

(1) Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the Gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son --- who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of Holiness by His resurrection from the dead --- Jesus Christ our Lord --- through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

(7) To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(8) First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you --- that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

(13) I want you to know, 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. I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, I am eager to preach the Gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Think on These Things:

- 1) Jesus is the Son of God, our Lord, because of what (v. 4)? How does this make Him any different than other leaders upon whom or who's teaching a religion is based?

Jesus was declared to be the Son of God --- in the power of the Spirit of Holiness --- by resurrecting from the dead. No other religions were founded by a leader who was publicly put to death, was buried (in a guarded tomb), and then rose again from the dead to live again and appear to His followers (as proof of His authority and teachings).

- 2) God has shown you grace, mercy and forgiveness. He has called and appointed you into service (see Ephesians 2:10). What is expected of you now (v. 5)?

Christian leaders exist to help believers come to "obedience of faith" in all parts of the world. We must not only come to faith for salvation, but live obediently to God's ways as a result.

- 3) Is it proper to call you a "saint" of God? Explain your answer.

We are called to "belong to Jesus", called to be saints (vs. 6, 7). The Catholic Church use of this term is misleading. We think it belongs to the super obedient, super humble, miracle-performing, and very dedicated servants of God. However, the use of "saints" in most New Testament books simply refers to the genuine believers in a church congregation.

Honest reflection and self-evaluation may cause us to respond, "I'm no saint!" based on the Catholic Church's use. But if we accept the more common use in the NT, then yes, we can be considered "saints" in God's eyes --- if we truly believe! We are HIS followers.

- 4) Paul has never been to the church established in Rome. How does he know about it? Why does he spend so much time praying for their church if God did not use him as a missionary to start it (see vs. 11-12)?

In v. 8 Paul shares that he has *heard* about their faith as others in the expanding Christian community had talked about it. Paul was inspired by what he heard, and he began asking God to give him an opportunity to visit this church. Paul was, after all, the Apostle to the Gentiles, establishing new churches in Turkey and Greece!

In vs. 11-12, he states that the objectives of his visit would be: 1) to bring to them spiritual gifts that would strengthen their faith; and 2) that they could be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

- 5) How are you praying for our church here at The Salvation Army? If you aren't, will you start?

Personal response. The goal of bringing this up is to help members to understand the value and need for prayer on behalf of their pastors (Officers), church leaders, and various members who have specific needs --- **and get them to commit to the invaluable ministry of prayer for one another.** As a Body of Christ, we have an obligation to care for and support other members of the fellowship where we worship. God responds marvelously and grandly to genuine, heartfelt prayer --- for our own needs and our intercessions for others! (2 Chronicles 7:14)

- 6) How was Paul "prevented" from getting to Rome? (See Acts 19:21-22 and Romans 15:18-29)

Acts – Paul, finishing up in Ephesus, made plans to first go up into Macedonia and Achaia (basically, all of modern Greece), sending a couple of folks ahead of him. AFTERWARD, he said that he intended to go to Jerusalem before heading to Rome.

Romans – Paul's ambition was to preach the Gospel where no one had been before, and now he had pretty much finished in Asia (Turkey/Greece). However, this ambition was part of the reason why he hadn't come to Rome yet; that church had been established by another.... Still, he wanted to visit Rome and see what was going on, so he shared that his plan was to go to Jerusalem first and deliver offerings from Macedonia for the Jewish believers suffering famine in Judea, and then go out again and swing through Rome on his way to Spain.

ULTIMATELY, he was arrested in Jerusalem and, by Roman conduct, brought to Rome for trial before Caesar (and his eventual execution). He never went on another missionary journey...!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: