

## The Heart of a Gospel Minister Romans 1:8-17

In this section, we have a **thanksgiving/prayer report** concerning Paul's apostolic visit to Rome (8-15) and the **theme** of the letter (verses 16-17).

At first glance, you may wonder what we can learn from Paul's about his upcoming trip to Rome? (**Other than making you want to visit Rome [Italy, not Georgia]!**) You may feel like me at my first ever hockey game. I didn't really know what to cheer! ... Go Canes!" "Do something positive!" "Skate better!" "Get organized!" Be aggressive! What do we say when we read Paul's plan for a visit to Rome? "Go Paul!" "Be agresdive!"

You may have not had that reaction.. There's actually a lot here...

**Let me mention a few reasons this text is relevant (and we will see more)...**

Here are two objections raised from your non-Christian friends:

- "**Christianity is a religion for a [fill in the blank with a particular race or class of people].** Some of my friends pastoring in more Urban areas regularly hear "Xianity is a white man's religion." Is that true?
- "**Christians live just like non-Christians.**" You will hear this charge a lot.

**This text corrects both of these false notions.**

Concerning the **first, notice Paul wants everyone to hear the good news.** (see verse 14 – **an obligation!... Greek, barbarian, etc).**

- Jesus is no Tribal deity; but the Lord of the nations.
- **True Christianity cares for the every member of society...**
- Paul gives us a wonderful missional example to follow.
- **We have an obligation to care for the poor in Appalachia and the wealthy in Orange County; to the slums of Nairobi to the millionaires on Wall Street; the concrete jungles of NYC and the jungles of South America.**

**Concerning the second argument, notice that Paul's faith and the Romans' faith led to a radically different way of life than the rest of those in Rome (1:8, 18-32).**

- **Romans one is not giving us a picture of "cultural Christianity."**
- One of the major problems we have in this region of the USA is **nominalism (Christian in label only).**
- That's not the case in **Portland, or in Muslim dominated countries, where people will just come out and tell you that they're not Christians!**
- **The Romans were enduring much opposition for their faith (1:8), and Paul is also modeling authentic faith here.**

Now, Paul's heart is really on display.

Before getting to his **theology**,  
he lets the Romans look into his **heart and life**.

We see what **drove** Paul; what **motivated** him; what **sustained** him.  
We learn about his **prayer life**, his love for the **church**, his **obligation** for world evangelism, and his **confidence** in the gospel.

Look at the “**internal**” phrases:

- “whom I serve with my spirit” (9)
- “my prayers” (10)
- “I long to see you” (11)
- I “intended” (13)
- “under obligation” (14)
- “eager” (15)
- “not ashamed” (16)

Do you hear that? We hear of his ministry **motivations and intentions**.

Remember he hasn't been to Rome. He's planning a visit.

- So he's building rapport.
- He's cultivating partnership/friendship.
- So he opens up his heart so that they may know him.

You can learn a lot about a person by reading **their books**.

But if you were able to travel with missionary heroes, or spend time with godly wives/mothers/singles, or hangout with faithful pastors, then that would certainly impact you. (cf., Phil 3:17).

Now, we see Paul's heart for something in particular: **gospel ministry**.

- Last week we looked at the gospel-filled greeting of **verses 1-7**.
- Paul is a man **consumed with the gospel!**

Now, we read Paul again emphasizing his commitment to the gospel:

- “I serve ... in the gospel of his Son” (9)
- “eager to preach the gospel” (15)
- “not ashamed of the gospel” (16)

Put it all together -- let's look at **four motivations for gospel ministry**.

- We see that Paul has both a **shepherd's heart** and a **missionary's heart**.
- He loves the saints and he loves the lost.
- Both flow from his heart for God.

## 4 Motivations for Ministry

**#1: Communion with God (1:8-10)**

Paul begins by thanking God and speaking of his personal prayer life.

### A. Prayer of Thanksgiving (v. 8)

“**First**” – Paul never gets to #2; he’s indicating **a priority rather than a list**. His first priority is **to commune with God** – so he gives **thanks** to God.

