

April 21, 2015

The Eager Spirit

Romans 1:15 (NASB), **“So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.”**

Most of us have activities that we *love* to do, whether it be playing a game of golf, or riding a bike, hunting, jogging, hiking, skiing, or simply reading a good book. If we truly love these activities we are often **“eager”** to participate in them. How many of us though are eager to serve the Lord and the cause of the Gospel?

As we have traveled together these past few weeks through Romans 1:8-15 we have seen what the marks of genuine Christian service are. The marks of genuine service are: a thankful spirit, a concerned spirit, a willing and submissive spirit, a loving spirit, a humble spirit, a fruitful spirit, and an obedient spirit. As we conclude our look at these marks we see here in verse 15 the mark of the eager spirit.

Paul was always eager to faithfully serve the Lord. Paul had an external obligation to serve the Lord and to minister to His people but that did not prevent him from having an internal desire to fulfill that obligation. He tells the brothers and sisters in Rome that he was not only willing but **“eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.”**

We see this determination from Paul elsewhere in the New Testament. Specifically in Acts 20:22-24 when he is on his way to Jerusalem and he knew that he would be in great danger when he arrived there. **“And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.”** In his spirit Paul was compelled to go because that was God’s will for him. This is why he says in verse 24 of that passage, **“But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.”** Paul understood as he wrote in Philippians 1:21 that for him **“to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”** He also wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:8, **“we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”**

Paul had the same level of concern for the Roman believers as he did for those in Colossae, to whom he wrote in Colossians 1:24, **“I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.”** How many of us have such a concern for the salvation and spiritual

growth of others that we will **“rejoice”** in hardship and suffering? I fear not many of us as we have become addicted to comfort and are ruled by the never ending quest for the American Dream.

You see life had but one value for the apostle Paul: to do the work of the Lord. He was consumed by an eager and burning desire to serve God, which then included serving others in the name of Christ. That absolute commitment to serving the Lord was shared by a man named Epaphroditus who we learn in Philippians 2:30, **“came close to death for the work of Christ.”** Godly servants like Paul and Epaphroditus and many others throughout the centuries are in the words of John MacArthur “like racehorses in the gate or sprinters at the starting blocks. They cannot wait to get on with the race of serving Christ.”

Are you eager to serve the Lord? Do you have a burning desire to share the gospel and to minister to those in need? Or are you like so many of us; addicted to comfort and ease?

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