

ROM 217 - What Makes a Minister? - Rom 15:14-33

If we're going to **look** today - at "What makes a Minister"
I guess we better start by **defining the word** MINISTER

HARPERS Bible Dictionary:

A minister serves the need, whatever it is; to that end, in the New Testament, the whole church was to be equipped.

In fact - it is the Church Leadership's **JOB**
To **EQUIP** the Saints to be Ministers

Eph. 4:11-12 - ESV

*11 And he [Christ] gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,
12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,*

A minister serves the need, whatever it is; to that end, in the New Testament, the whole church is to be equipped.

So - if you a part of "The Whole Church"
Then you have been **called** - to be a Minister

& **if you** are **ready** to say **YES LORD** to that call

Then **today** - we are going to see
what Makes you a **TRUE MINISTER**

Let's Pray

We're going to see **THREE LESSONS** today
& I'd like to **give them to you** up front - (*poss write them down*)

Lesson #1) A Minister of Jesus Christ
must **understand their Priestly Service to GOD**

Lesson #2) A Minister of Jesus Christ
must **give GOD ALL the credit**

Lesson #3) A Minister of Jesus Christ
must **have a Calling, but not a Blueprint**

Certainly there are plenty of **other** lessons
on **What Makes a Minister**

But **THESE** are the 3 lessons we see **in our text** today
so we'll focus on **them**

Lesson #1) A Minister of Jesus Christ
must **understand their Priestly Service to GOD**

Paul starts with a little "**Commendation**" to the Romans in **V.14**
& then we see our **lesson # 1** - in **V.15-16**

Rom 15:14- ESV

14 I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.

Rom 15:15-16 - ESV → →

Rom 15:15-16 - ESV

15 But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Paul is **DEFINING** his Position of **Minister** to the Gentiles

& it's **interesting** that Paul didn't choose the normal **GK** word for **minister** here

the **GK** word "**Diakonos**" [dee*ak*on*os] from which we get our word "**Deacon**" or "**Deaconess**"

Instead he uses the Greek word "**Leitourgos**" [lay*turg*os] from which we get our word "**Liturgy**", **LIT** meaning **Priest**

Which is why **V.16** reads - ***a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God***

Paul saw his Ministry as a "**PRIESTLY SERVICE**" to God

MEANING - Paul saw the **Eternal Perspective** of his **Earthly Efforts**

& **that's** something that **we Ministers** need to see **today**

To me, Paul's ministry looks like

100's of miles of dusty, dangerous roads traveled on foot
radical suffering, beatings, ship-wrecks, & imprisonments

But that's **NOT** what it looked like to **Paul - or to GOD**

To **PAUL** - & To **GOD** - That was ALL Part
of Paul's **PRIESTLY SERVICE**

All those dusty roads, the suffering, the beatings,
the shipwrecks, & imprisonments

We're just **the MEANS** by which
Paul was able to **MINISTER** to the Gentiles

& so they became part of Paul's **PRIESTLY SERVICE** to God

Here's a Question -

How do we **view** the Road **we** Travel, in order to Minister ?

We will probably **NEVER** go thru anything comparable
to what **Paul** experienced

But the **Road** we Travel to be a Minister
is definitely **long**, & **dusty**, & can be **dangerous**

& there is definitely **Sacrifice** & **Suffering** along the way

The question is - do we see all that
as part of our **PRIESTLY SERVICE** to God ?

Or **do we** see it as **something to avoid** at all costs
in order to make our lives **easier** ??

We have been made

A **KINGDOM of PRIESTS** - - A **ROYAL PRIESTHOOD** !!

But **is that** our **Perspective** ??

Rev 1:6 - ESV

6 and [Christ] made us a kingdom, - priests to his God and Father

1Pet 2:9 - ESV

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, . . .

