

Three “I Ams” of Paul

Rom 1:8-16

Introduction:

1. In the mid 1800's, a group of prospectors set out from Bannock, Montana in search of gold. Facing severe hardships, several of them died during the expedition. They were attacked by hostile Indians who stole all their horses and warned them if they returned to their country again they would all be killed. Defeated, discouraged and downtrodden, they slowly made their way on foot back to Bannock. One evening as they camped by a stream, one prospector found a gold nugget worth \$12. The next day they all panned the stream and found \$50 in gold. As they hiked back to Bannock for supplies, they made a solemn vow to tell no one of their find. However, when they headed back to mine their claim, some 300 men followed them. Who had told the good news? No one! The prospectors' beaming faces had betrayed their secret!
2. The greatest discovery anyone can ever make is not gold in a stream but salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. When you think of the fact that Jesus died for your sins, giving you a home in heaven - does it cause you to smile?
 - b. Does your faith show on your face?
 - c. Do you believe the gospel, the good news changes lives?
 - e. Do you really believe Jesus is the only way to heaven?
3. The apostle Paul believed the gospel so strongly that the message of the cross that it became the utmost priority in his life.
4. Today we will examine the three “I ams” of Paul

I. The “I am” of Concern – vs 14

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

- A debtor owes someone something
- No one needs to explain debt to modern Americans

A. Paul was in Debt to Christ

1. Paul was a servant of the One who died for him – vs 1
2. Believer, you are in debt to Christ
 - a) *Those sins deserved everlasting punishment*
 - b) *Sins against His law, His love, His mercy*
 - c) *He knew the whole amount of our vileness, and yet, Jesus came to take away our sins*
 - d) *His blood bought you*
 - e) *You are not your own, you are bought with a price*
 - f) *Jesus satisfied the claims of divine justice, He appeased the Father’s wrath, He bore our curse Himself.*
 - g) *O wondrous love – o marvelous grace – o astonishing mercy*
 - h) *“Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe.”*
 - i) *“Love so amazing so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all.”*
3. I am not saying that you have to work for your salvation
 - a) *Salvation is by grace and we can’t pay for it*
 - b) *“Oh to grace how great a debtor, daily I’m constrained to be”*
 - c) *“I cannot work my soul to save, that work my Lord has done. But I will work like any slave for the love of God’s dear Son.”*

B. Paul was in Debt to Those Who Had Gone Before

1. Paul stood on the shoulders of all who had preceded him
2. Others suffered, bled, died that he might know the Lord
3. We are in debt to those who have gone before us
 - a) *We sit here in this air conditioned, carpeted building in upholstered and padded pews*

- b) *We sit here in comfort and safety*
- c) *Someone paid for this building*
- d) *Who provided that seat on which you sit?*
- e) *Who provided that carpet beneath your feet?*

4. Don't forget those who died for the faith

The story of the Christian martyr Thomas Hauker (England, 1555) illustrates the sufficiency of the grace of God in our hour of need. Thomas Hauker, was a bright, well-favored, good-looking young gentleman, who would not deny his personal relationship with Christ. For this he was sentenced to being burned at the stake. "Thomas", his friend lowered his voice so as not to be heard by the guard. "I have to ask you a favor. I need to know if what the others say about the grace of God is true. Tomorrow, when they burn you at the stake, if the pain is tolerable and your mind is still at peace, lift your hands above your head. Do it right before you die. Thomas I have to know."

Thomas Hauker whispered to his friend, "I will." On the day of execution, the crowd was abuzz with Thomas's promise. As he was chained to the stake, he spoke quietly and with great grace to the men who laid the wood. Then he closed his eyes and the fire was kindled. Thomas continued to preach to those around him, but soon, for the roar of the flames, he could not. The fire burned a long time, but Hauker remained motionless. His skin was burnt to a crisp and his fingers were gone. Everyone watching supposed he was dead. Suddenly, miraculously, Hauker lifted his hands, still on fire, over his head. He reached them up to the living God and then, with great rejoicing, clapped them together three times. The people there broke into shouts of praise and applause. Hauker's friend had his answer. Beloved, does the story of this godly martyr not convict us? How often we whine "I can't take it anymore." How often we catch ourselves expressing frustration over the smallest trial. How often we overstate our problems and underestimate God's promise to enable us to bear up under the trial or weakness. When you think you can't take much more, remember Thomas Hauker's example of God's sufficient grace. - copied

