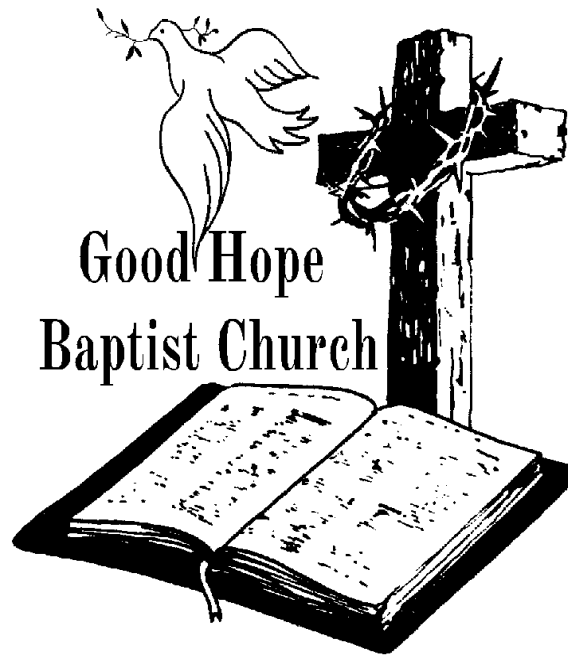


The "I Am" Christian

Romans 1:14-17



Good Hope
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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FOCAL Read Responsively Romans 1:14-17 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. (15) So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. (16) **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.** (17) **For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.**^{KJV}

Humans often define themselves by what they possess. A *prosperous* man defines his life by his riches, by the size of his bank account. A *pretty* woman will, quite often, define her life by her beauty and by the number of men seeking her attention. A man of *property* will often define his life by how much land he owns. A *promiscuous* and sinful man will consider himself a great success based on how many "conquests" he has had. A *powerful* woman will consider herself a success only if she has governing power over a large number of people.

The Apostle Paul, however, did not define his life by possessions, property, promiscuity, or power. When He met the Lord Jesus Christ on the Damascus Road he asked the Lord two questions:

Acts 9:5-6 Who art thou, Lord? And Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

These are the same two questions every Christian who is indeed a Christian should have asked, and should have

heeded. "Who are You, Lord?" is asked at the point of salvation. The answer is "I am Jesus whom you have been persecuting". Before we were saved and cared nothing at all about the Lord Jesus, we sinned willfully, frequently, and without care for God or man. Our sins hurt the Lord every bit as much as Paul's sins hurt the Lord. But once we are saved, then as Christians we no longer want to hurt our Lord by sin and by resident evil. **Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2)** we then ask Him - just as Paul asked Him - that second question: "Lord, What wilt Thou have me to do?" If you are a Christian, you want to serve the Lord Jesus. You want to do the things that would be pleasing in His sight.

A prince of God - and the believer is a prince of God by adoption (**Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6**) and through the Blood of Christ - is not defined by possessions, property, promiscuity, or power. A prince is defined by that which his King has entrusted to him. A prince - or princess for you ladies - is defined by the orders of the King. Our King has told us that He has placed the Gospel in our trust. How we handle that which has been entrusted to us is what defines us, and defined Paul. The Apostle Paul was a man whose life was defined by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He made three "I am" statements found in this section of Scripture. Paul said in **verse 14, "I am debtor", in verse 15, "I am ready", and in verse 16, "I am not ashamed"**.

What defines *your* life, dear Christian?

1. I Am Debtor

FOCAL Romans 1:14 I am debtor¹ both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

Word Study The Apostle considered himself to be an ὀφειλέτης, *opheiletēs*, (pronounced *of-i-let'-ace*), an *ower* or *someone who is indebted to another*. His debt was to the **Greeks or the wise, and to the Barbarians or the unwise**.

ὀφειλέτης, *opheiletēs*, (pronounced *of-i-let'-ace*), means "an *ower* or *someone who is indebted to another*". Why would the Apostle consider himself to be indebted to the **Greeks** and to the **Barbarians**?

First of all, the Christian – the person saved by faith in Christ – is under an obligation to God. You were saved *freely* by faith in Christ. God required nothing from you to be saved but that you:

Acts 16:31 ... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ...

You came to the Lord, and were saved. Or let's put it this way: you were saved *because you came to the Lord*.

You said, "Who are You, Lord?" and then realizing

¹ G3781, ὀφειλέτης, *opheiletēs*, *of-i-let'-ace*, From G3784; an *ower*, that is, a person *indebted*; figuratively a *delinquent*; morally a *transgressor* (against God): - debtor, which owed, sinner.

you were a sinner in need of the Grace of God you accepted His free gift. **You were saved by the Lord Jesus.** But now that you are saved, *you - like Paul - are under obligation.* Paul told the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

The Christian belongs to the One Who saved him. The Christian is *indebted to the Lord Jesus.* I do not belong to myself. and you do not belong to yourself. We belong to God! We belong to the Lord Jesus.

