

# **TO SERVE IN HUMANITY WITH DIVINITY**

**By Titus Chu**

## **MESSAGE TWO: THE OPERATION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL'S HUMANITY WITH DIVINITY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS**

### **A PATTERN OF OUR SERVING LIFE**

All Christians appreciate the Apostle Paul. He was a great servant of the Lord. He fulfilled and completed the Word of God. Without Paul we would not have the kernel of the Bible. Many serving ones admire Paul, yet very few have understood the reasons that he had such great revelations and was so effective in his operation. We can learn these reasons by examining the book of Romans. The book of Romans unveils to us Paul's divine commitment, how this commitment became his constitution, how this commitment and constitution became the content of his labor, and how he in his laboring displayed the humanity of Jesus.

Paul was separated unto the gospel of God<sup>1</sup>. The gospel of God became his divine commitment. This gospel is concerning God's Son, Jesus Christ<sup>2</sup>, so this gospel in operation is "the gospel of His Son."<sup>3</sup> While Paul was enjoying God's Son in both His divinity and humanity, in what He is and what He has accomplished, in His provision and His operation, the gospel of God as the gospel of His Son became the gospel of Paul.

What a marvelous experience. The Son is the substance of the gospel of God. Then the gospel of the Son became the constitution of the Apostle Paul, even to the extent that the gospel of God, the gospel of God's Son, became the Apostle Paul's gospel<sup>4</sup>. What a divine constitution. What a marvelous transformation. Paul, who was a fallen man, a zealous man<sup>5</sup>, a scholarly man<sup>6</sup>, and a chief sinner<sup>7</sup>, was not only regenerated, but even transformed into the image of His Son Jesus Christ<sup>8</sup>.

A man of knowledge became a man of revelation. A man of zealous work became a man of purpose and operation with rich content and substance. He was not a man who merely taught the doctrines he heard or the high truth he knew. He would not boast in his visions and revelations. Rather, Paul presented himself to men with what he was, with what he had, with what had been constituted into him, as a show, a display, so that the gospel could be preached<sup>9</sup>.

Paul lived and walked in the divine and mystical realm. He served in spirit with revelation and according to his constitution<sup>10</sup>. At the same time, he displayed the gospel of God, even the economy of God. This kind of serving must also be our serving. It is not enough to merely hear, know, understand, and speak things of truth. This will not produce effective serving. What we teach must be who we are. How we serve must be a presentation of our person. We should not find ourselves doing some spiritual activity, fulfilling a religious duty, or satisfying some natural zeal. We are here presenting ourselves as those in God's economy controlled by a heavenly vision, constituted with the divine life and truth, and laboring as priests of the gospel filled with the humanity of Jesus according to the divine attributes<sup>11</sup>. Only when we serve in this manner will our serving life be operative and effective.

Paul fully knew the meaning of the gospel. It is the gospel of God, denoting God's economy and focusing on the Son as the center, the content, and circumference of God's economy. The gospel is the good news (Gk. *euangelion*). It suggests a power which can create an operation in the hearer. When Christ is preached, man responds and follows the Lord<sup>12</sup>. Man is enabled to live in Christ and abide in Him.

In ancient times, the word "gospel" had a particular significance. The gospel was a speaking out of the birth of the king, the ruling of a new king or administrator, or the coming of a new age. In this new age there would be abundant harvest, healing and protection. This age would bring forth a bright future. The gospel, "*euangelion*," is God's economy.

The word “gospel” also denoted the offerings and the festivals of this new age (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume, by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, p. 269). Christ is the reality of all our spiritual offerings and spiritual festivals that we may partake of Him joyfully, enjoying His divine dispensing to build up His kingdom.

When the Lord was giving His first message on this earth He declared that the Spirit of God was upon Him<sup>13</sup>. God had anointed Him to announce the gospel to the poor and to preach release to the captives. This is the gospel that Paul preached, and this is the gospel with which Paul was constituted. When we touch the Son we touch the gospel. If a person says he received the gospel, then he received the Son. Similarly, whenever a person would touch Paul, he would touch the gospel. Paul was not the Savior, yet he was saturated with the reality of the gospel. The gospel had gained him, and in his living and service he applied the gospel. The gospel produced a God-man living in him. Through regeneration, Paul enjoyed a *life union* with God in his spirit. Through the process of *mingling*, Paul grew in life by sanctification, renewing, and transformation. Not only did Paul’s life change, even his nature was sanctified. Furthermore, his person became incorporated into Christ. Paul could boast that “to live is Christ.”<sup>14</sup> He was transformed into the image of Christ<sup>15</sup>. His person was *incorporated* with the person of Christ. His serving was a serving of the incorporation of God and man. This means that he served and operated with an uplifted humanity saturated with the divine attributes. This gospel produced an uplifted humanity.