**Proud people don’t give thanks; humble, grace-filled people say thanks a lot.**

- Paul fills the opening of his letters with thanksgiving to God.
- **Ten of his thirteen epistles open with some form of “I thank my God”** (Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; 2 Thess 1:3; 2 Tim 1:3; Phlm 4) or “Praise be to God” (2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3).

**App:** We would do well to begin our day with thanksgiving to God, and to pepper thanksgiving to God, **in our everyday conversations with one another.**

### “my God”

- **The Christian faith is personal**; it’s not a cold, dead religion.
- Rather, He is “**my God.**” Reflected in various Psalms (eg, **Ps 63:1**)

### “through Jesus Christ”

- Paul is radically Christ-centered, and he draws attention again to the Savior, who provides the way for us to have a personal relationship with God.

“**because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.**” **their “famous faith”**

There **were Christians in Rome, whose faith was known “in all the world.”**

### What made their FAITH so special?

It was in **Jesus** (1:5-6; 3:21-26; 1:17).

- We aren’t saved by the quality of our faith but by the object of our faith, Jesus.
- Faith from start to finish (**1:17**)
- Tons of songs speak of faith, but are devoid of the object of saving, transforming faith...
- **Katy Perry, “Rise” – about the strength within you to overcome obstacles...**  
*Oh, ye of so little faith  
Don't doubt it, don't doubt it  
Victory is in my veins  
I know it, I know it  
And I will not negotiate  
I'll fight it, I'll fight it  
I will transform*

**Paul points us in another direction: Victory is in Jesus’ veins! And it’s through him that we are transformed.**

“Fix your eyes on .... Jesus [not self, not within] the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb 12:1-3)

It led to observable obedience.

- People would not have known about their faith if they were “private Christians.”
- Their faith was known because it was observable.
- Romans 12 shows something of the context of their faith, “Bless those who persecute you” (12:14)... “Don’t be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (12:21)
- In ch 16, we get a feel for more of the opposition: “For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you ... The God of peace will soon crush Satan over you” (16:19-20)
- In verse 16 – Paul will talk about being “unashamed of the gospel.”
- That was a big calling for Roman Christians who faced persecution.

**What would create such obedience in the midst of opposition?**

Look back at verses 6-7.

- affections for God – they “belong to Jesus” and “are loved by God.”
- Ray Ortlund, “The felt love of God produces heroic Christians.”
- Great faith flows from knowing this great love.

**It was known throughout the world.**

- While Paul is using some measure of hyperbole with the phrase “all the world,” the fact remains that the faith of the Roman Christians amidst opposition had made its way around the Christian grapevine.
- When you read the NT, you find that the early Christians had a clear awareness that they were part of a “worldwide communion” of saints.
- One writer called this “the Holy Internet.”
- Believers often traveled widely, visited each other, wrote to one another, and shared literature with one another (in Bird, 37).

That’s instructive for us.

- We love the local church, but we we are also part of a worldwide church.
- We should serve and love and pray for the global church
- And we should be grateful to God that we are part of such a church!
- **Illustration: A29, Phone Call last week... Denver... Amazing**

**B. Prayer of Intercession (9-10a)**

**V. 9:** Paul tells the readers that he serves God – who could vouch for the truth of what he is saying– “serves God” with “my spirit” “in the gospel of His Son.”

- You can hear the passion for God in Paul here.

- **Serve** (“**latreuo**”) can be rendered “**worship,**” or “**priestly service.**” (Rom 12:1-2)
- He draws attention to his vertical life – his **worship of God in all of life.**
- It’s a word used in the second commandment to not “**serve other gods**” (Ex 20:5).

Believers are to perform **worshipful service to God, not begrudging service to God.**

- **Roses on Valentine’s Day (I needed to recovery after last week’s comment!)... “Why did you do this?” The wrong answer is, “I had to... I didn’t want to...”**
- Ministry which focuses on “**the gospel of His Son**” is **a privilege!**
- I do it with all “**my spirit**” – **with everything in me, by the power of the Spirit.**

**V. 10a:** He never ceases to mention the Romans in his “**prayers**”

- **Paul regularly mentioned his constant prayers for the church in other letters (1 Cor 1:4; Eph 1:16; Phil 1:4; Col 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2).**
- He has **been away** from the Roman saints **physically,** but his heart has **not been away** from them **spiritually.**
- Notice here that Paul wants to go to Rome, but he knows if he can’t be there, he can still pray for the church – and that **matters!**
- He does NOT say, “**I can’t get to Rome, so maybe I will do something for you once I arrive.**”
- **No, your prayers for the saints around the world matters!!!**
- **Prayer is ministry; it’s not just a routine, or something you do before you do ministry.**
- Paul is even praying for people **he had never met.** We can and should too.
- Intercessory prayer mattered to Paul.

