

First, I Thank My God

Romans, Part V

Romans 1:8-15

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I. Gratitude and Idolatry

Paul's letters routinely begin with gratitude.

- 1 Corinthians 1:4 - *I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,*
- Ephesians 1:15-16 - *Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you...*
- Philippians 1:3 - *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,*
- Colossians 1:3 - *We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,*
- 1 Thessalonians 1:2 - *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,*
- 2 Thessalonians 1:3 - *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren...*
- 2 Timothy 1:3 - *I thank God... as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day,*
- Philemon 4 - *I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers,*

II. First, I Thank My God

A. Thankful for God's Gifts (8)

Paul is thankful for the Romans themselves and for the good report that has spread throughout the world as a result of their faith. Both these things are _____ of God.

B. Prayerful for God's Gifts (9-12)

And not only is Paul thankful for the work that God has already done in Rome, he is eager to witness yet more. He is prayerful for more of God's gifts. He longs to visit Rome personally (9-10) and to impart to them *some spiritual gift* (11a) in order that they *may be established* (11b), made even more settled in their faith. But he didn't want to do this thinking that the giving would only go one way – he longed also to be encouraged by them (12).

C. Mindful of God's Gifts (13-15)

Paul had planned to come to Rome before but was hindered (13). He longed to have "*some fruit among*" them (13b cf. Jn 15:16). This longing was borne of Paul's apostolic calling – he was *a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise* (14). He was chosen by Christ to be the _____ *to the Gentiles* (Rom 11:13) and so was under obligation to preach the Gospel throughout the world, including Rome (15).

III. Overflowing with Thanksgiving

A. Every Good and Perfect Gift (Col 2:7; 1 Thes 5:18; Phil 4:6; Jas 1:17)

Paul exhorts the Colossians to be established in the faith, "*abounding in it with thanksgiving*" (Col 2:7). Similarly, he commands the Thessalonians, "*in everything give thanks*" (1 Thes 5:18). And he reminds the Philippians that even our prayers of petition are to be offered "*with thanksgiving*" (Phil 4:6). Why should this be the case? Because, as James tells us, "*every good and perfect gift comes*

An Outline of Romans

- I. Introduction
 - A. Opening Greeting (1:1-7)
 - B. Travel Plans (1:8-15)
 - C. Theme (1:16-17)
- II. Credenda: "The Righteous by Faith" Shall Live
 - A. God's Wrath vs. Unrighteousness (1:18-3:20)
 - B. The Revelation of God's Righteousness (3:21-5)
 - C. The Triumph of God's Righteousness (6-8)
 - D. The Universality of God's Righteousness (9-11)
- III. Agenda: The Righteous "Shall Live by Faith"
 - A. Transformed not Conformed (12-13)
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- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Paul, Minister to the Gentiles (15:14-21)
 - B. Travel Plans (15:22-33)
 - C. Closing Greetings and Benediction (16)

down from above, from the Father of lights" (1:17). All we have – *life, breath, and all things* – are gifts from God (cf. Acts 17:25). Consequently, _____ should be the norm.

So what of us? Are we overflowing with thanksgiving? Is thankfulness the aroma of your conversation, your demeanor, your home life, your conversation? John Calvin challenges us in his commentary on this passage. He writes, "*We should... accustom ourselves to such forms of _____ as may ever rouse us more keenly to acknowledge God as the bestower of all good things, and to stir up others at the same time to a similar attitude.*"

B. Giving and Thanksgiving in the Body (Ephesians 4:7-16)

We receive gifts from God and then we share those gifts one with another. We are not to be hoarders; we are to be generous with one another. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:

⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."... ¹¹And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Christ *gave* leaders to the Church. Why? **In order to equip the saints in order that the saints might do the work of ministry in order that the church might be built up.** Notice this cycle of _____. Everyone has a role to play. By teaching sound doctrine and *speaking the truth in love* (14-15a), Church leaders equip God's people to stand strong in the faith and *grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ* (15b). Christ then gives *the whole body* grace so that *every part does its share* and the entire body *grows up into Christ*.

C. An Evil Eye (Mt 20:1-15 cf. Dt 15:9; 28:54,56; Pr 28:22)

⁸"So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.' ⁹And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. ¹⁰But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. ¹¹And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, ¹²saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.' ¹³But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?' ¹⁴Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. ¹⁵Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'

This image of an evil eye is used to convey selfishness or miserliness. Those with an *evil eye* refuse to be thankful and generous, keeping everything to themselves. This twists them:

The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad [evil], your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! (Mt 6:22f)

Jesus reminds us that our *eye* either makes us full of light or full of darkness. A man with a _____ eye is able to see the blessings that God has bestowed on him and others. He is thankful. The man with the _____ eye, however, cannot see the good that God has given; he cannot perceive the largesse that God has poured out. The *evil eye* is the eye of ingratitude.

IV. Conclusion