



## Κατανῶμεν Let us consider...



### Paul's "Unanswered" Prayer in Romans 1:8-15

*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. <sup>9</sup>For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you <sup>10</sup>always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. <sup>11</sup>For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— <sup>12</sup>that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. <sup>13</sup>I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. <sup>14</sup>I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. <sup>15</sup>So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. **Romans 1:8-15***

God hears all prayers, but He may not give what the petitioner requests. They may be fervent prayers, casual prayers, thoughtless prayers, painful prayers, prayers from the faithful or prayers from pagans—all offered to God, but not all given the answer hoped for. God's world abounds in seemingly unanswered prayers. These prayers very often are good prayers: one for a stronger marriage, a child to return to the faith, or the healing of an illness. This painful reality dampens some in their faith, and it causes others to forsake Christ. Yet, God is a faithful God; He stitches together circumstances and gives hope where none can be found. In the midst of unanswered prayers, Christians are called to trust Him. But how? Paul's words in Romans 1 offer God's people a picture of how to live in a world of unanswered prayers: through observation of the Apostle Paul himself.

Paul penned this letter to a loved, but broken, Roman church. The church was fractured by division due to rivalries between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians. The Roman emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome several years prior to this letter, and Gentile believers began occupying leadership roles within the church. By the time Paul wrote to them in AD 57-58, the Jews had been permitted to return to Rome, but the Jewish Christians found the church permitting practices

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The mission of Grace Classical Academy is to provide an education designed to help our children know the love, grace, truth and holiness of our glorious God and, from this understanding, strive for excellence in knowledge, wisdom and service.

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Now to him who is  
able to do far  
more abundantly  
than all that we  
ask or think,  
according to the  
power at work  
within us, to him  
be glory in the  
church and in  
Christ Jesus  
throughout all  
generations,  
forever and ever.  
Amen. (Ephesians  
3:20-21 ESV)

forbidden in their culture (namely, the consumption of unclean food). Also, a certain arrogance had come upon the Jewish Christians, for they were physical descendants of Abraham. Paul, loving these people and desiring to advance the knowledge of God, wanted to visit them. He hoped to preach the Gospel among them and to establish a base of operations to advance his missionary efforts in Spain (Romans 15:28). With these needs in mind, he prayed: he asked God to provide a way to meet them. He continued to pray. And he prayed even more. And, up to the time of writing this letter, he had been prevented from visiting them. God was not responding to Paul with the answer Paul desired for this prayer. It should be noted: this was a good prayer, a servant's heart prayer, a prayer that hoped to advance God's kingdom on the earth. But still, God was not allowing Paul to preach the Gospel to the Romans. So, how then will Paul respond? How does Paul make sense of living in a world where God does not answer every prayer the way His children hope He will? Paul models three truths for all of God's people to follow:

1. He fights for gratitude.
2. He keeps praying.
3. He continues working out his calling.

First, observe Paul's words in verse 8: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world." Paul gives thanks to God, even a God who has not answered his supplications! While dealing with the frustrating reality of unanswered prayer, Paul finds something to be grateful for: the work of Jesus Christ and the faith of the Roman Christians. Paul understands that giving thanks to God is fundamental in maintaining faithfulness to Him. Later in the epistle, Paul will state, "*For although [the Gentiles] knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*" The starting line for unrepentant sin and enmity with God is ingratitude. Paul knows God, and if he refuses to acknowledge Him or give thanks to Him, this refusal will lead to his own destruction. Therefore, in the midst of his unanswered request, Paul finds a way to thank God.

The truth of gratitude in the midst of hardship litters Scripture. Observe Habakkuk, after he is told that all the land of Israel will be laid waste by the Babylonians:

*Though the fig tree should not blossom,  
nor fruit be on the vines,  
the produce of the olive fail  
and the fields yield no food,  
the flock be cut off from the fold  
and there be no herd in the stalls,*

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*yet I will rejoice in the LORD;  
I will take joy in the God of my salvation. (Habakkuk 3:17-18)*

Also, David gives thanks in Psalm 13, after he recounts the struggles he has had with his enemies:

*But I have trusted in your steadfast love;  
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.  
I will sing to the LORD,  
because he has dealt bountifully with me. (Psalm 13:5-6)*

Finally, Jesus offers thanksgiving to God during the last supper with His disciples. He thanks God for the bread that represents *His broken body* and the wine that represents *His shed blood*:

*And he took bread, and when he had given thanks (emphasis added), he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. (Luke 22:19)*

The truth of thanksgiving while enduring hardship does not exclude lament. Certainly, there were times Paul must have echoed David's prayer in Psalm 6, "I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping." But fighting for gratitude teaches God's people to trust Him during times of pain and confusion.

