

Romans: Unashamed; the righteous shall live by faith
Romans 1:8-15 – prt 3

MPS Our longings are *from* God and satisfied *by* God

INTRO:

- Changed date for student auction – now, April 28 from 430-730.
- Review
 - In verse 1, we see Paul as a servant, called to be an apostle and then set apart for the work- His introduction continues
 - Then we see Paul explaining what the gospel of God is, its purpose, and the result of believing this gospel – that we belong to God, we are loved by God and we receive His grace and peace.
- Today we are STILL in Paul’s introduction (the longest of any letter), as we go verse by verse from 8 to 15.

- In the opening of the wizard of Oz, we see Dorothy getting into mischief and a little trouble and Auntie Em tells her “find yourself a place where you won’t get into any trouble.” Then Dorothy says, someplace where there isn’t any trouble. Do you suppose there is such a place Toto? There must be. It’s not a place you can get to by a boat or a train. ... it’s far, far away ... behind the moon, beyond the rain...” then sings Somewhere over the rainbow.
- Dorothy longs to find a place without trouble – but its out of reach.
- We know what happens shortly after - Dorothy and her dog Toto find themselves in the strange land of Oz after a tornado hits her Aunt and Uncle's house in Kansas. She spends almost all of her time longing to be back home – it turns into a journey.
- She encounters three characters who each in their own way are traveling a journey of longing. The Scarecrow longs for a brain, the Tin Man longs for a heart, and the Cowardly Lion longs for courage.
- All of us are longing for something. No exceptions.
- To long for something is to yearn for it, to crave, to desire, to eat a meal, to drink water...

Psalm 42:1 (ESV) 1 *As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.*

- Pants in the Septuagint is the same word for long

1 Peter 2:2 (ESV) 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—

- Our longings reveal what is missing or what we have lost.
- Some of us long for the way it used to be – mainly because it was a place of safety and security – memories of what is known, rather than the future of the unknown. (its why we like older music and old movies – why we watch the same Christmas movies every year)
- Some of us long for something better – our past was not so great and we dream for a better future
- We all long for something. Even our broken world is longing for the redemption of the sons of God.
- **Romans 8:19–23 (ESV) 19** For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.
- We all long for how things ought to be. It's the source of our longing.
- **2 Corinthians 5:2 (ESV) 2** For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,
- We long for how things ought to be but aren't aware of it. So, we make the wrong things our ultimate object of pursuit and longing.
 - Money to fix the brokenness
 - The right friends to fix my loneliness,
 - Comfort through escapes – mindless scrolling, overwork, trips, parties, movies/shows
 - Power so as to right the wrongs,
 - future romance or spouse to fill the void,
 - success to fade our shame
 - politicians to bring heaven to earth
- NONE of those things are bad things. It's just we need the right perspective so that we don't made good things the object of our longing believing that if we have them, they fix us, our problems, or the world's problems.

- Our problem is we stop short in our quest for how things ought to be by longing for created things over the Creator Himself.
- **Our longings are *from* God and satisfied *by* God**
- Paul takes the time to share the longing of his *heart* before he shares his urgency of his *theology*

Vs12 – he longs.... He answers the question of what he longs for – I pray you will be able to do the same today – what are you longing for?

- We see what longings motivated and sustained Paul in ministry: Prayer, people and preaching.
- As redeemed people, we share the same longings as Paul shared.... Let's look.

1. We long to commune with God through prayer.

*(that without ceasing I mention you **10** always in my prayers,)*

Vs 8 *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.*

He says first but never a second – he's showing the longing for God is first.

a. We pray with thanksgiving

- In this case, Paul's thanksgiving is about the Roman church's faith!
- The testimony of the church in Rome was so strong that in A.D. 49 the emperor Claudius expelled all the Jews because of the influence of "Chrestus," which was undoubtedly a reference to Christ – Suetonius
- And if thanksgiving has seeped out of your prayer life, most likely entitlement has taken its place.
- Or maybe, you have altogether stopped praying – not only no thanksgiving, but no prayer.
- There is something this prayer that may help us if that is the case.... (brings us to the next point)

b. We pray with affection being our motive

Notice '*MY God*' and *through Jesus Christ*...

