and perseverance.

#### Vss. 13-15

- Paul shares with them that he has often planned to visit Rome, but was “prevented”. By who and how, he does not say. But throughout his ministry, especially since Antioch, the Gentile believers have been the greatest blessing to him. And since the Romans are the greatest among the Gentiles and this church being so amazing, then surely the blessing he would receive from being with them would be immeasurable.
- Paul understands that he is “under obligation/a debtor” to all the Gentiles, to “Greeks and barbarians and both to the wise and the foolish”. Paul put no limits on his ministry and was eager to take it to the most important city in the world. In the day that Paul was writing, the term “Greek” did not merely mean someone who was born in Greece, but rather someone who was educated and could read and write the language. Barbarians were those who were none of those things. “What Paul meant was that his message, his friendship, his obligation was to wise and simple, cultured and uncultured, lettered and unlettered. He had a message for the world” (Barclay).