

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

SERMON TITLE: Totally Abandoned to the Gospel

SERMON REFERENCE: Romans 1:14-16

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2041

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide this transcript produced from a live sermon preached by Adrian Rogers while serving as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. This transcript is intended for your personal, non-commercial use.

Note: Though it has been transcribed from a version used for broadcast, it may contain stutters, stammers, and other authentic remarks as would be common in a live setting.

In order to ensure our ability to be good stewards of Adrian Rogers' messages, Love Worth Finding has reserved all rights to this content.

Except for your personal, non-commercial use and except for brief quotations in printed reviews, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—without the prior permission of the publisher.

Copyright ©2021 Love Worth Finding Ministries, Inc.
Transcripts are used by permission of the Rogers Family Trust.

Be finding Romans chapter 1 and look up here. Today we're going to be studying the heart and mind of a man who was totally abandoned to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You know, if you will look at a man and just get down beneath the surface, get down into his heart, understand his motivation, see the philosophy of his life, and then you'll be able to understand his life. I believe we can do that with the greatest Christian who ever lived, in my estimation, the apostle Paul, the one who wrote this book of Romans. And we're going to find some things about him; I'm going to read Romans 1 verses 14 through 16. Here's what he says, he said, "*I am debtor, both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and the unwise, so as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it,*" the Gospel, "*is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*"

Now, there are three, "I am," statements right here. Look if you will in verse 14. He says, "*I am debtor.*" Look in verse 15; underscore this, "*I am ready.*" Then look in verse 16, "*I am not ashamed.*" Now if you just put those three, "I am's" together you're going to understand what motivated the greatest pioneer and spokesman of the church that ever lived. He preached and was a missionary just a few short years after Jesus Christ had ascended to Heaven and when Paul himself went to Heaven, there was a Christian church, a little colony of Heaven, in every major city in the western empire. A little man who had a heart aflame for Almighty God who could say, "*I am debtor, I am ready, and I am not ashamed.*" And oh, would to God, listen to me, folks, would to God that Adrian could say that, that you could say that, that every mother's child in this building could follow the apostle Paul in those three statements. For Paul said in First Corinthians chapter 11 verse 1, "*You follow me as I follow Christ.*" You see, Paul met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus and he asked the Lord Jesus two questions found in Acts chapter 9 verses 5 and 6; number one, "Who are You, Lord?" Number two, "What would You have me to do?" Answer those, ask those two questions and answer them, get the answer from Him and follow Him correctly and you'll understand what life is all about. Know who Jesus is and know what Jesus would have you to do.

Let's look at these three, "I am" statements. First of all, he says, "*I am debtor, I am debtor.*" And that tells me that Paul was faithful, I want you to write this down, **faithful to the obligations of the Gospel**. Paul saw himself as a debtor. Remember last week we told you in Romans 1 verse 1 that he saw himself as a bondsman? A bondsman was someone who had been purchased and then wanted to serve his master willingly and voluntarily. The apostle Paul would write to the Corinthians in First Corinthians 6 verses 19 and 20, "*You're not your own, you are bought with a price.*" And so Paul, first of all, saw himself as **a debtor to the Lord Jesus Christ**. Do you? Do you see yourself in debt to Jesus or do you say, "I thought salvation was free?" It is, but don't we sing this also, "Jesus paid it all and all to Him I owe?" I am a debtor to the One who hung in agony and blood on that cross for me, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all." I'm not talking about trying to pay for your salvation; you cannot pay for your salvation. Someone wrote these

words, “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. Won’t you?” Will you not? Don’t you see? See yourself as a debtor to the dear Savior who died for you?

I’ll tell you what else we are debtor to; along with the apostle Paul, we are **debtors to the heroes of the past**. Paul was there when Stephen was stoned. It was through the stoning of Stephen that Paul came under conviction. Paul was holding the clothes of those who were stoning the first Christian missionary. I believe that Paul had a debt to Stephen that he helped to kill. I believe that Paul had a debt to those Old Testament prophets who were stoned and massacred for the cause of Christ. And folks, I want to tell you, there are many heroes of the past who have suffered and bled and died that we might be here today. Don’t you think we owe them something?