The Christian is bought with a price, a great price, a terrible price, an unending price, a priceless price. The Blood that Jesus shed for us bought us eternal salvation. We belong to God forever.

You ask, "But isn't salvation free?" Yes, it is. It is a free gift from God through the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot pay for your salvation. But, dear friends, if you are saved you are obligated to Him. You owe Jesus a debt you can never repay. We sing of our obligation in Church:

**Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.
For nothing good have I**

**Whereby Thy grace to claim,
I'll wash my garments white
In the blood of Calv'ry's Lamb.**

**Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.**

ILLUSTRATE Leith Anderson tells this story about Abraham Lincoln in his book *A Church For The 21st Century* (© 1992). "Abraham Lincoln went to visit a slave auction one day and was appalled at the sights and sounds of buying and selling human beings. His heart was especially drawn to a young woman on the block whose story seemed to be told in her eyes. She looked with hatred and contempt on everyone around her. She had been used and abused all her life, and this time was but one more cruel humiliation. The bidding began, and Lincoln offered a bid. As other amounts were bid, he countered with larger amounts until he won. When he paid the auctioneer the money and took title to the young woman, she stared at him with vicious contempt. She asked him what he was going to do next with her, and he said, "I'm going to set you free." "Free?" she asked. "Free for what?" "Just free." Lincoln answered. "completely free." "Free to do whatever I want to do?" "Yes," he said. "free to do whatever you want to do." "Free to say whatever I want to say?" "Yes, free to say whatever you want say." "Free to go wherever I want to go?" she asked with skepticism. Lincoln answered, "you are free to go anywhere you want to go." "Then I'm going with

you!" she said with a smile.

Jesus did more than just pay cash for us. He did more than Lincoln did for that poor girl. Jesus hung on that Cross, bleeding and dying, for you and for me. The agony He endured was unimaginable. Not just the *physical* agony, but the *spiritual* agony as - upon His sinless Soul - every sin you and I would ever commit were poured out on Him and judged. He stood in my place of judgment - and stood in your place of judgment too!

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.**

**See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?**

**His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er His body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.**

**Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.**

from "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross"

You cannot pay for your salvation - but you and I are debtors to our Lord. We are not only debtors to our Jesus, but we are debtors also to those who came before us. The Church is founded on the Blood of Martyrs, shed

to keep the Gospel of salvation going. These men and women suffered much, giving their all for the Gospel of salvation.

We are debtors to the Church of yesterday, who made it possible through their blood, sweat, and tears, for the Church of today to reach into tomorrow.

We are debtors. We who are saved are debtors to Jesus, debtors to the Church of yesterday. But we are *also debtors to those around us*. Jesus Christ shed His Blood not just for you and I, but for whosoever will. Look again at Paul's words:

FOCAL Romans 1:14 **I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians²; both to the wise, and to the unwise.**

The Christian is a debtor, required of God to carry the Gospel to *whosoever will*. Jesus did not just die for the desirable, the popular, the wise. Jesus Christ died for *all*, for *all are sinners*. Jesus gave Himself for *all*, and wants the Gospel to be carried out to *all*.

Word Study Paul did not just carry the Gospel to the GREEK, but also to the "Barbarians". The word "barbarian" is the Greek (βάρβαρος, BARBAROS).

The word was actually a *mocking word*, derived because the language of the foreigners sounded like "bar bar bar

² G915, βάρβαρος, barbaros, bar'-bar-os, Of uncertain derivation; a *foreigner* (that is, *non Greek*): - barbarian (-rous).

bar bar" in the ears of the Jews and the educated Greeks.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Jesus didn't come for just the best and the brightest, He came for the breaking, and the broken. The less able you are, the more Able our Savior is.

He didn't just come for Israel. He came for all, and was often seen in the presence of prostitutes, tavern keepers, tax collectors, and others that society might consider "undesirable". When we look to Jesus we see the very best, but when we look at those whom Jesus has saved we see the very least. The Scripture says:

Hebrews 2:9-10 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. (10) For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Jesus came to **bring many sons unto glory**, and we who are His by faith are under obligation to share His Gospel with those who are around us.

ILLUSTRATE Imagine with me for just a moment. There is a man on death row scheduled to be executed.

The Judge calls you to his chambers, and tells you that he has decided to offer a pardon to that condemned man, and it is your job to carry the pardon to him. You are flattered, and put the pardon in your coat pocket. On the way home that night your wife calls. Your son has a ball game, and she wants you to go with her to show support for his team. So you go. The next day you get up, and go to work. You can't take a break from work, and by the time you get off it's too late to go to the prison. You plan to go with the pardon that weekend, but your best friend calls up. He has a weekend pass - complete with tickets - to fly to Pebble Beach California for a golfing weekend. You are ecstatic, and go off on a great weekend. On the plane trip home, however, you are listening to the news and learn that the inmate who's pardon you had been carrying *was just executed*. How do you feel about that?

You have been given a pardon that has been issued by the Judge and Maker of all Creation. You cannot make anyone accept the pardon, but you are *obligated to share the possibility of pardon with all*. The Bible says:

Luke 24:46-47 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: (47) And that repentance³ and remission⁴ of sins should be preached in his name

3 G3341, **μετάνοια**, metanoia, *met-an'-oy-ah*, From G3340; (subjectively) *compunction* (for guilt, including *reformation*); by implication *reversal* (of [another's] decision): - repentance.

4 G859, **ἄφεσις**, aphasis, *af'-es-is*, From G863; *freedom*; (figuratively) *pardon*: - deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission.

among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ was under obligation to suffer and die for our sins, and He was under obligation to rise from the grave on the third day. Jesus did His job. Now we who are His are given a Great Commission telling *others the Gospel of God*. If a person will **repent**, that is, **turn away from sin**, and turn toward Jesus Christ then that person shall **have full remission - pardon - from his sins**.

Paul saw himself under obligation or indebtedness to *preach the full Gospel* to those who were **Greek and Barbarians**. The **Greek** or the *wise, the philosopher, the scientist, the evolutionist, the educated* had to hear the Gospel – Paul was obligated to them. He was obligated because Jesus saved him from his sins, and commanded that Paul himself “**go, and teach all nations**”.

Paul did not look at the wondrous buildings the Greeks made, the marvels of architecture, the vast libraries and scholarly colleges and say, “they must be saved, for they are good, educated people”. Paul knew that Jesus commanded that **all nations be taught to observe all things the Master – our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20)**.

Good people don't get into Heaven – saved people get into Heaven. The Greek culture brought many good things with it, but it did not bring Christ.

Romans 10:11-13 For the scripture saith, Whosoever

believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (12) For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. (13) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

2. I Am Ready

It is one thing to feel yourself to be *under obligation*, but it is quite another thing to be **ready** to meet that obligation.

Paul said:

FOCAL Romans 1:15 So, **as much as in me is, I am ready⁵ to preach the gospel⁶ to you that are at Rome also.**

Word Study The word translated as “**ready**” is the Greek (πρόθυμος, PROTHUMOS), which literally means “**forward in spirit**”. The word conveys a sense of *leaning forward*, waiting for opportunity. It could be used to describe the track runner who, leaning forward against the blocks, is ready to spring into action when he hears the starter pistol. Paul was *ready*. He *watched* for

5 G4289, πρόθυμος, prothumos, *proth'-oo-mos*, From G4253 and G2372; *forward in spirit*, that is, *predisposed*; neuter (as noun) *alacrity*: - ready, willing.

6 G2097, εὐαγγελίζω, euaggelizō, *yoo-ang-ghel-id'-zo*, From G2095 and G32; *to announce good news* (“evangelize”) especially the gospel: - declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (the gospel).

opportunities to tell others about Jesus Christ.

Paul was ready, for his lifestyle was such that he was a good representative of Christ.

The reason why many of us are not ready to tell others about Christ is because we *know* that we have been poor representatives of Christ in our daily walk. We are abiding in the world, but not abiding in Christ.

Listen Beloved: No one is perfect! A Christian is a sinner saved by the Grace of God. Yes, we are prone to sin - but we should despise sin. We are fallible - but we should despise that fallibility. There are some professors who sin and then smile, saying "Well, after all, we're all sinners". Dear friends, the Christian should despise sin. The Apostle said:

Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? (2) God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

The Christian saved by Grace grieves sin and leaves sin. When he sins, he confesses that sin to God. We who are saved are saved to serve, not to sin!

Jesus commands those who are His to **abide in Him, to cleave to Him, to cling to Him.**

John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the

branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Paul had surrendered his life to the Lord, not to sin. He knew that others were watching him, so he was ready. Paul lived surrendered to **"the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe (1 Thessalonians 2:13).**

ILLUSTRATE One of the great believers of our Age, Dr. Billy Graham, said of his own life⁷: **"I surrendered my will to the living God revealed in the Scripture. I knelt before the opened Bible and said, 'Lord, many things in this Book I do not understand, but Thou hast said the just shall live by faith. All I have, I have received by faith. Here and now by faith, I accept the Bible as Thy Word. I take it all. I take it without reservations. Where there are things I cannot understand, I will reserve judgment until I receive more light. If this pleases Thee, give me authority as I proclaim Thy Word, and through that authority convict me of sin and turn sinners to the Savior."**

What made Paul such a great witness for Christ was that he was *part of the evidence*. Is there anything different about your life?

