"The Marks of True Spiritual Service"
Romans 1:8-13
Pastor John Miller

I. Introduction

A. When God measures a man, He puts a tape around his heart and not his head
B. Paul the Apostle was a man with a big heart! (Contrast with other things about Paul)
C. Paul wanted his Roman readers to know (vv. 8-13)
    1. That he cared about them (v. 8, v. 9, v. 11, v. 13)
    2. That he wanted to come to them
    3. Why he hadn't come to them
    4. Why he wanted to come to them
D. In doing this, Paul opens his heart!
    1. So, we get a revelation of his great love and see the marks of true spiritual service! (v. 8, v. 9, v. 11, v. 13)
E. Why are you serving?
    1. People serve the Lord from many different motives
        a) Some serve because of "legalism" – Earn salvation
        b) Some "fear" what God will do if they don't
        c) Some for "prestige" or "esteem" – To be seen of men
        d) Some for a "position of power"
        e) Some from "peer pressure" – From friends or parents
        f) (Danger for us, you have to; you're paid!)
    2. Ephesians 6:6 – "As the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart"
F. What kind of heart should we have in our service to God?

II. A Thankful Heart (Romans 1:8)

A. Paul was a man with a thankful heart!
    1. In all of Paul's letters (only Galatians!)
B. Who Paul thanked! "My God"
    1. Paul was thankful because his focus was on God, not himself!
    2. He's thankful for God's blessings. He saw God's hand
        a) He's thankful for God's blessings in the lives of others! – "For you all"
            1) Not focused only on self
C. What he is thankful for
    1. Their faith (v. 8)
        a) By faith Paul is not referring to salvation faith, but "persevering" faith and trust that brings spiritual strength and growth
        b) Note – Paul doesn't mention their "budget," or "building" or "programs"
        c) How do you evaluate a "church and its "people"? Faith!
            1) For Revival Christian Fellowship – That we believe what God has told us in the Bible, and seek to live by it!

III. A Servant's Heart (Romans 1:9a)

A. The word "serve" is always used in the New Testament of religious service

1. The Greek word used in the Septuagint referred to the service of the Priests in the temple; including also the idea of "worship." It's translated "worship" in Philippian's 3:3 – "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit"

B. Our "Service" should be done as an act of "Worship" (Romans 12:1 – "Service")
    1. Danger today – Leadership that is not worship. Leaders who are "business managers"
    2. The New Living Translation – "I serve with all my heart" (v. 9)
        a) No distinction between sacred and secular
            1) Colossians 3:23-24 – "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward"
C. Is your service sincere and wholehearted and spiritual? An act of worship?

IV. A Prayerful Heart (Romans 1:9b-10)

A. Prayer and service must be intertwined
B. Prayer is serving God.
C. Prayer must direct our service
    1. Illustration: Doing the Lord's work in the wrong way; or wrong goals!
D. Prayer makes our service effective
E. Prayer changes the one praying
    1. So that we become the kind of person through whom God can accomplish His purpose
F. Some important characteristics of Paul's prayer life:
    1. It was constant (v. 9)
        a) "Without ceasing"
            1) Illustration: Acts 6:4
        b) Paul probably reached more people through his praying than his preaching. You can't preach always, but you can pray
    2. It was personal (v. 9)
        a) "I make mention of you"
    3. It was specific (v. 10)
        a) "I might have a prosperous journey"
    4. It was submissive (v. 10)
        a) "By the will of God"
            1) Illustration: James 4:15

V. A Longing Heart (Romans 1:11-12)

A. We see Paul's shepherds heart
B. Why did Paul long to see them?
    1. To impart a spiritual gift to them (v. 11)
        a) Why? Love!
            1) What? Gifts are given by the Spirit
            2) Illustration: Body – every member
    2. Why? So they would be strong in the Lord. (v. 11)
        a) How?
            1) Illustration: Ephesians 4:11-14 – Paul's gift of teaching.

2) R. Kent Hughes – Paul is not sure what gift or gifts he might impart because he has not been to Rome. He simply wishes to enhance their spirituality. Paul said almost the same thing to the church in Corinth: "what I want is not your possessions but you" (2 Corinthians 12:14). He is not in it for what he could do for himself, but what he could do for them
3) Illustration: Paul's spirit was for all practical purposes duplicated in the life of General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army. Once when General Booth stood before Queen Victoria and she asked what she might do for him, the rugged old man replied, "Your Majesty, some people's passion is money, and some people's passion is fame, but my passion has been men."

3. To experience encouragement from them. (v. 12)
4. Christian Fellowship
5. Paul was humble. He received from younger believers
    a) Lesson – There is a mutuality in ministry! Give and it shall be given.
        1) Illustration: My life

VI. A Purposeful Heart (Romans 1:13)

A. Paul's view of the ministry
    1. That it was a quest for "spiritual fruit"
    2. The ministry is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end
        a) Illustration: Preaching…..fruit
    3. What was the fruit Paul wanted? Converts and spiritual growth
        a) Three kinds of fruit:
            1) Attitude – Spirit
            2) Action
            3) Addition – people saved!
    4. Jesus said – John 15:16 "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you"
    5. Paul's purpose in life was to bring forth much fruit
B. What is your purpose in life?
    1. Spiritual fruit – for His glory!
        a) Remember: Jesus said: John 15:8 – "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples"
    2. Lesson on hindrances ("but was led hitherto") - Hindrances are not always evidence that our purposes are wrong
        a) Poem: "Is Your Place a Small Place?"

VII. Conclusion

A. My heart, my desire - To settle for nothing less than "spiritual fruit"
    1. (No ministry of maintenance)
B. Paul was in the ministry for fruit
C. The marks of a loving heart – Pastor's heart
    1. Thankful
    2. Worshipful
    3. Prayerful
    4. Humbled

5. Purposeful – Fruit

D. ARE YOU SAVED?