Intro: 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you 10 always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— 12 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. 14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

• If you are called to the ministry, it should consume your thoughts, your motives, and the way you live. This is what we find here in this passage where Paul just opens-up and shows us just how grateful and dedicated to the ministry he was for Christ.

I. Paul thanked God for being in the ministry of the Church – 8 First, *I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you*, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.

a. First He thanked God

• Paul made it a point to point this first. He thanks God though Jesus Christ for being in the ministry. Wow. Lay people would not understand fully what kind of worship and honor this is for those that are in the ministry. We never lose sight of who gave us the privilege to serve Him in the ministry and we will first give Him thanks and praise for choosing us to serve His people and Him.

° 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17

b. He thanked God through Jesus Christ

• Without Jesus Christ you don’t have access to God the Father. This is something that the Jewish leaders had a problem with. See they thought they had total access to God once a year during the sacrifices and the Lord would meet with them, and they could meet with the God in His holy of Holies place, but Jesus said you can’t have access to the Father unless you accept Me. In other words, “Without accepting Me you don’t have access with the Father.

° 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” John 14:6-7

c. He thanked God for all of people he is ministering to

• Without people we, as pastors, have no ministry. So, from your pastor to you and on the behalf of my whole family I would like to thank God through His Son Jesus Christ for giving me the opportunity to minster to my people. Second, I would like to thank my church for giving me the opportunity of serving you as your Pastor. I am indebted to you just as much as you are to Me. So, let’s minister to each other in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

° 3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, Colossians 1:3-5

II. Paul gratefulness to serve the Son of God – 9 For God is my witness, whom *I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son*, that without ceasing I mention you

a. He has a grateful attitude – I serve with my spirit

b. He is grateful to serve Jesus – In the gospel of His Son

c. He is grateful for the ministry of continuation – that without ceasing I mention you

• He had such a passion for Christ and the church ministry that it was infused in his spiritual DNA (Drive Nobility Attitude). Once you are called, God will infuse in you the drive, the nobility of humility, and having the right attitude to minister. He prayed, worked, and toiled on the spiritual soil of the church and loved every minute. This is the difference between men that are called by God, and those who are seeing the ministry as just a job. One sees it as a very exciting opportunity to serve the Lord in ministry, even in her darkest of days, and someone who will leave just as soon as the newness wears off or when the first signs of trouble come, and when the commitment comes due, they run.

° 8 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 1 Peter 3:8

III. There was a need to pray for the Church – 9 *For God is my witness*, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, *that without ceasing I mention you*

a. Paul calls for God to be a witness to his prayer for the church

• This is not slag words of slander nor is this using God’s name in vain, it really means that God is his witness, and this is powerful enough for all who read to accept as gospel truth. Imagine who would you rather have a being a witness for your ministry: God or someone else?

° 22 Because of them this curse shall be used by all the exiles from Judah in Babylon: “The Lord make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire,” 23 because they have done an outrageous thing in Israel, they have committed adultery with their neighbors’ wives, and they have spoken in my name lying words that I did not command them. I am the one who knows, and I am witness, declares the Lord. Jeremiah 29:22-23

b. Paul prayed for Christian’s he did not know

• Paul did not start the church in Rome. It was started from Christians from the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. But it was such an important ministry Paul had to be involved in its survival and well-being.

° 5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, *and visitors from Rome*, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” Acts 2:5-11

IV. There is a passion for ministry – 10 always in my prayers, asking that somehow *by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you*. 11 *For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you*— 12 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.

a. Paul wanted to teach spiritual gifts to Rome

• The word impart (metadidōmi) means to teach or share knowledge on spiritual gifts that Paul wanted to show them how to use correctly. Some gifts we still use and some gifts we no longer need to use due to the vast use of the word of God.

° 10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10, 11

b. Paul has a deep longing to see the Roman believers

• The passion for ministry is deep in Paul’s spiritual DNA (He had such a passion for Christ and the church ministry that it was infused in his spiritual DNA (Drive Nobility Attitude). It does not matter who it is; it maybe a man that fell asleep and fell out of a window and died, or a group of people He has never seen, his ministry is God’s ministry, and he ministered to them equally with passion and conviction.

° 22 The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. 23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Romans 14:22, 23

c. Paul has a passion to bear fruit for Christ – This could mean two things:

1. Souls are going to be saved in the ministry

• Let’s make this a very clear point: CHRIST DOES THE SAVING IN OUR MINISTRY! When we say that we lead someone to Christ it is just that, we are leading them to Christ, we are not saving them. I have had for a long time a problem when a ministry says that he won someone to the Lord as if he was doing the saving. Paul was leading, preaching, and teaching his way through the ministry and the Lord was doing the saving. It really is the Lord’s ministry when it comes down to it, and not ours.

2. Christians need to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit

• He just said he wanted to teach them on how to use their gifts and there is nothing more important that teaching Christians on how to use the fruit of the Spirit wisely. Being able to teach other Christians on how to use the fruit of the Spirit is just as important as leading a soul to Christ. One saves us from hell and the other teaches us how to stay on the road to heaven.

° 13 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Matthew 7:13, 14

V. There is an eagerness to fulfill the Great Commission – 14 *I am under obligation* both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 *So I am eager to preach* the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

a. The obligation to that ministry has no bounds – This is the responsibility:

1. To the Greeks – Those who are the enemies of the Christians

2. To the barbarians – Those that others see as a lost cause

3. To the wise – Those who are intelligent and have common sense

4. To the foolish – Those who think they don’t need Christ

• As I have just mentioned in the previous verse; this is God’s ministry. He gives the choice to select a few to minister to the world. It is not a glorious title by the world’s standards, it causes a lot of pain and suffering to your wife and children, but I’m obligated to do what God has called me to do. And yes, I will make mistakes and do things that is hypocritical at times, but I’m obligated to carry out the gospel no matter the cost, wherever that may take me.

b. There will always be a burning desire for ministry – For those who are truly called

• It will never go away. You won’t retire from it. You can’t quit it. The calling will constantly be a burning flame deep inside of you that you can’t contain. Jeremiah said that was a “burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot”

° 8 For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, “Violence and destruction!” For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. 9 If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,” there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. Jeremiah 20:8, 9