If you are **serving God** today

no matter what your **role** or **position** is

& ***no matter*** if it's **in the church** or in **your own home**

If you are serving God - you are ***a Minister of Christ Jesus***

& so we can read **Rom 15:16** this way

Rom 15:16

. . . a minister of Christ Jesus to MY FAMILY in the priestly service of the gospel of God

. . . a minister of Christ Jesus to THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY in the priestly service of the gospel of God

. . . a minister of Christ Jesus to THE HURTING & THE BROKEN in the priestly service of the gospel of God

You Fill in the BLANK - - Nursery - Sunday School
Youth - Set-Up - Helps - YOU NAME IT

If you're doing it for God - then you are in the PRIESTLY SERVICE

1Pet 2:5 - ESV

5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

& THAT Vs leads us right into the 2nd half
of our Priestly Service to God

Let's re-read Rom 15:16 - ESV

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

What was Paul's "Offering" (*Spiritual Sacrifice*) to God ? (V.16)
It was THE GENTILES

Look how the NLT puts the end of Rom 15:16 - NLT

16 . . . I bring you the Good News so that I might present you as an acceptable offering to God, made holy by the Holy Spirit.

Paul's "Priestly Service" was to Present the Gentiles to God,
made holy (set apart) by the Holy Spirit

& so if you - as a Minister
after miles of dusty, dangerous, & suffering roads

Have been PART of a CHANGED LIFE being offered to God
Then you have done your Priestly Service WELL

& the road you've travelled - has simply been
the path to get to that Priestly Service

Whether you're a Minister in your HOME, NEIGHBORHOOD,
WORK, CHURCH

& you can be EXTREMELY JOYFUL in that Offering to God

Look at the next Vs. - Rom 15:17 - ESV
17 In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God.

That word "PROUD" strikes us as a little "Funny" - doesn't it ?

It means LIT - to GLORY IN - or to be EXTREMELY JOYFUL
It's not PROUD in the Negative Sense of the word

& THAT leads us right into our SECOND LESSON on
"What Makes a Minister"

**Lesson #2) A minister of Jesus Christ
must give GOD ALL the credit**

I'd like to do Lesson #2 - out of the NLT

Rom 15:17-18 - NLT

17 So I have reason to be enthusiastic (better word) about all Christ Jesus has done through me in my service to God.

18 Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them.

Paul says - I am **SO PUMPED** (so enthusiastic)
about what **CHRIST** has done **THRU** me, in my service to God

& then he Quickly Clarifies in Vs.18

Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me

Paul limits his "**Enthusiasm**"

to boasting **ONLY** about what **Christ** has done thru him
& he says - **I DARE NOT** Boast about anything **else**

& then - **in V.18** - Paul says that **Christ** brought the Gentiles to God
BY Paul's message, &
BY the way Paul worked among them

BUT he doesn't actually say - his message or the way he worked
was necessarily **Good**, or "**Praise Worthy**"

He just says that **Jesus was able** to **USE** His efforts
to **bring** the Gentiles to God

Why is it that we are so much like that **6 year old** little leaguer

who confidently steps up to the plate at his **1st T-BALL** game
& swings his entire **50 pounds** at the ball
only to barely nick it w/ the very **end of his bat**

& as the ball **barely rolls** toward the pitcher
he takes off for first base

When he's **only half way there** - the pitcher picks up the ball
& throws it 10 feet over the first baseman's head

While **our 3 ft high batter** is running to 2nd,
the first baseman makes his hardest possible throw
& the ball rolls out into left field

Where **the left fielder** is bird-watching
& doesn't even know the ball is anywhere near him

& while **the whole team** is screaming at the Left-fielder
our pip-squeak "*Babe Ruth*" finally crosses home plate

& as **he swaggers** into the dugout he says to his team;
"Hey, did you see me hit that home-run"

In the Kingdom of God - the best we can do - w/ our hardest swing,
is to barely **dribble** a ball back to the pitcher

God does **all the rest** - to get us around the bases and back to home !