### **C. Prayer of Submission (10b)**

The elephant in the room was **why had Paul not already visited Rome?**

- **The great apostle, who has never visited the most influential city of the time?**
- Rome was **the capital of the Roman Empire** and therefore **the most strategic city for Christian missions.** Population: estimated at over **4,000,000.**
- **Nero (A.D. 54–68)** was reigning as emperor in his early and more sane days.
- **Paul explains a bit of the reason, conveys his affection for the saints, and provides insight into his prayer life.**
- **If there were any questions about his ministry or motives, Paul attempts to answer them.**

“**that somehow by God’s will I may not at last succeed in coming to you.**”

- Paul is saying, “**Visiting you is at the top of my to-do list.**”
- **verse 13** has been “**prevented**” from doing so...
- “**Don’t get the wrong impression about me...**”
- He hasn’t **not visited them because of disinterest,** but because he has been “**prevented.**”

- At the end of the letter, he explains why: **He has been busy preaching the gospel from Jerusalem around to Illyricum (Rom 15:17-23).**
- **We also know from the rest of Scripture that he has also been tending to church problems from Antioch, Galatian, Corinth, Thessalonica, and a few stints in prison, beatings, and oh yeah, writing Scripture!** That's a full life!

But his prayer is to come to them soon, but **he submits that to "God's will."**

- Paul expresses his desires, but He knows **God is ultimately in charge.**
- **He's not paralyzed by God's sovereignty.**
- **He expresses his desire, and then leaves it to God.**

He seems to infer that some obstacles have been removed; but **we know from Acts that more trouble awaited Paul.**

- **He would eventually make it to Rome, but only after being mobbed, arrested, imprisoned, and surviving a shipwreck! He came to Rome in chains.**
- **We never know what awaits us!**
- This letter had reached them about **three years before he got to Rome!**

**Acts 28:11ff.** Some of the Roman believers decided to meet Paul along the way (v. 15).

- Some others met him at the famous Forum, or market of Appius, which was about forty-three miles from Rome and lacked a great reputation.
- Others met Paul at Three Taverns (**great name for a Pub!**), **10 miles closer to the capital.**
- But he eventually Rome, just as Jesus promised (**Acts 23:11**)

**App:** **So this is the first passion that we see which drove Paul: communion with God.** Does it drive you? Do you have a vibrant prayer life filled with – thanksgiving, intercession, submission to God's will?

**Do you find your heart filled with anxiety?**

- **I was talking with a counselor last week, and he was sharing how anxiety is so rampant.**
- **Paul tells the Philippians to relieve anxiety through prayer.**

**6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by **prayer** and **supplication** with **thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (4:6-7)

**Carson: "I have yet to meet a chronic worrier who enjoys an excellent prayer life"**

**Paul was a praying minister.**

**Later, he will write more about prayer like this:**

"Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." (**12:12**).

That's a great life verse!

## #2: Concern for the Church (1:11-13)

We see here why Paul longs to see go to Rome

**1. To Strengthen the Saints (11):** “to impart some spiritual gift to strengthen you”

- Paul **wants to bless the church.**
- He doesn't mention a particular gift, but I assume it is his **teaching and leadership.**
  - Rom 12:6-8, he lists a (non-exhaustive) number of gifts for building up one another

**Paul wants to strengthen their faith so that they will be more firm and fruitful.**

We may use **speaking gifts** to build up the body (“teaching, leading, Rom 12:7-8)

**1 Thess 3:2-3**

“We sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith, that no one be moved by these afflictions.”

- This is why you need Christians in your life – **to establish and exhort so you can endure afflictions!**

When David is being pursued by Saul, Jonathan comes to David, and the writer says he “strengthened his hand in God” (**1 Sam 23:16**). He then proceeds to tell David about God's promises (**23:17**).