As a matter of fact, we owe those who founded this church something. This church was founded, begun in 1903. It didn’t just happen. I want to ask you a question. Where did the seat that you’re sitting on come from? Who put the light bulbs up there? Who put the carpet under your feet? How did that front door get out there? Where did this organization come from? Who is running the sound system now? Who printed the bulletin that you have in your hand? Who has done all of that for you, that you could walk in this morning and sit down in air conditioned comfort and hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Have you ever thought about where that came from? How did this church get to be where it is today? I’ll tell you; the vision, the blood, the sweat, the tears, the faith, the sacrifice of others who came before you. Do you think that you’re just here to just sit, soak, and sour? I mean, you have received blessings. We are debtors to those who have gone before us; we are debtors to our Lord.

I’ll tell you something else, folks, we are **debtor to all of those around us**. That’s what Paul is talking about primarily. Look if you will in Romans 1 verse 14, “*I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and unto the unwise.*” When he says the Greeks and the barbarians, he’s talking about the cultured and the non-cultured, he’s talking about the up and out, he’s talking about the down and out, he’s talking about the educated, he’s talking about the ignorant, he’s talking about the rich, he’s talking about the poor, he’s saying, “Everybody needs to know Jesus.” Do you believe that? I hope that you believe that. Now folks, if we have received the Gospel, Jesus said in Matthew 10:8, “*Freely you have received, freely give.*”

Suppose there were a man in this state who was sentenced to be executed for a capital crime. Suppose the governor of this state called you and said, “I’m going to pardon that man.” And the governor said, “I want you to take this pardon to the prison and deliver it to the warden of the prison because he has been pardoned.” Suppose you took that pardon, put it in your breast pocket, and then remembered that your wife told you to pick up a gallon of milk on the way home and you did that. And then remembered that you had some bills that you had to pay and then remembered also that the furnace wasn’t working just right and you get busy working on these things. And then a friend calls you and says, “You know what, I’ve got a couple of extra plane

tickets and we can go to Florida and have a few rounds of golf,” and you say, “That’s wonderful.” And you go down there and you come back and immediately you’re a little behind in your work, and you’re trying to catch up and you’re having your coffee and you’re reading the newspaper and some print jumps out at you. That man that was pardoned has just been executed and you reach up there in that coat pocket, you happen to be wearing the same coat and you pull out that pardon and there it is! He had been pardoned but you had never delivered the message. How would you feel? How will you feel when the clods fall on the casket of your next door neighbor and you never ever even told him about Jesus Christ, your mother, your brother, your father, your sister? Paul said, “I am a debtor, I’ve been saved by the grace of God and Jesus paid it all but all to Him I owe.” You know what the church needs? We need a compassion for lost people. We’re blessed, but friend; we are an island of blessing in an ocean of need. We have a responsibility.

Now, Paul said, “*I am debtor.*” “I’ve not just been called to be blessed, must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to seize the prize and sailed through bloody seas.”

Next, here’s the second thing he says. Watch it, look, watch in your Bible. First of all, see it in verse 14, “*I am debtor.*” Now Romans 1 verse 15; look at it, “*So as much as in me is I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also.*” Not only was Paul faithful to the obligations of the Gospel, now listen carefully, write this down, **Paul was flexible for the opportunities of the Gospel.** Now you see, you’ve got to be both faithful and flexible. You have to understand that you are a debtor, and as a result of that, you have to be ready. Paul says in verse 15, “*I am ready.*” Now of course obviously he was ready to live for Christ. In Philippians chapter 1 and verse 15 he said, “*For me to live is Christ.*”

