

What's Your Credit Score?

1 Not too long ago I joined Kredit Karma to help keep track of my credit score. It's free and I get regular updates on any activity happening with my credit line. Especially with all the identity theft and things that go on nowadays it becomes important to keep track. I'm sure we all have a pretty good idea of what a credit score is, it's the way that lending institutions, banks, finance companies, credit card companies use to determine whether or not they will make a loan to someone and or how much they will qualify for. They want to know whether we have both the ability to pay back what is owed as well as the commitment to pay our indebtedness back. Paul understood what it means to be indebted.

Rom 1:14

2

14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

I think it obvious that Paul here is referring to the special obligation given him by Christ in his divine call to be the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Acts 22:17-21

3

17 "It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance, **18** and I saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.' **19** And I said, 'Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You. **20** And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him.' **21** And He said to me, 'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles. '"

He was entrusted with the Gospel as a steward, and by that trust was therefore bound to carry it all men, especially the Gentiles. But I see a principle in the commission given to Paul, a principle that applies to all Christians. The indebtedness referred to by Paul in Romans, is not necessarily peculiar to the Apostles, but is applicable to every believer. Every faithful follower Christ, who has received the truth for himself, has received it as a steward, and is, as such, indebted to God, from whom he got the trust, and to all for whom he received it. The only limit to the obligation is, as Paul says in the context...

4

“As much as in me is.”

Ability, defined by knowledge, opportunity, and circumstance, determines the kind and the degree of the work to be done in the discharge of the obligation; but the obligation is both real and universal. We are not at liberty to choose whether we shall do our part in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a debt that we owe to God and to men for our salvation. We do not expect to be praised for paying our debts, though sometimes when the attitude of people, nor should we.

That is what makes it an obligation. That means we do not have the option to choose whether we shall pay it or not. If we choose to not pay the debt that comes with salvation, then we go spiritually bankrupt.

What we are going to try to do in this lesson is reinforce the thought of indebtedness towards God and of honesty in discharging the indebtedness that Paul is talking about. He understood that his commitment was to carry the Gospel to everyone he could, a commitment that should be just as real today as it was then.

5 1) Christians are debtors

How can a value be equated to what Christ has done? You've seen the commercials; New crib \$300, new stroller \$200, new car seat \$200, that first smile priceless. What Christ gave up for you and I is beyond priceless.

Phil 2:5-7 **6**

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, **6** who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Paul says Christ "emptied Himself," and left equality with God to take on humanity, humanity, an interesting thought. In...

Titus 2:11 **7**

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

Think about something, not since the time just after the Tower of Babel has mankind been united in anything.

Gen 11:6 **8**

6 The Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.

After the flood, Noah and his family had left the ark and begun to repopulate the world. They were all of one accord with the same language. The Lord knew this was dangerous, it was not yet time for man to be united.

Gen 11:8-9 **9**

8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. **9** Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

A quick aside here, in...

Gen 10:25 **10**

25 Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg (*whose name means earthquake*), for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.

Peleg, or so it is thought, lived at the time of the Tower of Babel and was called "Earthquake," because it was at that time that God divided the dry land into the continents. Take that for whatever it is worth, there is no definitive scriptural proof of that other than the account of the Tower of Babel and this verse in Genesis.

The idea is that once again, through Christ, humanity is to be united. Christianity has brought that unity to the world; it has introduced a new thought of the brotherhood of mankind. As soon as man accepted the message that Jesus Christ came to give salvation, which is the message that God is the Father of all, that renewed unity of man began. Consider the 12 Apostles. Fishermen, a publican, a doctor, vastly different levels of society that would normally have nothing to do with each other, coming together in the name of Jesus Christ to worship the Father. Now compound that exponentially throughout the world, all nations, all languages, sinners, and righteous coming together.

Eph 4:11-13

11

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

On the belief of God's Fatherhood of all mankind, and the fact that Christ came to save all mankind is the belief of man's brotherhood, and on it alone is that belief secured and based.

