

# A foray into Faith

## 1. Verses 8-12

1. I am not going to linger long, but it is important to see that Paul is buttering up his audience.
2. He knows, as we have said before, that they only know him by reputation. He wants to make sure that he knows them by reputation as well.
3. This is only natural... if you want someone to listen to you, it is only good sense to butter them up.
4. In fact, Paul does much the same thing in Philemon vv. 1-4
  1. The response in both cases is pretty predictable
  2. Well... I didn't realize I was THAT important.
  3. You put someone in that frame of mind, they are automatically more receptive of what you have to say.

## 2. Verses 13-15

1. I have planned many times to come to see you
  1. This is a natural extension of what Paul was just saying...
  2. He obviously wants them to know that he has not been avoiding them.
2. He wants to come to Rome because it is the center of the known world.
3. He is writing from the far eastern provinces of the empire, he plans on traveling through the heart of the empire, and on to Spain, the far western edge. This is no mean journey.
4. These verses also gives us a sense of Paul's mission, and the composition of these early churches.
  1. We think of Christianity and Judaism as two separate religions, and this happened fairly early on in the process-but long after Paul's ministry.
  2. Paul, and all the apostles for that matter, considered themselves good Jews. In fact, they were good precisely because they had recognized Jesus as the messiah.
  3. We are not doing to dive into this in detail here, because we will spend quite a while diving into this issue when we get to chapters 9-11.
  4. For now all we will say is that: Israel still exists, that is the *true* Israel. The faithful remnant has always been kept by God, and still remains today. The contours of the people of God will shift and change,
5. Why is this significant? Because of who he is called to minister to-Gentiles
  1. Acts 9:19bff
  2. Acts 13:4ff
  3. It isn't until acts 13 that things get difficult
    1. Paul is preaching in a synagogue-to both Jews and "god fearers"
    2. v. 26 talks about the core issue-the Jews in Jerusalem did not see who Jesus actually was.
      1. This is a problem-he was the promised messiah but was missed by the very people looking for him.
      2. Even Paul himself was among those who totally missed it-until that whole Damascus road incident.
    3. In v. 38-39
      1. Paul is proclaiming a gospel not of Torah faithfulness, but of Christ faithfulness.
      2. Christ supercedes the LAW.

4. Do you see how this message would hit the two different parties in the synagogue?
  1. For Jews this is essentially blasphemy. The Law was Gods perfect and holy gift, You kept the law in gratitude for what he did for you.
  2. The Godfearers now no longer have to stand on the outside, they get full access and inclusion without having to undergo adult supervision.
  3. To one group this message is freeing and liberating, to the other it is ugly, backward, and unfaithful to Torah.
5. How do the Jews respond?
  1. vv. 44-48
  2. If political Judaism missed both Messiah and the significance of Messiah, what is the point any longer?
  3. He did what you could never do, and yet you still missed him-there is obviously a disconnect here.
  4. Of course, this is a huge problem. How in the world did they miss Jesus the Messiah? Paul himself reflects on this very specific question in 2 Cor 4:1-6
6. But we digress-lets move to 16-17
  1. The Gospel is not the message of the power of God, the Gospel IS the power of God.
    1. Paul has the idea of Torah in the background here.
    2. Gospel and Torah are perfect counterparts,
    3. Gospel isn't salvation from Torah, it is fulfillment of Torah
  2. Paul says a lot about the law, but he NEVER says it was bad.
    1. Law and Gospel are the perfect pair-both need each other.
    2. Now that Jesus has come the way to keep the law is to have faith in Christ
  3. First for the Jew and then the Gentile
    1. This continues this idea
    2. It is also a reflection on Paul's own experience
    3. Salvation came through Torah keeping for the Jews. But, when the messiah came the boundaries of the people of God changed.
  4. By faith from first to last
    1. Paul is careful to show that this idea of faith by righteousness isn't a new invention.
    2. For Paul it is highly significant that Abraham was declared righteous through faith *before* the law- he will go deep into this later
    3. The logic goes, if someone had righteousness through faith before the law, and the law was fulfilled in the Messiah, then we return to the original idea of righteousness by faith.
  5. The problem for the Jews was not that they kept the law. But that the way into the people of God had changed and they hadn't recognized it.