

OBLIGATED, EAGER AND UNASHAMED

“I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...”
—ROMANS 1:14-16

Is reaching the world with the gospel a kind of ‘take it or leave it’ option? “No,” says Paul. There is a very real sense of obligation, because he says the gospel is universal, and Christ’s mandate is to take the gospel into all the world.

There are three personal statements Paul makes about himself as a servant of the gospel. “I am obligated.” That’s Paul’s first sense. The gospel is for Greeks and non-Greeks. It’s for the wise and the foolish. There are no discriminations. The gospel is for everyone.

Second statement: “I am eager to preach the gospel.” Why? Paul narrows it down to “you who are in Rome”, and I suggest to you he says, “I am eager,” because the gospel is personal. “It’s for people I’m going to meet face to face, and whose names I’m going to know, and hands I’m going to shake. I’m eager because the gospel is personal to each of us.” Paul’s third statement: “I am not ashamed.” Why? Because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

To be an effective witness for Christ, we don't have to be good salespeople with cleverly thought out rhetoric that will only twist people's arms into making responses they really don't mean. As witnesses to Jesus Christ, we become the vehicles for God and the power of God to open people's understanding of the gospel. No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit, and the wonderful thing about preaching the gospel and witnessing to people is that we are not responsible for the response we receive. We leave it to the Holy Spirit to work in people's hearts... and He does.

"I'm obligated because the gospel is universal. I'm eager because the gospel is personal. And I'm not ashamed because the gospel is powerful." We know who we are – saints. We know how we function – spiritually. And we know what we must do – be servants who live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ with a sense of obligation and eagerness. We're not ashamed, because we know there's nothing like the gospel of Jesus Christ that meets the deepest need of the human heart, and we will never provide a better service to anyone than to introduce them to Jesus Christ.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank you for men like Paul who have pioneered the way in reaching people with the gospel. I pray You will give me many opportunities to do the same.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I feel an obligation to witness for Christ, and if so, am I eager?