

Intro: The first 11 Chapters of Romans is written from a doctrinal standpoint. Paul's sharing the gospel in a very detailed way. The next 3 ½ chapters are written to exhort the believers in Rome to live out the gospel in a more practical way. In front of the world and amongst each other.

Now the 2nd half of Chapter 15 and through the rest of the book it's more personal. Paul is now sharing with us his passion for ministry. I don't know if that was his goal to do that but as you read this section you start to see this underlining theme woven through it.

As Paul addresses them in a little more personal manner (vs14-21) and as he gives us his travel plans (vs 22-23) you can't help but to pick up Paul's heart, his passion, his vision when it comes to ministry.

You see the words ministry, ministering, minister used in this section and into the beginning of Ch16, when we are introduced to a certain "servant" which is another Greek word which describes this theme of ministry. See 15:8 (that word "servant" means minister)

So Holy Spirit has bathed this section with this theme of ministry and as we go through it my prayer is that Paul's heart, passion and vision as a minister doing the ministry along with other ministers, will begin to resonate within our hearts and minds as well.

14-21 I. PAULS PASSION FOR MINISTRY

14-16 A. Paul Wrote As A Reminder

Paul's saying, look I'm confident concerning you guys; in other words I'm convinced you all are the real deal. That your full of goodness and

that you understand these things very well, in fact so well your able to **"admonish one another"** or teach these things to each other.

15

1. **"Nevertheless I have written to you more boldly on some points as a reminder"**. You see though you may have heard this stuff before, we all need to be reminded.

a. It's as if Paul put down the pin and moved his chair close to theirs and said "I know what God's been doing in you guys. *You should've seen the letter written to the Corinthians !*

2. And if you look back at the letter there were some areas that were pretty bold right?

a. Those of us who have been in Christ for some time, when we began this book, there were some pretty strong areas that served as a stout reminder of where we were.

b. When Paul began to explain those who were given over to themselves in the lusts of their hearts (ch1) we remembered.

c. And in Ch 2 when Paul told them that you're inexcusable those of you who judge others but practice the same things we were reminded.

d. And the list went on.....

i. Circumcision, baptism, outward religious works mean nothing circumcision is not outward but in the heart.

ii. All have sinned. All fall short of the glory of God.

iii. Justification only comes by faith in Christ. Like Abraham.

iv. When he told us we are no longer slaves of sin but we were saved by grace so then reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God, we were reminded.

e. We could go on and on, my point is though that even though we may have heard something before A few times.... God knows we are but dust that we are easily distracted. That even though we know something we need to be reminded.

f. You may say about a sermon *"Oh, I've heard this before"* or a bible passage *"Oh, I've read this before"* but what does God want to say to you today through it?

And why was Paul taking all this time and energy writing this letter to them.....?

15b-16

3. ***"because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, 16 that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit"*** The reason I've written this doctrinal Epistle of which many of these things you already knew was because this is what Christ ordained me to do. This is my calling. To be a minister to the Gentiles.

a. And if Paul would be really honest with us he'd probably tell us *"I would've thought Jesus would've chosen me to minister to the Jews."*

i. That's my homies That's where I'm from!

b. Paul gives his testimony to his homies – look at what happened. **Go to Acts 22:1-22**

i. They know I've put in work

ii. They'll see if God can change me, He can change them.

c. Sometimes it's as Jesus said. A prophet is without honor in his own home town.

d. Paul could've been wallowing in this. Upset about it. But instead he did as the Lord was directing. He's a servant, a minister, ministering in a Kingdom that's not his.

And he says

- 15b
4. It's only **"because of the grace given to me by God"** that I'm even able to do anything.
- a. He doesn't argue why does James get to stay in Jerusalem? Why is he a leader there? He wasn't even schooled.
- b. That's not even his neighborhood.
- c. He's not focused on that he focused on the grace God has given him to do what He's called "him" to do.
- d. To be a minister to the Gentiles. To be an usher; a greeter; a sound guy; a parking attendant; a community group leader; front Office attendant; coffee bar servant..... whatever God has given us to do it's all only by His grace!
- e. And He's asking us a He asked Paul to be faithful at what He's given us as assignment at this time. (that's the heart of ministry; faithfulness)
5. Paul would be saying I've been faithful in my calling to you Gentiles though I thought my passion was for the Jews.

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- a. Though I had a heart to go in one direction, God redirected my heart.
 - b. And I wanted to be faithful.
 - c. As a minister, ministering the gospel! You see Pauls' preaching wasn't the only thing that was spreading the Gospel. He says I wrote this letter to you as part of preaching the gospel.
 - i. I disciplined people as part of spreading the gospel.
 - ii. I started home fellowships that became churches, I set up chairs, I made coffee, I swept floors, you see everything we do in ministry is all part of the bigger picture of spreading the gospel.

16

6. "that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit". Vs 16 has a priestly tone to it. To Paul this ministry to the Gentiles is sacred and holy work. It's an offering to the Lord.

- a. Why? Because of the words he chooses to use here for minister (vs16) and ministering (vs16b). Minister- (li-toorg-os) not (diakonos) vs 8,25,31,16:1, which we get our word Deacon – servant . But (li-toorg-os) means a minister or priest in the temple.
- b. What's Paul saying? He saying *"Though I could not come to you yet, I've written. And though I know that you are full of goodness and all knowledge I've wanted to boldly remind you of some sound doctrinal truths. See this is my ministry that God's called me to. He's given me to you, to care for and tend. To grow and admonish whether in person or by letter and you know what?*

I take it very seriously. You are my offering to the Lord. Acceptable and sanctified by the Holy Spirit"

c. What a vision for ministry right? What a heart for people. That's focus.