We are fallen men. Our humanity is corrupted and limited. Not only has our humanity become evil, but even the virtues in our humanity are limited. We have limitations in our love, because our love is often defeated by the self life. We have a limited righteousness which is often defeated by our greediness. We have a limited holiness which is often corrupted by worldliness. God cannot use this humanity, even though in this humanity there can sometimes be a religious exercise, a desire to honor and serve God with piety and zealously.

God desires an uplifted humanity. The very gospel, God's economy, brings us organic salvation. When we grow in the divine life facilitated by the divine attributes, an uplifted humanity is produced. This is the humanity God desires. This is the book of Romans, the complete gospel, the high gospel.

In Romans we see the gospel of Paul, which was the gospel experienced by him. In this gospel we also see full salvation. We were condemned under the law<sup>16</sup>, but we are justified in Christ<sup>17</sup>. We were born in Adam, but now we are in Christ<sup>18</sup>. We were in the bondage of the flesh, but now we are in the freedom of the spirit<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, in this gospel we are being renewed and transformed<sup>20</sup>. Ultimately we are being conformed to the image of His Son<sup>21</sup>, awaiting our glorification - the redemption of our body<sup>22</sup>. This was the apostle Paul's vision and experience. This was also his commitment and labor. This is God's eternal plan and also His operative economy. How marvelous it is that the gospel of God is substantiated, realized, partaken of, and enjoyed in the gospel of the Son. The gospel of the Son can be seen, can be made known, and can be touched by us through the matured product of the gospel - the apostle Paul. This is the principle of incarnation. How glorious! Not only did God become a man in Jesus Christ, but this God-man became constituted into Paul. What a glorious work of the Spirit!

Paul's gospel was preached in an uplifted humanity - the humanity of Jesus, a humanity with divinity. The human virtues lived out of this man came from the divine attributes enjoyed by him. The exercise of this humanity became the base of the apostle Paul's serving. His visions and revelations, his constitution and experience, became the content and reality of his gospel. Visions and revelations alone did not produce effectiveness. Rich experiences alone did not produce effectiveness. Paul's operative effectiveness came from his humanity. This we can see throughout the book of Romans.

Let us consider the pattern of Paul's serving life. Paul was so human when he wrote to the saints in Rome. Although he was called to be an apostle<sup>23</sup>, Paul knew that the believers in Rome were called saints<sup>24</sup>. They were beloved of God. Therefore, in Paul's mind, his calling made him a slave of these called saints. His relationship to the saints in Rome was so human. We see his fine humanity throughout his relationship with these saints. He was able to encourage them by being thankful to God for them because of their faith<sup>25</sup>. He showed a life relationship with them through his unceasing prayer on their behalf<sup>26</sup>. He would consider his coming to the saints in Rome as his being prospered in the will of God<sup>27</sup>. He did not consider these believers as an object of his work. Neither did he desire the expansion of his "territory." As an apostle, he desired to see the church in Rome raised up properly. His journey to Rome was not to gain the saints for himself, but to impart some spiritual gift unto them for their establishment in the faith<sup>28</sup>. He considered himself a debtor, ready to announce the gospel to those who were in Rome<sup>29</sup>. What a healthy humanity! This fine humanity was Paul's base to preach the gospel with which he was constituted. Eventually he exhorted the brothers through the compassions of God to present their bodies as a living sacrifice<sup>30</sup>. He also exhorted them to strive together with him in their prayers on his behalf<sup>31</sup>. What an apostleship! What a humanity!

