(Romans 1:14)

Key Scripture:

> “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.”
> — *Romans 1:14–15 (NIV)*

Understanding Paul’s Statement

When Paul says he is “obligated,” the original Greek word used is *opheilētēs*, which means “a debtor” or someone who owes a debt. Paul isn’t speaking about financial debt, but a spiritual one. He felt deeply responsible for sharing the Gospel with everyone because of the grace he had received from Christ.

Who Are the Greeks and Non-Greeks?

In Paul’s cultural context:

- Greeks were often synonymous with the educated, cultured, and philosophical.

Greece was the hub of classical knowledge, philosophy, and logic.

- Non-Greeks (often translated as “barbarians”) were considered outsiders to Greek culture—those who lacked formal education or sophistication.

The same applies to the wise and the foolish—categories that reflect levels of intellectual receptiveness.

> “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.”
> *— 1 Corinthians 1:21 (NIV)*

Paul knew that regardless of their education or background, all people needed the Gospel.

Theological Insight: Universal Scope of the Gospel

The Gospel transcends human boundaries—ethnic, intellectual, or social. Paul’s theology affirms:

- All have sinned: *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23).

- Christ died for all: *“He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:10).
- All must hear: *“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? … And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”* (Romans 10:14).

Paul saw himself as a vessel through which this message should be delivered—urgently and inclusively.

Greeks Seek Wisdom, Jews Seek Signs

Paul often encountered two types of responses:

> “Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.”
> *— 1 Corinthians 1:22–23 (NIV)*

Jews tended to require miraculous signs, while Greeks preferred rational argument and intellectual reasoning. Paul tailored his approach accordingly:

- With Jews: He often referenced Scripture and miracles.

- With Greeks: He used philosophical reasoning and logical appeals.

This principle is seen clearly in Acts 17.

Paul in Athens – An Example of Contextual Evangelism

In Acts 17:16–34, Paul addressed the philosophers of Athens:

- He observed an altar inscribed *“To an Unknown God”* (v.23).
- He used this as a bridge to reveal the true God.
- He quoted their poets: *“For in him we live and move and have our being.”* (v.28)

This shows Paul’s missional adaptability—he neither compromised the truth nor ignored the context.

> “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.”
> *— 1 Corinthians 9:22 (NIV)*

What Does This Teach Us Today?

Like Paul, we are also debtors to all people. We have a responsibility to:

- Share Christ with both the educated and the uneducated,
- Reach both the powerful and the humble,
- Speak wisely to those who value reason,
- Demonstrate grace to those seeking signs or emotional connection.

Sometimes, the reason people don’t respond is not their resistance—but our failure to approach them wisely.

We must pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance to speak in ways that touch each person’s heart and mind.

> “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”
> *— James 1:5 (NIV)*

Conclusion: The Mission Is for Everyone

Paul’s approach teaches us:

- To recognize that the Gospel is for all, not just a chosen few.
- To adapt wisely without diluting the message.
- To let love and urgency fuel our evangelism.

May we, like Paul, be eager to share the Gospel with all kinds of people, being all things to all people, so that some might be saved.

Maranatha – The Lord is coming soon!

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