- a) *Those who were dipped in oil and tar, who served as*

- human candles for Nero's garden*
- b) *Remember those who were fed to the lions in coliseum*

C. Paul was Debtor to Those Around Him - vs 14

1. Paul was debtor to the Greeks - the uppity ups
2. He was debtor to the Barbarians - the down and out
3. He was debtor to the cultured and the crude
4. He was debtor to the intelligent and the ignorant
5. These debts caused Paul to whole heartedly serve the Lord - vs 15 - "...as much as in me is..."
6. We are commanded to preach the Gospel to every creature, indiscriminately and without any reservation
7. The Gospel is for all and it is to be offered to all
8. Remember how Jesus sent out the disciples with power to `heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead...'?
 - a) *These supernatural powers put them under an obligation to the inhabitants of Judea.*
 - b) *Jesus put it like this, `Freely you have received, freely give' [Matt 10.1, 7, 8].*
 - c) *We do not have those supernatural powers, but we have something greater.*
 - d) *We have this Gospel `which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth' [Rom 1.16].*
 - e) *We can't heal the sick or to raise the dead, but he said, `Greater things than these shall ye do'.*
 - f) *What is greater than healing the sick and raising the dead and casting out demons? Preaching the Gospel!*
 - g) *Freely we have received it from God, we are obligated to freely give out the gospel*

D. You Owe It To Yourself

1. At the judgment seat of Christ I would like to be `free from the blood of all men'.
2. Much of our future happiness hangs upon the discharge of this debt.
3. **1Th 2:19** For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of

rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? **20** For ye are our glory and joy.

4. "Well done, good and faithful servant"

II. "I Am" of Commitment – vs 15

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

A. Paul Was Ready to Go to Rome - vs 13

1. He would be imprisoned there
2. He would die there - his head would be cut off
3. Paul was ready to live, ready to die and ready to go
4. He was not half-hearted - "As much as in me is..."
5. Paul was ready to preach the gospel
6. Paul was ready to live for the Lord
7. Some have said that they would die for the Lord - but will you live for the Lord?

B. Christian, Are You Ready?

1. Ready to preach the word - Rom 1:15
15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.
 - a) *This is the same word used in Matt 26:41 - "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak"*
 - b) *This is an attitude of readiness*
2. Ready to provide an answer to searching souls
1Pe 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:
3. Ready to every good work - Tit 3:1
Tit 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,
4. Ready to distribute - 1Tim 6:18

- 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;
5. Ready for the return of Christ - Lu 12:40
- 40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

III. "I Am" of Confidence – vs 16

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.

A. Paul Was Not Ashamed of the Gospel

1. Paul could have been ashamed of the gospel
 - a) *The gospel was associated with a poor Jewish carpenter who was killed on a Roman cross*
 - b) *"Put my faith in a crucified Jewish criminal"*
 - c) *Christians were not among the elite in society, some were even slaves*
 - d) *Rome had known many famous philosophers, why listen to fables about a Jew who supposedly died /rose*
2. Paul was not ashamed to give out the gospel in Athens, the intellectual capital of the world
 - a) He would not be ashamed to preach in Rome - the political capital of the world
3. The unpopularity of a crucified Christ has prompted many to present a message more palatable to unbeliever
 - a) *Removing the offense of the cross always renders the gospel message ineffective.*
4. Paul was not ashamed of the person of the gospel
 - a) *Its the gospel of Jesus Christ*
 - b) *Jesus did not come as a philosopher - Jesus came to seek and to save the lost*
5. Paul was not ashamed of the purpose of the gospel
 - a) *The lost need to hear the gospel to be saved*
 - b) *More than soup and soap the lost need salvation*
6. Paul was not ashamed of the power of the gospel
 - a) *The greatest power on earth could not remove sin from*

your life

- b) *But the gospel has power to make a crooked person straight*
 - c) *The gospel can make the profane person pure*
7. Paul was not ashamed of the plan of the gospel

