



Romans

Right With God

Paul Was Duty-Bound

Lesson Eight

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

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Paul Was Duty-Bound

Have you ever owed someone. It might be that you borrowed money from them. Or, it might be that they had given you a gift and you felt that you should give them a gift in return. However, there is another kind of owing. It is referred to in our Scripture for today as obligation. And, one version of the Bible calls it a debt. But, we are getting a little ahead of ourselves, so let's go back to the beginning of our Scripture selection. Read Romans 1:13-15.

Paul tells the Romans that he has wanted to and planned to go to Rome many times. He says that each time he got ready to go, something kept him from making the trip. We don't know what happened to keep him away, but we can assume that Paul considered it the will of God. He says circumstances beyond his control had kept him from going.

He says that he wanted to go because he wanted to have a harvest among them. The New American Standard Bible quotes Paul as saying that he wanted to "gather fruit" among them. Paul saw his role in missions as one who watches God at work, bringing people to the place of repentance and faith. When that happens, Paul likens the result to a ripe harvest; and he, Paul, has the privilege of participating with God in gathering the ripe fruit. We can be sure that by fruit or harvest, he is speaking of converts...people who trust Jesus as their Savior and ask Him to be their Lord.

Paul considered his ministry an obligation or a debt. He has laid the groundwork for this statement in verse one – he was a servant of Jesus Christ. In verse five, he said that he had been sent to call people from among the Gentiles. In verse nine, he said he was completely sold out to God's service in preaching the Good News. His mission is not only a privilege, serving God, but an obligation. He was duty-bound to share the Good News.

Paul had received many, many blessings from God. This made it his duty to be an ambassador for Christ. Paul owed God big time! But, he also owed the Gentiles. They had significantly contributed to his way of life. His life was greatly influenced by the Gentiles. He had received many kindnesses from the Gentiles. He owed them because God had given Paul the assignment to tell the Good News to Gentiles and they were the harvest to which he had been assigned...where he should gather fruit.

From these verses, the truth ought to be very obvious to us: To whom much is given, much is required. That certainly applies to the fact that all Christians are freely given the Gospel and we have an obligation...we are duty-bound... to share that Good News with others.

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Paul said that he was obligated, or duty-bound, to the Greeks and the non-Greeks. Non-Greeks is translated “barbarians” in some versions of Scripture. Maybe it would be a little easier for us to understand if we said he was obligated to the educated upper-class folks and the under educated lower-class folks. He also said that he was obligated to the wise and the foolish. He distinguished between the wise and the foolish in I Corinthians 1:20. He said that there is a wisdom of this world which is foolish, but that true wisdom comes from God.

We should note that the Paul was not listing these things to say who is worthy and who is not. Paul says that he is obligated to all of them...it is his responsibility to preach the Gospel to all of them. So, everyone deserves to hear and accept God’s Good News.

Let’s also note that Paul refers to this as obligation, his duty. But, he doesn’t consider it a burden at all. Instead, he is eager...he is ready...his great desire is to tell the Good News.

Scripture Memory: “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.” Romans 1:14

*Underlined statements in this Teacher’s Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher’s Guide.

For the Teacher:

Lesson Goal: To encourage students to see how Paul encouraged the church at Rome.

1. He began with the expression, “I do not want you to be unaware...” He used this with the personal pronoun “I” and the plural “we” at least six times in his writing. Each time, he was introducing something he thought his readers might not be expected to know, but which he regarded as very important. Doing this, he emphasized what he was about to say.
2. We don’t know why Paul was prevented from going to Rome. It is likely that he was “forbidden” by God’s Spirit from going just as he was prevented from preaching in Asia by God’s Spirit. (Acts 16:6-8)
3. Jesus put the business of bearing fruit in the context of loving each other. In John 15:12-17. Paul talked about love for the church at Rome. He said they are loved by God (7), that he is thankful to God for all of them (8) and he longs to see them (11).
4. All who receive the Gospel are placed under obligation to share it with others. Minear says, “Obligation to Him who died, produces obligation to those for whom He died. To the extent that Paul was indebted to God for this call, to that very extent he was indebted to those Gentiles for whose sake God had called him.” Schlatter said, “the principle which Jesus had made binding on His disciples had become binding on Paul. His purpose in giving a gift to one disciple was that he might give it to another.”
5. His obligation was to the Greeks and the barbarians. The Greek word is *barbaroi* (*bar’-bar-oi*). The Romans had become the caretakers of the Greek culture. Alexander the Great had spread Greek language and culture across the western world. Note that the word *barbaroi* has a repeated first syllable. It sounds like stuttering...bar, bar. The barbarians were the uncultured...the unsophisticated. The Greeks/Romans looked down on them. Paul intended to go to Spain from Rome. People in Spain would have been known as barbarians by Roman standards.

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Student Worksheet

Paul Was Duty-Bound

=We can be sure that by fruit or _____, Paul is speaking of converts...people who trust Jesus as their Savior and ask Him to be their _____.

=In verse one – Paul was a servant of Jesus Christ. In verse five, he said that he had been sent to call people from among the _____. In verse nine, he said he was completely _____ to God’s service in preaching the _____.

=All Christians are freely given the _____ and we have an obligation...we are _____ - _____... to share that Good News with others.

=Maybe it would be a little easier for us to understand if we said he was _____ to the _____ upper-class folks and the under educated lower-class folks; _____ and the foolish.

Scripture Memory: “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.” Romans 1:14

A Roman Road to Salvation:

Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Everyone is a sinner and needs salvation.

Romans 6:23a “For the wages of sin is death.” The law of God is unchangeable. If someone sins the penalty must be paid, and that payment is death.

Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us.” God loves us so much, according to John 3:16, that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins.

Romans 6:23b “But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The debt for sin is spiritual death, but God, through the death of Jesus on the cross, paid that debt and now everyone can have eternal life. See also, II Corinthians 5:21

Romans 1:9, 10 “That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” To personally receive the gift of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus, you trust God to be what He says He is. Believing that “God raised Him (Jesus) from the dead” is to accept all that the Bible says about God and His Son, Jesus. Then you speak (confess) the words, “Jesus is Lord,” as a statement of faith. Believing “with your heart” means that you believe with your mind and with all that you are.

Romans 10:13 “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” You have the promise of God Himself that if you do what Romans 10:9, 10 says, you will become God’s child and have eternal life.

Romans 12:1, 2 “I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Becoming a Christian is a life-long act of faith and worship.