

Leverage Your Life Part 2

Under Obligation

Romans 1:8-15

Memory Verses: Romans 1:14

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

One of Lisa's idiosyncracies is a fixation on good teeth. She likes them sparkling white and arrow straight. For this reason, regardless if they need them or not, every child in our family will have had braces. One of my least favorite things is taking my kids to the orthodontist. I'm just not a fan of sitting in doctor's offices for, hours on end, watching Matlock reruns. Why is it always Matlock... or Walker Texas Ranger? Regardless, I have better things to do with my life than waste it away waiting for my children to be hooked up to torture devices so that their smiles will be adequately received by their mother.

But guess what, I do it. I do it, with a smile and without a guilt trip. Not because, I want to, but because I am under obligation to do it. I love my wife, and am in covenant with her. I love my children and as their father have a responsibility for their wellbeing. I am under obligation.

Obligation means a duty, responsibility, or requirement to do something because of ethical expectations or commitments. An obligation is something you are bound to do, either because you must or because you ought to. Christians are under obligation to Christ, not in a forced or burdensome way, but in a grateful, covenantal, gratuitous way, because he has created us, saved us, loved us, forgiven us, sustains us, and leads us. Going back to last week, we are Set Apart by Christ to a new life and a new Lord. We are his slaves and he is our master. According to **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** we are bought with a price. That price? The blood of Jesus Christ. **We are not our own, we are his and because of this, we are under obligation to leverage our lives for Him and his Gospel.**

As we learned last week, our year long trek through Romans will show us what it means to live as a Christian man or woman. Our theme: Leverage Your Life. Use all that you are and have to grow the Kingdom, spread the Gospel, and bring glory to Christ. Our motto: We are leveraging who we are and what we've been given for the sake of the Gospel, wherever we are and wherever God takes us. Why do we do this? Because we have been Set Apart to do it, and because we are Under Obligation to do it! We must give everything for the sake of Christ!

But there is great tension here among professing Christians. It seems that instead of asking, "how much can I give for Christ," most so called 'believers' ask, "how much can I keep for myself." **Going back to**

the illustration last week about long crow bars. Only long crow bars can create enough leverage to do the work. But we don't want to be long crow bars because long crow bars cost too much. Can't we just get the really small and cheap crow bars? Can't we just do the bare minimum to let people know that we have at least a morsel of religion? Think about it. How much are you willing to leverage? Enough to make yourself feel good with God or enough to actually make a difference?

The purpose of this series and this message is for you to understand one pivotal and critical point. Leverage doesn't work if the crow bar isn't long enough to create movement. As a believer you are in rebellion to God if you are not critically thinking about how to leverage your life for God. You have a responsibility to leverage your life. You are under obligation to leverage your life.

This morning, Paul is our example. He felt a strong compulsion to minister to the Church in Rome because he was under obligation to them because of his relationship with Christ. Let's look at our passage together in **Romans 1:8-15**. This morning we are going to see three things that we are obligated to do because of our relationship with Christ. The main point this morning is this... **When you grasp who Christ is, you realize what you must do.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to recognize based upon who Christ is to us, is.... **We Are Obligated To Pray**. Let's look again at **vs8-10**. Notice that Paul recognizes who he is obligated to. The greek word for obligated literally means to be indebted to. Paul knows that he is indebted to Christ because of many reasons. He lists three specifically here. 1) He is his God, 2) this God has a personal relationship with him, and 3) his spirit indwells him. Jesus, his savior and Lord, dwells inside his soul through the Holy Spirit and as his witness has a very personal relationship with him. This creates in him a heart indebted to... serve (**vs9**). When we grasp who Christ is, we realize what we must do.

And the first thing we must do, according to this passage, is... pray. Now, I know that our theme last year was prayer and you may feel a certain way about that. Like maybe you are like, "are you kidding me, he's going to talk about prayer again, I thought we were done with that." I hate to burst your bubble, but just because our focus this year isn't directly on prayer... doesn't mean that we aren't going to focus on prayer. Prayer is like the language of Christianity. If you want to know what it's like to live the Christian life... it means you pray... and you pray a lot! No, we won't move on past prayer. Rather, we will continue to talk about it regularly.

Again, the greek word for obligated is active, meaning we are actively responsible for others and prayer is our first response. **Prayer is our first response, not a last resort**. Paul says that he is "always: praying for the

Roman Church. Without ceasing he is mentioning his brothers and sisters in the trenches of ministry. Paul thanks God for them in his prayers because of their faith and their testimony which is being spread throughout the world. And lastly Paul is praying that he could be with them. He longs for fellowship with them. This is how we pray for others. We thank God for them, we intercede on their behalf, we ask God to increase their faith and testimony, and we express our love for them.

