

## Romans: Verse-by-Verse

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### Romans 1:8-12

**Last time:** Paul's description of ministry as he "serves God from his spirit"; he serves with his whole heart:

This is not shallow, superficial, tradition-laden, lifeless religion. No, what Paul describes is a ministry that produces transformation, that causes lives to be different than they were before.

- **Roman Faith**

Verse 8: *"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world."*

"I thank my God"... typical of Paul's theological wording: For Paul, Christ is central to all of God's activities towards humans. Paul doesn't just say, "I thank God", but "I thank *my God*". See: Psalms 3:7; 5:2; 13:3;

Rome's faith is known in "all the world". Greek expression: "en holo kosmo" means their faith has become known throughout the Roman Empire. See: Colossians 1:23.

- **"God is my Witness"**

Verses 9-10: "God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times..."

"God is my witness" represents an oath that was used by Paul on other occasions: Galatians 1:20; Philippians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:10

God is acting as the surety for Paul's statement that he has earnestly prayed for the Romans – even if he has been unable to visit them up to this point. "Can God testify to my prayer life"? (Compare Acts 6)

- **“Where’s (Waldo) Paul the Apostle?”**

10. Paul writes, “... And I pray that now at last by God’s will the way may be opened for me to come to you.”

Paul is making it clear that he had wanted to come to Rome before this point – which is really fairly late in his ministry. He will pick up on this note again in verse 13: “I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now)...”

“I do not want you to be unaware.” Compare this statement to those in: Romans 11:25; 1 Corinthians 10:1; 1 Corinthians 12:1; 2 Corinthians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

Paul had the desire to go to Rome, but not the ability. Three possible reasons Paul hadn’t made it to Rome yet:

1. Spiritual opposition: See 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18

2. The scope of the work that Paul was engaged in throughout the eastern portion of the empire: 2 Corinthians 11:27-28

3. God’s Will; it just wasn’t time; it just wasn’t God’s will at that time. God did not allow Paul to visit Rome because the outcome was going to be Paul’s death! Compare Acts 16:6-7

As Paul writes this epistle from Corinth he notes, “I pray that now at last by God’s will the way may be opened for me to come to you.” He hopes that when he finishes yet another tour of service in Jerusalem that God will allow him to go on to Rome.

- **Paul’s Motivation To Go To Rome:**

Verse 11: “I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.”

Greek language here: So that he might impart to them some “charisma pneumatikon” – some spiritual gift that will make them strong.

Literal phrase: “I want to impart to you a gift of the Spirit”.

- **Amplified:** For I am yearning to see you, that I may impart and share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen and establish you; (Amplified Bible - Lockman)
- **Wuest:** for I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you resulting in your being stabilized (Eerdmans)
- **Young's Literal:** for I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, that ye may be established;

Paul doesn't say what spiritual gift he desires to impart to the Romans, but it's clear that it was something that the entire body of Christ would receive to strengthen their faith. (Compare with Acts 19 at Ephesus)

### **No One-Way Street:**

Verse 12: “...that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.”

**That's humility.** The man who preached in more places than any other apostle is expecting to receive something spiritual from his friends. The man who has imparted spiritual gifts to countless other Christians is expecting that his faith will be encourage by the Roman believers.

What an example to all of us. We can never be so mature, so aware of God's Word, so experienced in the things of God that we should imagine no one else has anything to offer us. That attitude is the epitome of pride.

Paul, who was probably the greatest apostle of them all said to his new friends: “I expect that you and I will be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.”