Can those around you see Christ in you? Is there anything different about you from the day you were saved? Or do you look the same and act the same as your

unsaved neighbors? **Are you ready to live for Christ? Not if you aren't ready to die for Christ. Paul said "I die daily".**

Paul was ready, because he knew two things were true, and kept them in the forefront of his mind: that he, Paul, had a mission, and *he was mortal*, and that *Jesus Christ was coming soon*.

Whether Jesus called Paul home unexpectedly through the valley of the shadow of death, or whether Jesus split the midnight sky in the Rapture, **Paul was ready.**

He said:

FOCAL Romans 1:15 **So, as much as in me is, I am ready** to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Are you ready?

3. I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel

FOCAL Romans 1:16 For **I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power⁸ of God unto salvation** to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

⁸ G1411, *δύναμις*, *dunamis*, *doo'-nam-is*, From G1410; *force* (literally or figuratively); specifically *miraculous power* (usually by implication a *miracle* itself): - ability, abundance, meaning, might (-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) *miracle* (-s), *power*, *strength*, *violence*, *mighty* (wonderful) *work*.

Word Study The Gospel of Christ is the *δύναμις*, *dunamis*, (*pronounced doo'-nam-is*) or **miraculous explosive power of God**. We get the English words "**dynamite**" and "**dynamic**". If you are a Christian, you should not be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel, like dynamite, can move that which is humanly immovable. The Gospel is powerful, able to change even the most hardened heart.

ILLUSTRATE Are you ashamed of the Gospel? You should not be. A little boy was walking his dog, one you might call a "Heinz 57" dog. A man saw them walking together and asked the young boy, "What kind of a dog is that, son?" The little boy replied, "He's a police dog". The man said, "He sure doesn't look like a police dog". To which the child replied, "That's because he's under cover".

We who believe should not be ashamed of the Gospel of salvation. We **should not be in the Secret Service, or be undercover when it comes to Christ**. I am told that some 60 billion people have lived on this earth since human history began. Of those 60 billion people, only a handful of people have ever made any lasting impact on humanity. Of that handful of people, only *one Person has made a significant change in the lives of His followers*. That Person is Jesus Christ.

When I think of my life, there are many things I've done that I'm ashamed of. But I am not ashamed of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the Good News of salvation available only through Him!

The Gospel of Christ is the Good News of God. Yes, it is bad news that our first parents sinned and plunged all of humanity into spiritual death. Yes, it is terrible that death entered this world through the one man Adam:

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

but the **good news** is that Jesus Christ made payment for our sins on the Cross of Calvary. Salvation has *always* been by faith in God's provision.

1 Peter 2:21-24 ... Christ also suffered for us ... (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

The local Church ceases to be a local Church when the Pastor and its People stop emphasizing the Gospel in order to *emphasize other things*. We are to proudly proclaim that **whosoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved**. It is all of faith. It is all of Jesus!

FOCAL Romans 1:17 For **therein is the**

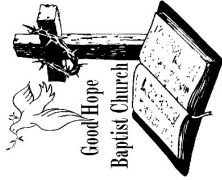
righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Nothing else will produce God's righteousness in a person *but* faith in the Gospel of Christ. Too many local churches keep getting confused by this, keep adding rituals or things to do to *remain* saved. We are saved by faith in the Living God. Once saved by faith the Christian – in love with his Savior and Lord – seeks to serve Him and to grow in His knowledge of Him.

The greatest thing in the world is to know and love the Lord Jesus, to know you are loved of Him. If you are born again by faith in Christ, then you are to share His Gospel. Let Him shine through you. Let others see Jesus in you. This is the most important thing in all the universe.

And if you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, today is the day to call on Him. His Gospel of salvation is for you, just as it is for *whosoever will*.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Living Together In The Love Of God

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Acts 9:5-6; Hebrews 12:2; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6 _____

1. I Am Debtor

Romans 1:14; Acts 16:31; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 1:14; Luke 19:10; Hebrews 2:9-10; Luke 24:46-47; Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 10:11-13

Word Study The word translated "debtor" ὀφειλέτης, *opheiletēs*, (pronounced *of-i-let'-ace*), means _____

Word Study Paul did not just carry the Gospel to the GREEK, but also to the "Barbarians". The word "barbarian" means _____

Additional Notes: _____

2. I Am Ready

It is one thing to feel yourself to be *under obligation*, but it is quite another thing to be **ready** to meet that obligation.

Romans 1:15; Romans 6:1-2; John 15:4; Romans 1:15

Word Study The word translated as "ready" is the Greek (πρόθυμος, PROTHUMOS), meaning _____

Additional Notes: _____

3. I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel

Romans 1:16; Romans 5:12; 1 Peter 2:21-24; Romans 1:17

Word Study The word "power" is the Greek δύναμις, *dunamis* meaning _____

Additional Notes: _____