There is **nothing** that any of us can do of any Eternal Value
without Jesus Christ doing it THRU our **feeble efforts**

& so - we must **ONLY** speak - of what Christ has done **THRU US**

& in V.19 - Paul places the Glory EXACTLY where it is due

Rom 15:19 - NLT

19 They [Gentiles] were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit. In this way (meaning by God's POWER & by God's SPIRIT), *I have fully presented the Good News of Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum.* (e-lir-e-kohm)

Paul says - - ***It is only - BY God's POWER, & BY God's SPIRIT, that I have fully presented the Good News of Christ to the Gentiles***

& we MUST follow Paul's Example - *Giving GOD ALL the credit*

**Lesson #1) A Minister of Jesus Christ
must *understand their Priestly Service to GOD***

**Lesson #2) A Minister of Jesus Christ
must *give GOD ALL the credit***

**Lesson #3) A Minister of Jesus Christ
must *have a Calling, but not a Blueprint***

We must KNOW what God has called us to DO
But we must NEVER try to *Design Our Own Blueprints*

God's Ways are NOT our Ways - & in fact
Most Often - **HIS WAYS**, are OPPOSITE of our ways

If you will **give your life** to be a **Minister** of Jesus Christ
He **WILL** use you

But it **MAY NOT be** in the **way**, or in the **timing**, you'd like

& **we see** this - in the **next lesson** from Paul's life

Rom 15:20-21 - ESV

20 and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation,

21 but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."

First of all - Allow me to say - **This DOES NOT mean**

that **no person** should ever start a church
fewer than 10 mi's away - from another church

This verse is **NOT saying** that **"NO MAN"**
should ever build upon another man's foundation

If that were **true** then - what about all those men
who took over all those **churches** that Paul started
(*they were certainly building upon another man's foundation*)

This Vs. **is saying** - that it was **PAUL'S Specific CALLING**
to **NOT build** upon another man's foundation

It was **PAUL'S CALLING** to preach the gospel
where Christ had **NEVER** been named

Paul **KNEW** His Calling
& I Pray each of **US** - would know our **CALLING**

HOWEVER - Not even the Apostle Paul
knew **THE BLUEPRINTS** God designed - for his Calling

Paul had a **GOOD PLAN** to go to **Rome** (*we'll see in a minute*)
GOD had a **GOOD PLAN** to get Paul to **Rome**

it's just that **PAUL'S PLAN** - & **GOD'S PLAN**
had some **Drastic Differences** in the **ROAD TRAVELED** to Rome

Rom 15:22-24 - ESV

22 This is the reason [because of his calling] ***why I have so often been hindered from coming to you.***

23 But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, 24 I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.

Paul **planned** to come to **Rome** on his way to **Spain**
for **fellowship**, and to receive **financial help** from the church

But **Paul** had just **one obligation** to perform
before his plan could unfold

& **THAT** is where God showed Paul - **A NEW BLUEPRINT**

Rom 15:25-28 - ESV → →

Rom 15:25-28 - ESV

25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints.

26 For Macedonia and Achaia (provinces) (incl'd'g Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth) **have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.**

27 For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.

Some great Truths there - about our obligation

to give material blessings, in return for spiritual blessings
& for the churches to give to those in need within the church

28 When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you.

Paul had just **this one task** to complete
before **HIS** plan could move forward

He had **collected money** from the saints in Macedonia & Achaia
to give to the **needy** in Jerusalem

& Paul says (v.28) - **When** I have delivered this financial gift
then I will leave for Spain by way of Rome

Sounds good Paul - **Unless** of course

GOD has some other plans - - - & *he certainly **DID***

Paul **did** get the **offering** to the Jerusalem church

But then → →

Paul was almost **killed by a mob**
& only **escaped** w/ the help of the soldiers . . . by **boat**

Then - he was **shipwrecked**, **snake-bit**, **stranded**, **beat**
& **bound in chains** as a *prisoner*
& **THEN** - to be **brought to Rome** & thrown in a **Dungeon** !