- That's one of the ways we strengthen others, **by reminding them of the promises of God.**

We may use **“serving gifts”** to alleviate the burdens of others to make them more firm and fruitful (Gal 6:1-2; 1 Pet 4:10-11; “mercy” “serving” – Rom 12:7-8)

We may use **financial gifts** to build up the body, “the one who contributes, with generosity [Rom 12:8).

- Example: Austin Stone – Every time I talk to my pastor friends in Austin about the history of their church, they never fail to mention a young business man, who was extraordinarily generous and mission.... making up the difference each week...

**2. For Mutual Encouragement (12):** “you and I may be mutually encouraged”

Mutual encouragement is an important part of **Romans 14:1-15:13**

- “Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.” (**15:3**)
- Motivation: “For Christ did not please himself....” [but became a substitute for us] (**15:4**)

**Don't tear down a brother or sister, but build them up... Live for their good...**

**Paul** – like all Christians --- **needed encouragement.**

- He also needs their assistance to go to Spain.

## **You need other believers, and other believers need you.**

- **Why do I need the church?"** You need to be built up. And the church needs you!
- **It's sad to see people use their gifts everywhere except in the local church.**
- **"Each has receive a gift, employ it" (1 Pet 4:10)**
- **Freely you have received, now freely give!**

### **3. To Have a Harvest (13):** "in order that I may reap some harvest among you..."

- Here's another example of the missional thrust of the letter.
- **"Harvest."** Paul probably has in mind **an increased number of people becoming Christians and the strengthening of the faith among the Roman Christians.**
- **"But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life" (6:23)**
- Paul wants to see people free!

### **What drove Paul? Here's a big one: a concern for the church.**

"Apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches" (2 Cor 11:28).

### **#3: Calling to Preach the Gospel to Everyone (1:14-15)**

Paul's burden to preach the gospel is stated in various places in the NT, like **1 Cor 9:16**. Here we see that **burden/obligation**.

#### **A. Preaching to Every Kind of Person (14)**

- Rome was filled with all kinds of people – **Greeks, Barbarians, civilized, brutish, wise, and unlearned.**
- Paul says that I'm under **obligation** to them **all**.
- He expresses a burden/moral obligation to speak the gospel to people.

**App:** We can't keep the good news to ourselves – we must tell others about it.

- From the scholars at **Duke to the immigrant community trying to learn English. To those who sake "Coke," "Pop" or Soda.**
- And everyone in between. **To the kids to the elderly.**

#### **B. Preaching to Believer and Unbeliever (15)**

**"eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome"** – is probably a reference to both those in the church who need the know the gospel better, and those in Rome in general who were not believers.

**"Both initial evangelism and the strengthening of believers is in Paul's mind" (Schreiner)**

- The gospel is for both **evangelism** of unbelievers and **edification** of believers.
- Obviously **unbelievers** need the gospel, for as verses 18-3:20 will explain, they are guilty before a holy God, and it's only through Jesus that they can be saved.

- The **believers** needed a better grasp of various gospel doctrines, like **how the Jews and Gentiles were united in Christ**; and why they should **get on board with Paul's mission to Spain**.
- They needed to learn how to **“live worthy of the gospel”** (Phil 1:27)
- He will preach the gospel to the unconverted, and **gospelize** the converted.

#### #4: Convictions about the Gospel (1:16-17)

**Paul arrives at his thesis: The gospel is the saving power of God in which the righteousness of God is revealed.**

This is the “nerve center” of the letter, a central claim, or proposition that Paul will explain and defend.

- 1:18-3:20 – No One Is Righteousness
- 3:21-5:21 – Being Declared Righteous (Positional Righteousness)
- 6:1-8:39 – Being Slaves to Righteousness (Practical Righteousness)
- 9:1-11:36 – Defending the Righteousness of God
- 12:1-15:13 – Living a Righteous Life (Practical Righteousness)

He is **“not ashamed of the gospel.”**

- This is a roundabout way of saying, **“I am proud of the gospel.”**
- **Some thought he should be ashamed of the gospel.**
- Paul says to the Corinthians that this message is **“foolish”** to some people – for it's a **stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles** (1:23).

