Sermon Highlights

Called, Commissioned, and Certain:
Living Out Your Priestly Calling

Summary:

Drawing from Romans 15:14-32, this sermon examines Paul's closing words to the Roman church, exploring three commendations he offers them -- fullness of goodness, knowledge of the Word, and the ability to counsel one another -- before turning to his vision of himself as a priestly minister to the Gentiles. The sermon calls believers to recognize their own priestly identity before God, to discover and walk confidently in their specific calling, and to support the work of God through faithful prayer. Paul's travel plans and his request for prayer serve as a practical framework for understanding how believers are to engage one another in accountability, intercession, and the shared mission of the gospel.

Key Points:

- Paul commends the Roman church for three qualities: goodness that flows from genuine transformation, knowledge of the Word of God, and the ability to counsel and be counseled by one another

- True knowledge of Scripture must move beyond the intellect and become part of a believer's character and conduct, much like a fragrance that permeates a person from the inside out

- Every believer holds a priestly role before God, standing as a representative of God's hope to the world and offering themselves as living sacrifices

- Knowing one's specific calling is essential to walking in the power and confidence of the Holy Spirit; uncertainty about calling produces timidity and ineffectiveness

- The church is weakened by prayerlessness and an absence of thankfulness; these are callings in themselves that many believers neglect

- Paul's example demonstrates that God's purposes are accomplished through willing, surrendered instruments rather than through human planning alone -- his chains in Rome became a platform for the gospel

- Specific, honest prayer requests are more effective than vague appeals; Paul models this by giving the Roman believers three precise things to pray for on his behalf

- The God of peace dwelling richly in believers is the ultimate blessing for a church navigating an unstable and often hostile world

Scripture Reference:

- Romans 15:14-32, in which Paul commends the Roman church, describes his priestly calling to the Gentiles, outlines his missionary ambitions toward Spain, explains his mission to deliver a financial gift to the saints in Jerusalem, and requests specific prayer

Stories:

- Pastor Bruce Gordon recounts a trip to Israel in 1999 during which the group's guide, a Greek man, was so saturated with garlic that the aroma came through his very pores -- used as an illustration of how believers ought to be so saturated with the goodness of God that it becomes their natural fragrance to the world around them

- Pastor Bruce Gordon shares his own reluctance to accept the call to preach, acknowledging that he initially ran from it, and that God persistently and purposefully pressed upon his heart until he submitted -- used to illustrate that a calling is not self-selected but divinely appointed

- The historical account from the book of Acts is referenced regarding Paul's collection from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia for the impoverished saints in Jerusalem, illustrating the principle that those who have received spiritual blessing bear a responsibility to those from whom that blessing came

- Paul's eventual arrival in Rome in chains, though he had hoped to visit freely on his way to Spain, is noted as an example of God redirecting human plans for greater purposes, with Paul turning his imprisonment into an opportunity to witness to the Roman soldiers chained to him