Next, in verses 9-10, Paul continues to walk faithfully with God although God has seemingly said "no" to his request. How does he do this? He prays more. Ponder his wording: "...without ceasing, I mention you always in my prayers, hoping that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you." Paul has not given up. Paul bombards God with his request like a child begging to open presents before Christmas—relentlessly. Paul views God as a good father who gives his children good gifts and delights when his children ask him to supply their needs (Luke 11:13, 18:1-8). Maybe God will grant the request, or maybe not; Paul does not know what his Father in heaven will do, but he does know that He is a *good Father*. Therefore, he continues to pray and ask God to grant him the opportunity to visit the Roman church.

Finally, in verses 11-15, Paul concludes his introductory remarks with a declaration of his purpose: I am under obligation, both to the Greeks and the barbarians, to the wise and the foolish, to preach the Gospel. Yet, Paul is in a quandary. How can he fulfill his calling when God has not granted him his prayer? Instead, should he give up? Quit? Pray God would send someone else? None of these Paul does; rather, he finds a new way to preach the Gospel to them: he writes a letter. This letter will explain the condemnation of all men. This letter will expound the grace of God to all men. This letter will declare justification through faith. This letter will reveal the truth that everything that happens to those who love God will work out for good. This letter will call all believers to be one living sacrifice. This letter will lay the foundation for New Testament theology. This letter will sustain Christians suffering under the persecution during the infancy of Christianity. This letter will, 300 years later, bring a young man named Augustine to Christianity. After long wrestling with Scripture and other philosophies to understand his own sinfulness, Augustine recounts reading Romans 13:13-14 (*Confessions* 8.29):

"Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." (Romans 13:13-14) No further would I read, nor did I need; for instantly, as the sentence ended—by a light, as it

**The LORD has heard my plea; the LORD accepts my prayer. Psalm 7:9**

were, of security infused into my heart—all the gloom of doubt vanished away.

This letter, almost 1,500 years after Paul, will be the foundation for Martin Luther to reform the Catholic church. Hear his words in his preface to the epistle to the Romans:

This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian's while not only to memorize it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well. The more one deals with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes.

And, nearly 1,700 years later, this letter will change a man named John Wesley. In his journal entry for May 24, 1738, Wesley recounted the moment God began the blaze in him that would fan the Great Awakening:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

This letter—the epistle to the Romans—has altered the scope of human history. Billions of lives have changed because of Paul's words to a Roman church in AD 57-58. And this letter was born out of an “unanswered” prayer. Just a question for thought: how many wise persons, foolish persons, Greeks, or barbarians have believed the gospel because of this letter? This letter exemplifies the mustard seed-sized faith that becomes a mountain-mover.

Everyone of us has disappointments we endure day in and day out. Yet, take heart that the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jesus, and Paul is the same God we worship today. The God who wrote their stories writes our stories today. The God who heard their prayers hears our prayers today. The God who didn't grant Jesus' prayer in the garden for the cup to pass and Paul's prayer to visit the Roman church continues to work His perfect plan today. As believers, we must place our hope in Jesus and His work on our behalf. This hope allows us to live like Paul in the midst of unanswered pleas to God: a life of thankfulness, persistence in asking, and working at our calling. When we are on the other side of history, we will finally know and understand God's purpose with our prayers; for He will show us what He did with all of them.

*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)*

## Teacher and Staff Birthdays

### December

December 5 - Robin Harrison



### January

January 1 - Tanya Dale

January 6 - Judy Daugherty

January 20 - Lisa Loyd

January 30 - Jedidiah Moss

### February

February 3 - Coby Cullins

February 7 - Jeff Cymbaluk

February 22 - Katie Sparks



## Peacemaking

By Eden Barnhouse

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Matthew 5:9*

When I was little, my dad used to give me advice in the form of two phrases: “Never say never or always.” (ironic, right?) and “Be a peacemaker.” My dad said these phrases to me all the time, and they would infuriate me. I didn’t understand why he would repeat them over and over. All I wanted to hear from him was how to win an argument or deal with a situation, or just how I had been right but, instead, he insisted on repeating this wisdom that I considered pointless. As I grow up, I realize that he might be right, so I am trying to be a peacemaker. As the years progress, I try harder and harder to become more of a peacemaker and to follow this command of God. As I begin to learn and grow, so does my view of peacemaking.