Look back at the passage we started with...

Rom 1:14

12

14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

Here is a Jew writing to Latins in the Greek language. The phenomenon itself is a sign of the new order of things, and in the course of the ages to come would dissolve the barriers between men. Do remember what the prophecy was in Daniel?

Dan 2:34-35

13

34 "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. **35** "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

44 "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

Paul points out some of the more major differences that mankind faces in the passage in Romans;

14 A) “Greeks and Barbarians”

Which at that time were the basic divisions of mankind, race and language. Remember what the Lord said at the time of the Tower of Babel, “Let us confuse their language.” Then Paul splits mankind even further when he says the

15 B) “Wise and unwise”

The division of culture and so-called intellectual capacity. Both rifts still exist, the only thing that can span those gulfs, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Christians owe a debt to all mankind to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all. Cain is not a very good model, but his question is the Christians’ question,

16 *“Am I my brother's keeper?”*

While Cain may have been looking for a negative answer, the answer to the followers of Christ today is a resounding “YES”.

17 2) Christians are debtors because of their possession of the universal salvation

We have been given the greatest gift ever to be given, that of salvation through Jesus Christ. What are we to do with it? Why did He offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice? Notice what Christ says in...

John 12:30-32 **18**

31 Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. **32** and I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

Christ came to draw all men to Him. He came to save all men.

Heb 5:9 **19**

9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

Christ draws men to Himself for their own sakes, but not for their own sakes only. He draws them to Himself, that they, in their turn, may draw others with their lives, words, and teaching so that others may enjoy the blessings to be found in him.

1 Peter 2:11-12 **20**

11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. **12** Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

I can't imagine a greater thrill than to have someone tell you that they want to learn of Jesus because they have seen how you live your life. One, they want to learn of Christ, two it validates the life you are trying to live. And that really is the point of this discussion, we should feel an obligation to others because they not only are our brothers by virtue of humanity, but because Christ has given us the gift of salvation and has asked us to help spread it to others, to our brothers.

I want to take just a moment now to speak in generalities. The world of religion has perverted the idea of being a Christian; it defines Christian as anyone who says they accept Christ as their personal savior. While being a Christian is that, it is also encompasses a much broader definition of what that means. Accepting Christ as one's personal savior isn't confined to just a mental acceptance, a belief, that He is the Son of God, but rather includes along with that belief a determined faithful obedience to His commands. Alone of all faiths, following Jesus Christ as a Christian has proven itself capable of transforming every type of character, of influencing every stage of civilization, and of assuming the speech of every tongue. But, just for clarification, following Jesus as a Christian means following everything He commanded in faithfulness and love.

Christ says He will draw...

21

“ALL MEN”

So, to all men, we are bound, as much as it is in us to do, to carry the Gospel. If a man wants the Gospel, I am obligated through Christ to do my best to give it to him. Lastly...

3) Lastly, we are debtors by injuries inflicted

This may sound a little odd, on the surface, but hopefully I can explain what I mean by it.

1 Peter 5:8

22

8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Brethren, We, more than any others of the world, and that includes the world of religion, know to that lengths Satan will go to deceive men into turning away from God. False teaching, perversions of the Gospel, denying everything God says, Satan is actively seeking to devour whom he can. Faithful followers of Christ have the tool to keep Satan at bay, and because of that, we are debtors to all men.

To that end, and I don't typically speak about politics, because they are so strongly based on personal opinion and experience, but we are facing a very difficult election coming in November. This isn't to endorse any one candidate but rather to encourage us all to do our due diligence in making sure that we do the best we can to cast our vote in the best way possible. And while we may not necessarily be able to influence national action in accordance with the political scene, we can influence the spiritual action of Oakdale by how we act, what we say, and what we teach. And that brethren, is our obligation that we owe to God, to Christ, to their truth, and not in the least, to all men.

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So, what's your spiritual credit score look like? Are we paying our debts to God and to man, or are we spiritually bankrupt?