7. Let me ask you something? Do we see what God has asked us to do as a priestly offering up to Him?

a. Would it be considered "**acceptable**" as an offering? Or is it with attitude and slothfulness?

b. Is it our best? As the priestly offering had to be?

c. Is it sanctified by the Holy Spirit? Set apart by the Holy Spirit? Or is it set aflamed by the flesh? Is it private ambition that cares very little about those it's supposed to serve?

Paul was able to say "my ministry to you is an offering to the Lord....."

17-19 B. Paul Glories In The Work God Has Done

Paul's saying, I've received this calling from the Lord to go out into all the world and preach the gospel among those who would have never heard of it, and in doing so I've seen God do some awesome things. Signs, wonders, healings; He's accomplished much in a short period of time. And I've had a front row seat!

17 1. Therefore I have reason to glory but that reason to glory would be "in Christ". Not in myself.

a. **Rom 15:17-18** Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. NASB

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- 18a
2. In fact he says **"I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me"**. Basically, anything that I've accomplished on my own I won't dare speak of. Wow.
3. Here's another snap shot into the heart of Paul when it comes to his ministry.
- a. As true as it may be to not waste time talking about all the things I've accomplished, it's just as true to boldly proclaim and glory in the things God is doing in and through us.
- b. We don't have to remain silent so as to appear humble, if God is doing a great work we can proudly boast in the Lord. Proclaim what God is doing!
- i. But we also want it clear it wasn't us doing it.
- c. See we're like those kids I would coach when my son Carlos was playing T-ball. (explain = tip, run, over throw, cross plate)
*** Go up to swing *** Ball barely rolls off the tee *** Someone picks it up.... Or don't! *** Finally someone gets it and over throws the 1st baseman so you run *** They overthrow the next base *** You run *** Till you finally make it home! *** Everyone's happy Home Run!
- d. Paul would be saying God has done some mighty things, the Spirit of God moved powerfully through me from Jerusalem to Illyricum around every base it was all God.
- i. Why? To get the gospel preached.

20-21 C. **Paul's Desire To Preach Where Christ Wasn't**

- 20a
1. **"I've made it my aim to preach the gospel"**
- a. Not to do or see miracles, signs and wonders.

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- b. But to use miracles, signs and wonders as a means to spread the gospel.

20b

2. **"not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation."** Paul's saying "I've made it my aim to take the gospel to places that never heard it. To bring the good news of salvation to the areas where no one had been yet.

- a. Jon Courson said, "*Paul had traveled 1,400 miles walking in order to be a fisher of men rather than dipping into someone's aquarium*"

3. We may think that everyone's heard the gospel message in this town, but there are groups of people that haven't been reached.

- a. There may be specific needs unmet in a town such as ours with many churches.
- b. We may not be able to go out the country to minister where Christ hasn't been preached, but we can seek to meet needs in this town that haven't been met.
- c. We can pray for God to help us reach people that are not being reached.

4. I think that's what Paul's heart was in ministry.

22-23

II. PAULS DESIRE TO GO TO ROME

22-24

A. **Time To Move On**

I love reading this more personal part of this letter because it really takes the robe of apostleship off of Paul (sort of speak) and allows us to see his everyday garments.

1. In other words – seeing Paul’s natural responses shows us a lot about his ministry.

22

2. For instance **“For this reason I also have been hindered from coming to you”**

a. **Hindered** = The Greek word egkopto (eng-kop'-to) N.T. 1465 means *to cut into, to impede one’s course by cutting off his way universally, to hinder.*

b. Paul allowed the needs of others to cut into his path from time to time.

23

3. **“but now no longer having a place in these parts and having a great desire these many years to come to you, whenever I journey to Spain I shall come to you”**

a. **but now, with no further place for me in these regions, NASB**

b. Now that there’s no longer a place for me to bring the gospel.....

c. **“whenever I journey to Spain”** Spain was considered then the edge of the world.

25-29

B. Paul’s Present Plans

25-27

1. At this time there is a great persecution of Christians in Jerusalem So many of them were experiencing poverty at levels they’d never known.

a. **[Map]** The churches Paul planted amongst the Gentiles felt compelling, indebted to the Christians there in Jerusalem that they sent aid.

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- b. Pauls writing Romans during his 3rd missionary journey while in Corinth.

28-29

2. **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.** NKJV

"After I have brought this fruit safely to them, I'll go by way of you to Spain."

29

3. **Read vs 29.** It's interesting how Paul gets there.

a. **Go to Acts 28:11**

- b. It's cool how you think your gonna be a blessing to others you serve in ministry and then they become the blessing you needed.

30-33

C. **Paul's Request For Prayer**

1. **"through the love of the Spirit"** What did Paul write in Phil 2:1

Phil 2:1-3 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

2. **"that you strive together with me in prayer to God for me"**

3. What's Paul asking prayer for?

- That he would be delivered from unbelievers
- That his service or ministry for Jerusalem be acceptable to the Saints.
- That he would come to them
- With Joy by the will of God.
- That he would be refreshed together with them.