**What's foolish about it? Oh, everything (!) if you don't have eyes to see:**

- There is One Triune God – not many gods, nor an impersonal consciousness at the heart of the universe – and this God created the world.
- Humans have a wicked heart, and are radically sinful
- The single most important event in the history of the world is Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection
- Jesus atoned for our sins on the cross; he didn't merely give an example of sacrifice to follow.
- God raised Jesus bodily, not just “spiritually.”
- Jesus is Lord over all things.
- Jesus is the only way to salvation; there aren't many ways.
- Being born again is a real experience, and the Holy Spirit really indwells us.
- The church is made up of the redeemed who make known the manifold wisdom of God; are not some religious society of backwards people with Victorian morals.
- At the return of Jesus everyone will bow and confess that He is Lord – every Jew, Muslim, Hindu, atheist, Scientologist, Baptist, etc.
- There will be a final judgment, and Jesus will separate the sheep and the goats; one group will perish and the other will have a glorious inheritance.

**Many mock such affirmations!**

- They say, “**You should be embarrassed by such beliefs.**”
- Romans, “**We are too sophisticated to believe that archaic stuff.**”
- The **early graffiti** showed a crucified man with the head **of a donkey**, mocking a young man for worshiping Jesus.
- Times Square: “**Keep the Merry, Dump the Myth.**”

**Paul says, “I’m not ashamed.”**

**Preachers are told to do something else.**

- Madonna used to sing, “**Papa don’t preach**” and now people want pastors to do everything but preach these things!

We have **two options**: (1) **abandon the gospel** out of embarrassment, or (2) **embrace the shame.**

**I say we must stand with Paul!**

**We must not be ashamed when we are shamed!**

Jesus said to his disciples, “**If you are ashamed of me in this generation I will be ashamed of you when I come again.**” (para, Mark 8:38)

**Paul tells us some important truths about this gospel that he’s so proud of.**

**1. The gospel is God’s power for salvation (16a)**

The very message that people consider foolish actually contains the power of God for salvation.

**1 Cor 1:17**, “Christ ... sent me to preach the gospel, not with words of eloquent wisdom, **lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.**”

- If you try to clean the gospel up, you lose it.
- It can’t be domesticated.
- It is a message about a bloody Savior and an empty tomb.

**1 Cor 1:18** – “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

**Rom 1:16**: The gospel is simply “about” the power of God (though it is), but that **it contains the power of God** – in the sense that **God actualizes his saving work through it.**

**Bird, “The gospel is a speech-act, in that it not only announces the way of salvation, but actualizes the salvation in those who hear it with faith.... The gospel manifests God’s death-defeating, curse-reversing, evil-vanquishing, devil-**

crushing, sin-cleansing, life-giving, love-forming, people-uniting, super-über-mega-grace power that results in salvation.”

### 1 Thess 1:4-5a

<sup>4</sup> For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup> because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

Several years ago I went to Athens for the Olympics (not to compete but evangelize). I remember feeling very intimidated at this task. What confidence did our little team in seeing anyone converted? As I thought about it, I first preached to myself all the reasons I should have confidence in speaking the gospel.

- **Jesus promised to build his church** – He’s sovereign.
  - Jesus told Paul, “I have people in this city.” (Acts 18)
- **The Spirit of God opens people’s hearts to believe** (Acts 16)
- **And here is a third major reason for confidence: the gospel is the power of God for salvation. It does the work!**

**Our confidence is not in our ability. Our confidence is in God and the gospel!**

“**salvation**” is fairly broad and denotes a *rescue*.

- It’s both “already” and “**not yet.**”
  - In **Romans 5:1 and 8:1** we see some beautiful “already” aspects – **justification and peace with God.**
  - In Romans **8:23, 13:11**, we see some “not yet” dimensions, **the redemption of our bodies.**
  - It is a glorious salvation!
  - We are **saved from something terrible** and **for something glorious!**
2. **The gospel is for everyone**, “to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” (16b)
- We must proclaim the gospel to everyone.
  - The priority of the Jews here reflects a **historical reality.**
  - **God chose Israel, but not just for Israel’s sake, but so that they would be “a light to the nations” (Is 42:6; 49:6).**
  - A **transformed Israel would transform the world.**
  - But both **Jew and non-Jew have the same need: salvation through Jesus.**

### 3. The gospel reveals God’s righteousness (17)

The phrase “righteousness of God” here has led to great debates...