You know, Paul was a great witness, but you know what made him such a great witness? He was also part of the evidence. Is there anything different about your life? I mean, can your neighbor see a quality of life in you that would provoke him to spiritual jealousy? I don’t mean jealousy in the wrong way, I’m just saying, “Look at that family, look at that man, look at that life, what is different about him?” Are you ready, ready to live for Christ? You’re not if you’re not ready to die for Christ. Paul said in First Corinthians 15 verse 31, “*I die daily.*” Paul said in Acts 20 verse 24, “*I count not my life dear to myself.*” Are you ready to die for Jesus, I didn’t say did you want to die for Him? If you do that, you have a martyr complex. I say, are you ready to die for the Lord Jesus Christ? Until you are ready to die, you are not ready to live. I’ve never known a man like the Apostle Paul, more like anybody to be compared to him, absolutely in love with life and yet not afraid to die. You see, are you ready to die? The apostle Paul was.

I have visited Rome and many think that Paul was executed there in Rome. We know that he was imprisoned in Rome and in Rome there is a cell that is called the Mamertine Prison. If you go to Rome, it’s right near the Roman Forum, you can go down into that Mamertine Prison, about the size of the place where I’m standing over

to Jim and Greg, just about that size. The ceiling about this high, hewn out of stone, a little hole in the ceiling where they could let down food and whatever. No restroom facilities, the excrement would be on the floor. No window to let the light in, the apostle Paul was incarcerated there. I can hear the guard as he says, "All right, Paul, let's go." "Where, where are we going?" "You know where we're going, Paul, they're going to take off your head." And I can see that little squinty-eyed, hump-backed Jew, that body that had been beaten and scarred and pickled in the Mediterranean, I can see Paul as he gets up and begins to go with that man, perhaps dragging those chains with him, and the guard says, "You don't look particularly frightened." He said, "Well no." Said, "I'm not frightened. I'm not worried about this." "Well why not?" "Oh, well this is nothing new to me, I die daily." Paul said, "*I die daily.*" "Hey, are you humming a song?" "Oh, I'm sorry, I wasn't aware that I was humming. Yes, I was humming a song." "What is that song you're humming, Paul?" "Oh, it's a song that Jim Whitmire taught me, 'It Will Be Worth It All When We See Jesus.'" And Paul is thinking, just a few minutes, he's going to see Jesus, face to face. Ready to live, ready to die, ready to go. Yes, that's what he says, "*I'm ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also.*" Romans 1 verse 15. Are you ready to go? I mean, if Jesus Christ were to say to you, "I want you to be a preacher of the Gospel, I want you to be a missionary, I want you to do this thing or that thing." Friend, you must be ready to live and ready to die, you must be ready to go and you must be ready to stay. You must be ready, are you ready, are you? If God were to speak to you today would you say, "Yes, Lord, yes."

One of the greatest missionaries who ever lived was David Livingstone. I want you to hear these pregnant words that he said, listen to this, he said, "Send me where You will but go with me. Lay any burden on my heart but sustain me. Sever any tie but the one that binds my heart to Thee. Send me where You will but go with me. Lay any burden on my heart but sustain me. And sever any tie in my life except the one that binds my heart to Thee." Now, folks, this is Sunday morning and it's the polite thing to do, to sit in church, but I'm asking you, are you ready to go? And are you ready to stay? Sometimes it takes more grace to stay and pray and support and give than it does to go.

I remember when we put our son on a plane to go to missionary to Spain, and he took his precious wife Kelley and our little grandson Jonathan, and Joyce and I stood there in the airport with scalding tears, scalding tears, scalding tears coming down our cheeks. The happiest and saddest that two could be at the same time. He wasn't going over there like a person goes when they're in the army, to come home. He's going to Spain to stay, to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sometimes it takes as much grace to stay as it does to go. Are you ready? Ready to live, ready to die if necessary, ready to go, ready to stay and I don't mean with a half-heart. Paul said, "*With as much as in me is, I'm ready.*" Now you can understand, now you understand what made this man the great man that he was.