The point is simple. If you are a Christian; if you have Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then you have an obligation to leverage your prayers for the blessings of others. You are under obligation to pray and intercede for others. This is your duty as a believer. When you refuse to pray you are neglecting your duty, you are derelict. We have a good God and our first obligation is to pray. **When you grasp who Christ is, you realize what you must do.**

The second thing we must recognize in light of who Christ is to us, is... **We Are Obligated To Disciple**. Let's look again at vs11-12. Paul longs to visit the Roman Church so that he can impart some spiritual gift to strengthen them. We have a word for that. It's called discipleship. Discipleship is when we take what God has given us through his spirit and his word and we use it to strengthen the spiritual walk of others. Discipleship is what happens when we leverage what God has given us spiritually to grow others spiritually. **A leveraged life invests in the spiritual growth of others.** Discipleship means intentionally walking alongside someone to help them to grow in their own walk with Christ.

It's like a gardening. I have romanticized gardening. Like, I want to be a gardener. I want to plant things and make them grow. But I recognize how much time and work it takes. In the end I always just assume it's more work than it's worth. So I respect those of you who are good at it and are dedicated to it. Discipling someone is like being a human gardener. Just like a gardener tends to young plants; waters them, supports them with stakes, and prunes what would hinder growth, a disciple maker helps others flourish in their walk with Christ. But it's hard work and it takes time and patience. It takes intentionality and dedication.

The point is this... if you know who your Lord is then you know that you are obligated to serve him by discipling others. What Christ has poured into you, you have an obligation to pour that into others. So, who are you discipling? Who are you mentoring to become a better Christian? Who are you intentionally walking alongside to see them mature in their spiritual walk? If you have chosen to neglect this duty then you are not fulfilling your obligation to Christ. It's as simple as that. **When you grasp who Christ is, you realize what you must do.**

Lastly, our passage shows us that we should recognize that... **We Are Obligated To Share the Gospel**. Let's look again at vs13-15. Lastly, and no duh, we are obligated to share the Gospel. Paul longs to go to Rome, not only to disciple the church but also to... reap a harvest (vs13). Paul is under obligation to preach the Gospel to the Jews, the Greeks, and the barbarians in Rome. Why? Why does he feel so strongly that he must do this? Does he have some special relationship with Greeks or Romans or barbarians? No, it is because he feels obligated to preach the Gospel to everyone who has not heard it regardless of where they are from or what their background is. **Again, going back to last week. As those who are Set Apart in Christ, we have a new identity, a new message, and a new mission. We are slaves of Christ, under obligation to leverage our lives to see the message of the Gospel, spread to the ends of the world!** According to **Matthew 28:18-20** we are commissioned, commanded, and ordered by our Lord, to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth and make disciples of all peoples.

The point... **Every believer who has received the Gospel has an obligation to share it.** We are all in debt and we all have a duty. So who are you going to share the Gospel with this week? Or who are you going to begin a relationship with that leads towards trust and the opportunity for Gospel conversations? Who are you going to try to reach with the Gospel in 2026? We owe it to our savior. We owe it to the world. **When you grasp who Christ is, you realize what you must do.**

Application

So, we leverage our lives for the Gospel by recognizing our obligation to pray for others. Prayer is the first and simplest way our obligation to Christ and others is manifest. You have a duty to pray. Pick up a prayer guide today and start praying.

So, we leverage our lives for the Gospel by recognizing that we are under obligation to make disciples through intentional spiritual gardening. We have a duty to find others to pour into. We leverage the spiritual works Christ has done in us to grow spiritual maturity in others. Find someone to disciple today.

So, we leverage our lives for the Gospel by recognizing that we have an obligation to share the Gospel message of Christ and preach the good news to everyone. Find someone to reach with the Gospel in 2026 today.

Conclusion

In 1977, in a small village in Ghana, a boy named Emmanuel was born with a severely deformed right leg. Because of lack of medical facilities and funds, many kids like Emmanuel are either discarded and left to die as infants, or they grow to be children who are radically rejected, marginalized and left to fend for themselves. But Emmanuel survived and grew up, and

instead of feeling sorry for himself he realized something that many of us never grasp; life is a gift and for those of us who have it, we must pay it forward. Instead of letting his deformity define him, he learned to walk, and then ride a bike. And then in 2001 he made a crazy decision. He decided to ride his bike 400 miles across his country to advocate for the rights and dignity of disabled people. When asked why he did it he said, I have a duty and obligation to pay forward what I've been given. I want my life to count for others.

Emmanuel understood what it meant to be Set Apart. Emmanuel understood what it meant to be under obligation. And Emmanuel understood what it meant to leverage your life for a greater cause. Church, we are set apart for Christ. We are under obligation to our Lord and savior. Our lives must be leveraged for something greater than simply living our best lives now and having the american dream. What are you willing to leverage for Christ. **When you grasp who Christ is, you realize what you must do.**