- I am going to cut to the chase and say that I think Paul has two things in mind: both (1) **God’s righteous activity** and (2) **human receptivity.**

- **God's Activity:** God demonstrates his righteous character in his saving actions.
- **Human receptivity:** God bestows a righteous status on unrighteous people.
  - Luther, "Gateway to Paradise"

**Stott:** "The righteousness of God is God's righteous initiative in putting sinners right with himself, by bestowing on them a righteousness which is not their own, but his."

**Verse 18ff** explains why we need a new status: we are unrighteous! (next week)

**3:21-26** unpacks how we receive this new status by faith:

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup> Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith

- Paul puts it concisely in **2 Corinthians 5:21**
- **Our status has changed!**
- **Jesus takes our punishment**, and through our union with him, we **have received his righteousness.**

**The righteousness that God requires from us is the righteousness that God has provided for us in Jesus.**

#### **4. The Gospel is received by Faith (17)**

This is already stated in verse 16, "to everyone who believes."

We embrace Jesus by "faith."

It's a peculiar construction "**from faith for faith**"

- Is this (1) God's faithfulness to human faith; from (2) Jewish faith to Gentile faith; from (3) Christ's faithful life to our faith; or (4) faith from start to finish.

Usually Paul uses this term to talk about **the instrument** by which we receive the saving benefits of Jesus' death and resurrection. That's certainly the case in Romans.

- In light of that, Paul is saying that salvation is by "faith from beginning to end" or "**start to finish**" (NLT)
- To be sure real faith results in "obedience" (v. 5), but the whole Christian life is a life of **faith from start to finish.**

**17b:** To underscore that this is consistent with the rest of Scripture, Paul quotes **Habakkuk 2:4.**

- Paul quotes from the OT in this letter more than his other letters together.
- There are at least **61 direct quotations** from **14 different books.** And more echoes.
- **Psalms and Isaiah** are the most frequently quoted.

**Paul's simple point is that faith is the ways in which one stands right before God. The whole Bible is teaching us this.**

**To the Unbeliever: Believe!** You can't *earn* righteousness; it must be *received*.

- Believe on Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.
- Turn from sin and idols and trust in the Savior.

**To the Believer: Be Unashamed of the Gospel**

**Don't** value what people think about you more than faithfulness to Jesus.

We must take on the mindset of the saints that have gone on before us.

When the Bishop Polycarp of Smyrna was put on trial, he was told to swear allegiance to Caesar and to curse Christ.

He responded:

"Eighty and six years have I served him, and never did me any wrong: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?"

Amen, I'd rather have Jesus than all the fame and comforts of this world...

Keep standing for Jesus even though you get cramps in your thighs....

**When are we tempted to be ashamed of the gospel?**

**Bird:**

- I am ashamed of the gospel when I am afraid to tell it.
- I am ashamed of the gospel when I'm too intimidated to uphold it.
- I am ashamed of the gospel when I'm too lazy to teach it.
- I am ashamed of the gospel when I'm too selfish to live a life worthy of it.
- I am ashamed of the gospel when I make other things the center of fellowship.

- I am ashamed of the gospel when I affirm any political, economic, or social position that denies what the Lord Jesus taught about the poor, the orphan, the sick, the elderly or the homeless.
- I am ashamed of the gospel when I make excuses for the unchristian behavior of my political heroes.
- I am ashamed of the gospel when I spend more money on chocolate than charity.
- I am ashamed of the gospel when my social life becomes more important than my church life.
- I am ashamed of the gospel when I spend more time combing my hair than active in prayer.

If we are unashamed, we will live a life of faith centered on the crucified and risen King Jesus -- and living as if His opinion of us matters more than anyone else's, because it is before Him that we will one day give an account of ourselves.

**Where does such boldness come from?**

**Acts 4:29-31** – the church is being pressured; they pray, the Spirit fills them, and they speak “with boldness.” (31)

Let us pray to that end now.