Now here's the third thing. Now watch it. Paul was faithful to the obligations of the Gospel, Paul was flexible for the opportunities of the Gospel, and here's the

third thing, **Paul was fearless at the opposition to the Gospel**, fearless at the opposition to the Gospel. There was so much opposition to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but he says in Romans 1 verse 16, *“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.”* **He wasn’t fearful about the Gospel.** Now there were many reasons why he could’ve been fearful, there are many reasons why he could’ve been intimidated, there are many reasons why he could’ve been ashamed. For in the first place, the Gospel of Jesus Christ was identified with a poor, Jewish carpenter who was crucified. Can you imagine going to Rome, the Imperial city Rome with its might, its power, its armies, and saying, “I want to tell you about a Jew.” The Romans had no appreciation for the Jews, especially one who was not one of the mighty philosophers in their mind, but a carpenter, one who was crucified. Who would put faith in a Jew that was crucified? And Rome was such a proud city. They had subjugated the land of Judea. Here was a Gospel coming out of Jerusalem, not of Rome. Why should Rome listen to anything that came out of a conquered place? And the Christians of that day, they were not the big shots of that day. Paul had to say to the Corinthians in First Corinthians 1 verse 26, *“You see your calling, brother, not many mighty, not many noble are called.”* They didn’t have a lot of philosophers, they didn’t have a lot of generals, they didn’t have a lot of wealthy people. The Christians were the off-scouring, the scum of the earth of that day, and even Paul himself, when he went to Rome, he went to Rome as a prisoner. And yet he didn’t hang his head in shame. Rome was known for the great philosophers of that day. Who’s going to pay any attention to a fable about a Jew who rose from the dead? But Paul was bold for the Lord Jesus.

Now, I want to ask you a question; are you ashamed of the Gospel? Are you ashamed to put a Bible on your desk at work? Are you ashamed to bow your head in the cafeteria? Are you ashamed to invite people to Jesus Christ? I say, are you ashamed of the One who died for you? You say, “Well Pastor, I just don’t believe in wearing my faith on my sleeve.”

A little boy had a dog, I’m told. Somebody asked him what kind of dog he was and the little fellow said, “He’s a police dog.” He was just a mongrel and the little boy said, “He’s a police dog.” His friend said, “Well he doesn’t look like a police dog.” The little guy said, “Well he’s in the secret service.” I’m afraid that there’re many of us who are in the secret service. We ought to be open and bold for the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Who could be ashamed of the person of the Gospel?

But there’s one name that stands above all other names, that is the name of Jesus. And while I am speaking to you right now, listen to me, this very moment, there are multiplied millions of people, this moment, attending to His Words and seeking to do His will. That one name, that name that is above every name. Are you ashamed of Jesus Christ?

A young preacher had been called out of a life of sin to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He totally, thoroughly repented of his sin, was made new. But somebody who knew his old life wrote him a note and said, “Aren’t you ashamed of yourself. You up there telling people to get right with God.” And that person who had known this

man in his past listed all of those sins in detail. You know what the young preacher did? He read that note, bowed his head in prayer, stood up and said, “Ladies and gentlemen, I’ve received a note and here’s what it says,” and then in front of that whole crowd he read every one of those sins without leaving out a one. And then he said this, “Yes, I am ashamed of myself but I am not ashamed of my Savior. Not ashamed of my Savior.” Paul said, “*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.*” It’s the Gospel of Christ, the person of the Gospel. And I want to tell you, I hope I’ll never be ashamed of Him.