We also see Paul's humanity in his concern for the Israelites in relation to God's purpose. He realized the value of the Israelites according to God's selection<sup>32</sup>. He knew that eventually the whole household of Israel would be saved<sup>33</sup>. But his realizations were not merely doctrine, teaching, or theology. He was so much in the reality of his heavenly teachings that he testified he had great grief and unceasing pain in his heart concerning Israel. In his humanity he could wish that he himself would be a curse for his brothers<sup>34</sup>. His heavenly revelations operated in his person and became his charge, his burden. His life was a result of the truth operating in him, and he labored according to his uplifted humanity.

Even in practical matters Paul had a proper and uplifted humanity. When there were contributions collected for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem<sup>35</sup> Paul was ready to bring the offering to Jerusalem himself. He did not make this journey as some puffed up messenger. Rather, he considered this as ministering to the saints<sup>36</sup>. Even he asked the saints in Rome to pray on his behalf that his service for Jerusalem might be acceptable to the saints and that he might be delivered from those who were disobedient in Judea<sup>37</sup>. It seems as though he should just send someone else to do the work. Yet Paul was willing to risk himself just for the sake of fellowship with the church in Jerusalem and the care for the needy saints there. Paul's humanity was so high!

Finally, Paul exhibited his uplifted humanity by greeting so many of the saints in Rome. He commended sister Phoebe to them<sup>38</sup>. She was a deaconess of a relatively unknown church, Cenchrea. But Paul knew her and cared for her. Paul greeted Prisca and Aquila as his fellow co-workers<sup>39</sup>. He greeted Andronicus and Junia as his kinsmen and fellow prisoners. Paul called Ampliatus beloved. He greeted Urbanus as his fellow worker in Christ, Stachys as his beloved, and Apelles as his approved in Christ. He greeted the households of Aristobulus and Narcissus. He greeted Tryphaena and Tryphosa as those who labor in the Lord. He greeted Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and Rufus's mother as his own mother<sup>40</sup>. What respect and intimacy! What an uplifted humanity!

Paul asked the saints in Rome to greet one another and declared that all the churches of Christ greeted them<sup>41</sup>. These were the churches that Paul served, the churches he produced. Yet because of his humanity, you cannot find in the Bible where Paul considered these churches "his" churches. Rather, Paul testified that these churches were the churches of Christ.

Finally, Paul confirmed that the very God of grace and peace<sup>42</sup> was able to establish them according to his gospel - the proclamation of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery<sup>43</sup>. This was his gospel. This was his labor. Yet he concluded this book with a marvelous praise to the only wise God: “To the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”<sup>44</sup>

**VERSE REFERENCES**

- |                                   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Rom. 1:1                       | 23. Rom. 1:1      |
| 2. Rom. 1:3-4                     | 24. Rom. 1:7      |
| 3. Rom. 1:9                       | 25. Rom. 1:8      |
| 4. Rom. 2:16; Rom. 16:25          | 26. Rom. 1:9      |
| 5. Gal. 1:14                      | 27. Rom. 1:10     |
| 6. Acts 22:3                      | 28. Rom. 1:11-12  |
| 7. 1 Tim. 1:15-16                 | 29. Rom. 1:14-15  |
| 8. 2 Cor. 3:18                    | 30. Rom. 12:1     |
| 9. 1 Cor. 4:9; cf.<br>1 Thes. 1:5 | 31. Rom. 15:30    |
| 10. Rom. 1:9                      | 32. Rom. 9:4-5    |
| 11. Rom. 15:16                    | 33. Rom. 11:26    |
| 12. Matt. 4:19-20;<br>Matt. 9:9   | 34. Rom. 9:2-3    |
| 13. Luke 4:18                     | 35. Rom. 15:26    |
| 14. Phil. 1:21                    | 36. Rom. 15:25    |
| 15. 2 Cor. 3:18                   | 37. Rom. 15:30-31 |
| 16. Rom. 3:19                     | 38. Rom. 16:1     |
| 17. Rom. 3:23-24                  | 39. Rom. 16:3     |
| 18. 1 Cor. 15:22                  | 40. Rom. 16:7-13  |
| 19. Rom. 7:5-6                    | 41. Rom. 16:16    |
| 20. Rom. 12:2                     | 42. Rom. 16:20    |
| 21. Rom. 8:29-30                  | 43. Rom. 16:25    |
| 22. Rom. 8:23                     | 44. Rom. 16:27    |



This article is available online at  
[MinistryMessages.org](http://MinistryMessages.org).

© 2001 Titus Chu

The date and location of this  
message is not known.