

Paul has been speaking to his family, the brethren.

He's never been to Rome but he's certainly aware of the good they've done.

- They've developed a good reputation

Paul reminds the church that

- he's an apostle and
- that he's in a position of authority.

In fact, he reminds the church that

- he's a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

This simply means that there is no longer a special priesthood in the NT.

- We no longer need anyone to offer penance to God on our behalf.

Matt 28 tells us that we've been commissioned to share the gospel with others.

Rom 15:22-33

22 For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you,

24 whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while.

25 But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.

26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.

27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

28 Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.

29 But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

30 Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,

31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,

32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.

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

22 For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.

Paul made it his business to share the gospel everywhere he went.

He'd been busy sharing the gospel in what

- he may have labeled as the eastern part of the Roman Empire

We're told that something hindered Paul from visiting Rome. What or who was it?

Paul had much opposition in his life,

- like the Judaizers who followed him and
- tried to undermine his ministry.
- He had health issues and many other obstacles.

I believe there are many times that the Lord Himself has hindered us from doing something.

Have you ever stopped and thanked God after returning from running errands?

A friend of mine shared something with me last week,

- What if you woke up today with only the things you thanked God for yesterday.
- What would you have!

How often do we thank the LORD!

Paul may have been hindered by the Lord and not by Satan

Acts 16:6-7

6 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. 7 After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.

Then again in his letter to the Philippians while in a Roman jail:

Phil 1:12-14

12 But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, 13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; 14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Paul's aim stood in the way, He wanted to go to where no one had been.

- God had other plans!

23 But now no longer having a place (tōpos - opportunity, occasion) in these parts (talking about Greece and Macedonia), and having a great desire these many years to come to you,

24 whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you if first I may enjoy your company for a while.

Paul's desire was to visit the church of Rome. His plan was to go to Rome and from there to Spain. Interestingly, he did make it to Rome but not the way he would have liked to have gone.

This was due in part that he was accused of taking a man by the name of Trophimus into the temple. After his arrest, and after an oath by some Jews to kill Paul, he was taken to Caesarea where he'd spend the next two years in jail.

It seems strange to hear Paul say in verse 23

- that he no longer had a place in Greece.
- It could mean that he had fully preached the gospel in the circuit.
- I reached my goal,
- I don't really have a place in these parts anymore.

Paul had a bucket list and on that list was Spain.

Did Paul ever make it to Spain,

- we don't know for certain but there is some historical evidence which shows that Spain was not evangelized until the 3rd century, so it's unlikely Paul ever visited.

Paul did have a hope that the church in Rome would support the ministry he was involved in once he arrived, nothing wrong with this when your motives are right.

There are a few ways you can get involved in missions,

- one is to go in person,
- second is to go in prayer

- and third you can go financially.

1 Cor 16:1-2 gives some principles on giving,

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

Paul didn't want to have to deal with the collection of money from the saints.

Giving was on the first day of the week so

- it was very systematic
- giving is voluntary

This is where giving starts, by saying this belongs to God.

That was a disciplined system of putting God first.

- God isn't looking at any amount that we give. He wants us to give with right motives even if it's a widows mite,

Remember the story of the poor woman who gave what she had:

Luke 21:1-4

21 And He Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, 2 and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. 3 So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; 4 for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."

God looked at the motive in her giving. She sacrificed more than the rich.

Paul is saying, come on, I'm trying to get the gospel out, if first I may enjoy your company for a while.

But before Paul can even think of visiting Rome he has one responsibility that he must take care of,

- that's delivering the collection to the poor that

25 But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister (~~serve~~) to the saints.

I'd like you to consider something.

- Paul had a desire to go to Rome,
- to go to Spain.

But he had a prior commitment

- and that was to serve the saints in Jerusalem.

He wasn't going to allow his personal desire of visiting Rome to keep him from a prior commitment.

The word minister here means "to serve."

26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.

Paul spent a lot of time talking to the church about giving,

- he continually went back to churches he'd planted
- soliciting their support.

Remember, prayer is the best and most important weapon we have as a Christian.

- That is our direct line to the Lord.

Sending money to Jerusalem was common practice.

- They gave to meet the needs of the people in the church who had fallen on hard times.
- And that's what Paul is speaking of here.

The church has always been selfless:

Acts 4:32-37

32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. 33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. 34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

No doubt there were poor people in Jerusalem at the time and Paul reminds the Gentiles that they are debtors to the Jews.

He's saying,

- since or because you "Gentiles" have been partakers of spiritual things,

- you then have an obligation to minister to the Jews in material things.

28 Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit (the contribution of money), I shall go by way of you to Spain.

29 But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

Paul knew first hand that his plans could be altered at any time.

- Now, it's good to plan, but be prepared to allow God to change your plans.

Rom 8:28:

Yes, all things do work out for the good of those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose.

- But He also says: My thought are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways. Isa 55:8
- We make plans in our heart, but He directs our steps Prov 16:9

30 Now I beg you (parakaleō - to call along side), brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together (to agonize, to contend for victory as they used to do in public games. It means to come along side of someone and assist in a fight. If things aren't getting done maybe it's because we're not spending time in prayer.) with me in prayers to God for me,

We see here that Paul was like any other person, he too was in need of prayer.

D.L. Moody once said:

I'd rather be able to pray than to be a great preacher; Jesus Christ never taught his disciples how to preach, but only how to pray.

He also said, He who kneels the most, stands the best.

Paul's prayer requests: Verse 31

31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service (ministry) for Jerusalem may be acceptable (received) to the saints,

It was for the cause of Christ and for the Kingdom that Paul wanted prayer. Paul needed prayer in 3 areas in particular.

First: He needed deliverance from unbelievers.

People didn't want the good news then, and people don't want the good news now.

Don't fool yourself even for a moment thinking that things are going to get better.

They're not!

2 Tim 3:13

13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Isa 5:20

20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

The word "woe" is

- not just a groan or a moan,
- but this word means "a judgment,"

so God will send His righteous judgment on all

- who call what is good, evil, and
- upon all who deem evil as good.

Paul needed deliverance from unbelievers:

He also needed prayer that the ministry would be accepted by the saints:

Paul was constantly opposed by carnal believers.

First he prays for those that could be a problem.

Was Paul delivered? Yes, according to acts 21.

How was he delivered?

- He was arrested, tried, imprisoned and 3 times rescued from being lynched.

In Acts 23:12 they plotted to kill him.

Paul is also praying that the gift that the Gentiles are giving to the Jews would be received and that thru this the Jews would receive the Gentiles as part of God's family.

We know Paul was ministering to the Gentiles, but he was Jew. He was trying to bridge the gap between Jewish believers and Gentile believers.

32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.

Paul's third prayer request is verse 32.

He's praying God's will, not his will, God's will!

Paul's prayer was:

1) That he'd be delivered from those in Judea that do not believe.
Was he delivered? Yes, after a beating.

2) That his service to those in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the Saints.
He was speaking of the gift of money to the saints in Jerusalem. Was it acceptable?
Yes, but we're not told of it.

3) Third prayer was to visit Rome. Did he go? Yes, but not quite the way he hoped
he'd go.

At times we pray and it seems God isn't answering.

But is that so? No! We have a preconceived idea of how God should answer our
prayers.

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

In verse 5 Paul calls God the "God of patience"

In verse 13 He calls Him the "God of Hope"

And finally here in verse 33 he calls Him the "God of Peace."

One of the names of God is Jehovah meaning "I will be who I will be"