But not only was Paul not ashamed of the person of the Gospel, **he’s not ashamed of the purpose of the Gospel.** Look in Romans 1 verse 16, look at it, “*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ,*” that’s the person of the Gospel, “*for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.*” There’s no greater business or occupation than sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let Wall Street handle the finances, let Hollywood have the fame, let the military people figure out what to do in the Middle East. Let’s us get out the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Folks, let me tell you something, the Gospel is not intended to save civilization from wreckage; the Gospel is intended to save people from the wreckage of civilization. That’s what the Gospel is all about. Jesus did not come as a social engineer. Jesus came, Luke 19:10, “*For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.*” You see, think about it. There are a lot of kinds of losses; it’s tragic to lose your health, to lose your wealth, to lose your friends, loved ones, to lose your life, but how tragic to lose your soul. Mark 8 verse 36, “*What should it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*” Listen to me, friend, listen to me. How could we be ashamed of the Gospel when the power of the Gospel is the only thing that can help this world today? The Gospel is the only thing that can make harlots pure. The Gospel is the only thing that can make drunkards sober. The Gospel is the only thing that can make perverts straight. The Gospel is the only thing that can make adulterers pure. The Gospel is the only thing that can give a hope that is steadfast and true to rescue the perishing and care for the dying and snatch them in pity from sin and the grave. Without the Gospel of Jesus Christ there’s no hope, there’s no hope.

Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the person, it’s the Gospel of Christ, I’m not ashamed of the purpose, unto salvation.” And then he said, “**I’m not ashamed of the power of the Gospel.**” Look in verse 16, “*For the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation,*” and the word that he uses there for power is the word in Greek that we get our English word dynamite from. This world is enamored with power. We’ve heard so much in our generation about atomic power but if you were to take an atomic bomb and detonate it between the lapels of your coat, there wouldn’t be enough of you to bury, we couldn’t find you; you’d be vaporized. But that wouldn’t take the sin out of your heart. There’s only one power, one power that can wash and make you whiter than snow. That is the incredible power. You know, not only do we get our word dynamite; we get our word dynamo from that? When you receive

Christ, there is a dynamo that comes into you. I've been living for Jesus now since I was teenage years and I can attest to you that were it not for that power, that dynamo that is in my heart, I would not be able to persevere at all.

And then listen. Not only is Paul not ashamed of the person of the Gospel, it's the Gospel of Christ. Not only is Paul not ashamed of the purpose of the Gospel, its salvation. Not only is Paul not ashamed of the power of the Gospel, it is by grace through faith. But **he's not ashamed of the plan of the Gospel**. Look at it, here it is, I love it, Romans 1:16, "*To everyone that believeth.*" That's it. That's the plan. You say, "Adrian, that's so simple." Yes! It is gloriously simple but it's simply glorious. "*To everyone that believeth.*" Aren't you glad the Gospel doesn't say, "Everybody who wants to be saved, read so many chapters in the Bible." Some people don't have a Bible and some people can't read. Aren't you glad that the Gospel doesn't say, "Everybody who wants to be saved, take a walk around the block?" Well you say, "That'd be simple enough, except some people can't walk." "Everybody wants to be saved, give \$150." Well, that's cheap enough for eternal salvation, yes, but some people don't have \$150. But friend, there is a whosoever in the Bible, "*That whosoever believeth.*" That's it, that's the Gospel. There're always people who want to tell you, "Well you've got to believe and," they say, "You've got to believe and be baptized." Well, friend, the minute you put baptism on, you take whosoever out. That means nobody in the desert can be saved, that means nobody in an airplane can be saved, that means nobody in a submarine can be saved, surrounded by water, that means that nobody by himself can be saved because nobody to baptize him. Do you see how silly that is? Friend, I believe in baptism. Somebody said, "You're in the King's army," no I'm in His navy. Listen, I believe in baptism, but water, whether a spoonful or a tankful, cannot take away sin. God's simple, wonderful, glorious plan is that anybody, anywhere, anytime can say, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart and save me," and He will, He will. Paul's not ashamed of a Gospel like that, Romans 1 verse 16, "*Everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*" Paul was not ashamed of the plan of the Gospel.

There was an old timey preacher, his name was Christmas Evans. Christmas Evans, in his wonderful way, said, "The Gospel is so simple and so available you could put a man in a barrel, nail the lid on, and then whisper through a knothole how to be saved and he could be saved inside that barrel." I like that, I like that.

