

## Romans: Verse-by-Verse

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### Romans 1:8-10

- **Paul: Credentials and Introductions:**

Paul writing to a group of Jewish and Gentile Christians who don't know a lot about him. They probably know him by reputation, but not personally.

Similarity: Jesus at Caesarea Philippi: "Who do people say the Son of Man is? The disciples: "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." (Matthew 16)

John McArthur: "... We tend to see Paul as a strong, resolute, determined, hard, confrontive, bold, dynamic individual. ...We also see him as a brilliant, logical, astute genius, a definitive theologian ... but I have to add a third word; he's also an intimate.

- **Paul's Intentions:**

"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation." -- Romans 15:20

Paul's simple intention: He has a great deal of concern about their spiritual maturity. He wants to assure them of their faith – while assuring himself that they have correctly understood the gospel.

- **The Key to Verses 8-16:**

The source of Paul's pastoral heart: ASV:"I serve in my spirit." NIV: "I serve with my whole heart".

Paul's background -- Raised in Judaism; knowledgeable of the

external religion of the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, and Chief Priests. Much of what was left of the Jewish priesthood was external -- wrapped up in mechanical production of rites and traditions; shallow, lifeless, and superficial.

**Jesus knew that as well.** Do you remember what happened on the last day of the great feast in Jerusalem? (See Leviticus 23)

The priest's ceremonial rite at the Pool of Siloam: drawing water as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' interruption of the ceremony: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." (John 7:37-39)

- **Jesus' Purpose:** Offering the people of Israel an opportunity to move from mere symbolism to reality.
- **Paul's Purpose:** Like his Master, Paul wanted to see real, spiritual life among the Romans: "For God is my witness, **whom I serve in my spirit** in the gospel of his Son..."

Paul: "My service to the gospel is not external. It is not merely intellectual. It is not merely philosophical. See: Romans 15:17-19.

Paul's use of Greek word for service or "to serve": "latreuō". Used throughout the New Testament for religious service -- service to God -- (except for two times it is used in the context of idols).

The same word translated as the word "worship": The apostle saw his service in the gospel as a form of worship. Not external, but internal. He's making the same contrast between the external, shallow displays of Judaism in his era, versus life in the Spirit. See: Romans 12:1.

Serving in the Spirit -- Philippians 3:2-3: True circumcision is not the outward cutting of man's flesh, but the inward transformation of a man or woman's heart at conversion.

"We put no confidence in circumcision. We do not believe it provides us entrance into the family of God. We no longer serve God in external traditions and rites. We put no confidence in these outward ceremonies.

As the "true circumcision", we worship God in the Spirit. We offer ourselves to God as our spiritual worship.

- **Paul: Service and Worship:**

Do you remember what Paul said to the captain and the entire group on that ship out in the Nor'easter on the Mediterranean Sea? Just when they all expected to die Paul said to them:

Acts 27:23-26: "Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve ...

2 Timothy 1:3: "I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers."

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- **Conclusion:** True worship is true service. It is the foundation of ongoing relationship to God.

Paul wants those he is planning on seeing and ministering among to know that his ministry is from the heart. It is not a lifeless, external ministry that some would offer them. No, this gospel ministry has an internal, beating heart.

This ministry has the power to transform lives. They should expect nothing less when he comes to see them.