B. Let Us Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel

1. Don't Be Ashamed of the Person of the Gospel
 - a) *He stepped out of heaven, came to earth, suffered and bled for you*
2. May God give us some men and women, boys and girls, who are not ashamed of Christ
3. We might face ridicule
4. "Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to wind the prize and sail through stormy seas?"
5. Many Christians are ashamed
 - a) *Embarrassed about eternal life*
 - b) *Distressed about denouncing the devil*
 - c) *Bashful about the Bible*
 - d) *Squeamish about the Savior and sin*
 - e) *Apprehensive about the accusations of the world*
6. The world is not ashamed of its sin
 - a) *Homosexuals are not ashamed*
 - b) *Adulterers and fornicators are not ashamed*

Conclusion:

1. Here are four ways to begin paying your spiritual debt.
 - a. Pray specifically for lost people you know.
 - b. Work hard at being a faithful example.
 - c. Look for opportunities to share the gospel.
 - d. Support the missions program and ministries of HBC
2. John Phillips wrote, "The world does not need a better system of education, more social reform, or new ideas in religion. It needs the gospel. The gospel message grips the mind, stabs the conscience, warms the heart, saves the soul and sanctifies

the life. It can make drunken men sober, crooked men straight and profligate women pure. It is a message sufficient to transform the life of any who believe" (p.20).

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J. Kirk Johnston shared this story in his book "Why Christians Sin" pp. 39-41.

Roger Simms has just been discharged from the military and was anxious to take his uniform off once and for all. He was hitchhiking home and his heavy duffel bag made the trip even more arduous than hitchhiking normally is. Flashing his thumb to an oncoming car, he had just about given up hope when he saw the taillights flash on a shiny, black, expensive, sports car. The car was so new that it still had a temporary license on it. To Roger's amazement, the car stopped and the passenger door swung open. He ran toward the car, placed his duffel bag carefully in the back and slid into the leather front seat.

A handsome older gentleman stuck out his hand and smiled. "Hello, son. Are you on leave or are you heading home for good?" "I just got out of the army and I am heading home for the first time in several years," answered Roger. And with that they were on their way.

After each briefly gave his life history, Roger (who was a Christian) felt a strong compulsion to witness to Mr. Hanover about the Lord Jesus Christ. Witnessing to an older, wealthy businessman was a scary prospect indeed and Roger kept putting it off. Eventually they neared Roger's destination and he knew he must say something about the Lord. "Mr. Hanover, I would like to talk to you about something very important." Roger proceeded explain the way of salvation and finally asked Mr. Hanover if he wanted to receive Christ as Savior.

To Roger's amazement the car pulled over to the side of the road. For a moment Roger thought that Mr. Hanover was going to throw him out. Then a strange and wonderful thing happened. The businessman began to cry while affirming that he did want to trust Christ as Savior. He thanked Roger for talking to him and commented "This is the greatest thing that has ever happened to me." He dropped Roger off at his house and continued to his business in Chicago.

Five years went by and Roger Simms had married, had a child and started a business of his own. He was packing for a business trip one day when he came across an old, gold-embossed business card which Mr. Hanover had given him five years before. Roger determined that, while in Chicago on business, he would look up Mr. Hanover to see how he was doing. Roger found a tall, impressive office building in downtown Chicago and the sign said, "Hanover Enterprises." The receptionist told him that it would be impossible to see Mr. Hanover but if he was an old friend he could see Mrs. Hanover. A little disappointed, he was led into a poshly-decorated office where an elegant-looking woman was sitting behind a large oak desk. She extended her hand, "You knew my husband?" Roger explained how Mr. Hanover had been kind enough to give him a ride back home. A look of interest passed across her face. "Can you tell me what date that was?" she asked. Roger said, "Sure, it was May 7th five years ago. That was the day that I was discharged from the army." Mrs. Hanover asked about the trip. Roger told her how

he had witnessed to Mr. Hanover and how he had pulled the car over to the side of the road and trusted Christ as His own Savior.

She quietly began to sob uncontrollably. After several minutes, she regained her composure enough to continue. "I grew up in a Christian home, but husband did not. I had prayed for my husband's salvation for many years, and I believed that God would save him. Just after he let you out of his car, on May 7th, he was killed in a terrible head-on collision. He never arrived home that day. I was angry at God and I stopped living for the Lord five years ago because I blamed God for not saving him."

Never underestimate what God can do when you trust Him by faith.

Ro 1:13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.