As for getting to **Spain** – we don't know for certain,
if Paul ever made it to Spain or not

One thing we **DO KNOW** is

Paul's Plan & **God's** Plan - May've Had the **SAME END**
But they *Radically Different* **METHODS** to get to Rome

WHY would God allow **Paul** to be
shipwrecked, **snake-bit**, **stranded**, **beat** & **imprisoned**

WHY would God **NOT intervene** on Paul's behalf
& have everything work out just like **PAUL** planned it ?

Why would God have the **AUDACITY**
to **Draw His Own Blueprint** for **PAUL'S** ministry,
without even getting Paul's **OK** ?

Shouldn't Paul demand an **explanation** from God ??

Shouldn't Paul get angry at God
because things **DIDN'T work out** like **PAUL** had planned

Shouldn't Paul just throw up his hands
& **quit the ministry** all together

OR - - **Should PAUL** actually **ALLOW GOD**
to **DRAW the Blueprint** for his Ministry?
Even if it includes **suffering** ??

Paul's **CALLING** Never Changed
But the **Blueprints** - Ohhh, **they CHANGED** alright !

But **Paul's heart** stayed *right*

He **remained** focused on his ***Priestly Service to God***
He **remained** committed to ***giving GOD ALL the Glory***
He **remained** ***Steadfast to his Calling***, in-spite of Blueprints changing

& **THAT** is why the next verse in **Rom 15** is absolutely **TRUE**

Rom 15:29 - ESV

29 I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

When Paul came to ROME
it ***WAS in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.***

But it was ALSO **as a Prisoner** - facing a **DEATH SENTENCE**

The Blueprint had changed - but Paul's;
Priestly Service - Had NOT changed
Giving Glory to God - Had NOT changed
Calling - - - Had NEVER CHANGED !!

& if **WE** will commit
to becoming a **Minister** of the **SAME MAKING**

Then **WHEN WE** arrive - ***wherever it is He's taking us***

When WE arrive - We **WILL** arrive
in the fullness of the blessing of Christ

As we close **CH 15** - in **Vs's 30-32**

We have Paul's **PRAYER LIST**
as he asks the church in Rome to Pray with him

Let's follow **Paul's Prayer List**
& see what we can learn - - IN **HINDSIGHT** from Paul's life

Rom 15:30 - ESV

30 I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,

An **important lesson** here about
"striving together" with one another in **prayer**

But then Paul's *Prayer Request List* starts in **V.31**

Rom 15:31 - ESV

31 that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,

BOTH these things **DID** happen

- 1) **The offering** Paul delivered was a great blessing
- 2) & Paul **WAS** initially **delivered** from the unbelievers in Judea

However - the unbelievers did **eventually** have Paul *arrested*
& ultimately - he was *killed for his faith*

But the **BIG lesson** is in **V.32**

Rom 15:32 - ESV

32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.

by God's will I may come to you

DID Paul come to Rome *BY God's Will*** - **YES !!****

Was **God's** will **ANYTHING LIKE Paul's** Will - - - **NO !**

But Paul prays - that ***I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company***

& we know - **INSPITE** of the **suffering & hardship** that finally brought Paul to Rome

We **KNOW** that he came in **JOY**
because he wrote Philippians - which is **ALL ABOUT JOY**
while he was in **prison** in **ROME**

& **we know** by the **Prison epistles** - that the **saints in Rome** did indeed **REFRESH** Paul during his imprisonment there

& so, **PAUL** did his part - - & **GOD** did His part

Paul's Part was to;

Understand his Priestly Service to God

Give GOD ALL the Glory

Remain Steadfast in his Calling

God's Part was to;

Draw the details of Paul's Blueprints

Bring about His will in Paul's life

My prayer - is that God would Make Us Ministers
the Exact Same Way

& finally - Paul closes the teaching section of Romans
with the ONLY Benediction that each of US need

in order FOR US - to live our lives - as Ministers of Jesus Christ

Rom 15:33 - ESV

33 May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Let's Pray