You know, there was an old preacher named Baldwin who pastored in Troy, New York, and he pastored there for a number of years, 41 years. Here's what he said about the Gospel, it's so wonderful I want to share it with you. Listen to it; you'll get blessed of this. He said, this is a pastor, now, reflecting back. Now he's a very old man and here's what he wrote. He said, "At thirty, after examining the philosophies and religions of the world, I said, 'There is nothing better than the Gospel of Christ.'" Then he said "At forty, when burdens pressed heavily and the years seemed to hasten, I said, 'There's nothing as good as the Gospel of Christ.' At fifty, when there were empty chairs in the home and the mound builders had done their service, I said, 'There's

nothing to be compared with the Gospel.' At sixty, my second sight saw through the illusions and vanities of earthly things and I said, "There's nothing but the Gospel." He started out saying, "Nothing better than the Gospel," then, "Nothing as good as the Gospel," then, "Nothing to be compared to the Gospel," and then finally said, "There's nothing but the Gospel." And then he said, "Then at seventy, amid many limitations and privations, I sang, 'Should all the forms which men devise attack my faith with treacherous art, I had called them all vanities and lies and bind the Gospel to my heart.'" You see, Paul said, "You want to know what motivates me? You want to know what sends me? Three I am's!" "I am debtor, I am ready, and I am not ashamed. I am faithful to the obligations of the Gospel, I am flexible for the opportunities of the Gospel, and I am fearless to the opposition of the Gospel. I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, are you?"

Dr. Lee used to tell a story about something that happened in South Carolina. There was a schoolhouse fire and the children were trapped in the schoolhouse. And the men of the community gathered to try to do what they could do but the fire, flames were so hot that they couldn't get near and the children were trapped inside. And a father saw the face of his boy in those flames and the boy saw his father and their eyes met. The little boy said, "Daddy, daddy, can't you save me?" But the flames were such that strong men held him back and he could not go and that father had to stand there watching his son in the fire and over and over again the little boy said, "Daddy, can't you save me?" That father stood there and watched his son wither like a flower held in the flames of an acetylene torch. Dr. Lee said that, "That father didn't live but two years after that. Night and day he could see the face of his darling son in those flames saying, 'Daddy, can't you save me?' And he realized he was powerless to do anything about it." And this old hell-bound, sin-cursed world looks at science and says, "Science, can't you save me?" And science will tell you, "I can tell you how far it is from the earth to the sun but I can't save you." This world looks at culture and says, "Culture, can't you save me?" And culture says, "I can tell you how to dress for a party and hold your teacup just right. All I can do is to make this world a better place to go to hell from." This world looks at finance and says, "Finance, business, can't you save me?" Finance says, "I can tell you how to gather money to leave it all behind, but I cannot save you." "Philosophy can't you save me?" Philosophy says, "I can tell you more and more about less and less until you know everything about nothing, but I can't save you." But friend, I'm here to tell you there's One who can save. Sing, "Above the battle strife, Jesus saves, Jesus saves." I have given my life to declaring the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it," the Gospel, "is the power of God unto salvation."

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Every head bowed and every eye closed. Now remember the Gospel plan. The Gospel plan is to everyone that believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. And I want to help you right now to receive Jesus Christ into your heart as your Lord and Savior. Heads are bowed, eyes are closed. If you already know the Lord Jesus, would you begin to pray for those round about you! Right now I want you to pray. Here's how I want you to pray, just pray out of your

heart, “Dear God,” just pray silently but fervently, “I know that You love me, I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me, You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You, I believe You’re the Son of God. I believe You paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. I believe that salvation is a gift and I receive it right now, right now, I receive it. I don’t look for a feeling; I don’t ask for a sign, I stand on Your Word. Lord Jesus, I trust You to save me and I will not be ashamed of You, I will make it public, I will not be ashamed of the Gospel. Give me the courage this morning to openly and publicly confess You. Don’t let me be intimidated by the devil. Help me, Lord Jesus. In Your name I pray, Amen.”