- Our prayers are not a grocery list
- Our prayers are to be rooted in intimacy – its personal.

- When you forget who He is and what He has done, affection fades and we become prayerless.

Signs that you've lost affection for God:

- Cynicism
- Isolation
- Disdain toward others
- Judgmentalism
- Illustration: bees and vultures in the desert – one looks for life in everything and the other death... be a bumble bee looking for life in Christ and life all around you.
- Self sufficient
- "Our prayerlessness is a declaration of independence from God"

God longs for you – did you know that?

Matthew 23:37–39 (NIV) 37 *"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"*

The Prodigal son's father longed for his son to return, so does your Heavenly Father.

Vs 9-10 *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you 10 always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.*

c. We pray with humility

whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son

- When we remember who He is in sight of who we are (in the flesh) we are more than humbled that we even get a chance to pray.
- Humble people are usually happy people... maybe another sign of loss of intimacy with God.

d. We pray for others

that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers

- Who are you praying for in a consistent manner?
- Do you only pray for you and yours? Are you including others?
- This may be a way for you to break the coldness you are feeling.
- If Christ says love your enemy, I'm pretty sure praying for others shouldn't be a chore.

e. We pray with expectation

asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.

- Paul ends up in Rome 3 years later, perhaps not in the way he hoped, but God answered the prayer.
- Most often than not, God answers our prayers in ways we don't expect.

2. We long to be mutually encouraged by others.

Vs 11-12 *For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—
12 that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.*

- Of all people in all of history, if there is one person who could survive without encouragement it would have been Paul... but NO, he needed it too. If Paul needed it, you need it AND he gets it from others

a. God has given us a longing to strengthen each other.

- The Gr. word translated "gift" is *charisma*, which means a "gift of grace"—a spiritual enablement whose source is the Spirit of God.
- You are a gift because you are gifted – don't withhold your giftedness from others – they miss out and so do you.

b. God has given us a longing to be mutually encouraged by each others' faith.

- Story of Tony (or anyone) encouraging me by a story of faith.
- Ray Ortlund says, "You will not meet anyone who is too encouraged."
- Illustration: one piece of charcoal that falls away from the fire will go out – it's not useful, it's not warm, its isolated and being wasted.
- You have an enemy – there is no debating that – he is a roaring lion seeking to devour you.
- He wants you discouraged... not encouraged.
- One of his greatest weapons is to isolate you from being encouraged by others' faith.

- *We reap what we sow.* Sow criticism, reap criticism. Sow encouragement, reap encouragement.
- You need to be built up, and other believers need you. Regarding the latter, you should remember that your spiritual gifts are not for you but for the good of other believers.

3. We long for the God of the gospel to redeem the His people.

Vs 13 *I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.*

a. Deep down our hearts long for a harvest of good for others

- There is a longing to reap a harvest – do you ever feel a longing to see others fruitful in their spiritual lives?
- It’s why I became a preacher and pastor – there is a longing in me to see others saved and discipled. This is not a career – it’s a calling and with that calling there is a longing.
- You are called as well; with that calling should come a longing – a longing for God, a longing for others and a longing for the lost.

Vs 14 *I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.*

b. We owe others the gospel

Paul says he is under obligation – what does that mean?

It is illustrative to think about how I can be in debt to you. First, you may have lent me \$100—and I am in debt to you until I pay it back. But second, someone else may have given me \$100 to pass on to you—and I am in debt to you until I hand it on. It is in this second sense that Paul is “obligated” to everyone, everywhere. God has shared the gospel with him. But God has also commissioned him to declare it to others. So Paul owes people the gospel. Keller

15 *So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.*

c. Our longing for the lost produces eagerness to share

WHO’S YOUR ONE?

- Your longing for God, your longing for others connects you with others – you grow in encouragement and strength – and it is good invite others into where you are connecting and growing.
- You don't have to invite the masses – invite one! Who is your one?
- Pray for them – long to pray for them
- Connect with them – long to strengthen and encourage them.
- Invite them – let them see Christ is better than else in the world
- Relational evangelism academy module coming up in April 15TH and 22nd at 630pm.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. What does it mean to long for something?
2. How has God designed you to long for Him?
3. Do you feel you long more for God or for His gifts?