*And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. James 3:18  
Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan peace have joy. Proverbs 12:20  
So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. Romans 14:19*

These are just three of the many verses showing how vital peace is when interacting with others. God tells people to love Him and love others—these are the two greatest commands. Why should we choose to disobey Him just to win an argument? It is pointless to try to live without peace. If Christians are going to be successful at loving God and all those around them with their whole heart, they must be humble, gracious, and peaceful. There’s simply no other option.

So, how do we make peace? Zechariah 8:16-17 answers this question by saying, “These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgements that are true and make for peace; do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the Lord.”

If anyone is looking to make peace, the answer is to simply make peace. It’s the same way that someone gains wisdom as well. “The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom...” (Proverbs 4:7) Every high school student here at GCA has been presented this truth: in order to have these attributes, all one must do is ask for them. It may sound redundant that “the way to make peace is to make peace,” but it really is that simple! “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you.” (Matthew 7:7) If someone asks God for something, He will lead them to the answer, but they have to be willing to open their eyes, ears, and hearts in order to receive these gifts from God.

We are God’s creations, made in his image, and alive to bring Him glory. So, after hearing what God has commanded, how am I supposed to continuously have a peacemaker’s heart? How do I keep a smile on my face and joy in my heart, when that truly is the last thing on my mind? In the midst of chaos and drama, the idea that I have to keep at the front of my mind is, “Love God and love others.” These are the two greatest commands that have ever been given to man from God, and He is more than willing to help us with them—we can count on it. God’s love will always come to those who ask it of Him, and that is what helps give us the power to become peacemakers. Learning to be a peacemaker is a lifetime adventure and, as with any challenge, is filled with both good days and bad days. But God won’t leave us alone in this struggle against our human nature.

Will you strive to be a peacemaker? If so: Ask for God’s help to love Him and others. Show the world that chaos cannot bring down the spirit of love that God has given you. Show the world that even during overwhelming times, you will persevere in peacemaking and will love all of those around you.



# 1st-8th Grade History Day



Tade Wynn in the 1st and 5th Grade Ancient History Skit



Esther Roos, Mandy McNulty and Sheridan Sellers in the 3rd and 7th Grade Renaissance and Reformation Skit



James Griffin and Fritz Adkison in the 1st and 5th Grade Ancient History Skit



Luke Garrison, Vail Humphreys, Landon Pennell, and Tyler Hildebrand in the 2nd and 6th Grade Medieval Skit



Will Wynn and Parker Pennell in the 3rd and 7th Grade Renaissance and Reformation Skit



Macy Perryman, Ashley Jones, and Miriam Boyle in the 2nd and 6th Grade Medieval Skit



# High School History Day



Kristi Draschil as Helen of Troy



Jackson Frazier as Julius Caesar



Tori Umlauf as Joan of Arc



Ben Vandiver as Leonardo Da Vinci and  
Gretchen Ruffa as Janet Reno



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### ***January 2016***

- |           |                             |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 1-8       | Christmas/New Year's Break  |
| 1         | New Years Day               |
| 7         | Tuition Due                 |
| 7-8       | Teacher Training<br>9:00 AM |
| <b>11</b> | <b>2nd Semester Begins</b>  |
| 18        | Martin Luther King Day      |
| <b>29</b> | <b>Hat Day</b>              |

### ***February 2016***

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 1         | Tuition Due   |
| <b>14</b> | <b>Valentine's Day</b>                              |
| 15        | President's Day:<br>No School                       |
| <b>19</b> | <b>4th-7th Grade Battle<br/>Grammatica Playoffs</b> |
| <b>26</b> | <b>Mismatch Day</b>                                 |

### ***March 2016***

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1         | Last Day for Reenrollment<br>Discount/Tuition Due                  |
| <b>11</b> | <b>End of 3rd Quarter</b>  |
| 13        | Daylight Savings<br>Time Begins                                    |
| 15-16     | Optional P/T Conferences,<br>4:00-6:00 PM                          |
| <b>18</b> | <b>Dots and Stripes Day<br/>All-School Open House:<br/>6:30 PM</b> |
| 25-31     | Good Friday/Easter<br>Break—No School                              |
| 31        | Teacher Training<br>9:00 AM  |