

# Trailblazers

## Introduction

Come on! This year we are blazing new trails! We are the trailblazers!

This word, trailblazer, has been impacting me for over 3 months yall! It has convicted me, it has challenged me, it has shaped me, it has compelled me, and it has been transforming me, and I am so excited today as we step into a new season together.

A few weeks ago I spoke to you about my sons machette and how he trailblazed a path through the woods. What I didn't tell you was the part of that story that captivated me the most. As we blazed a trail through the woods that day, we found ourselves at a river bed, and we realized that we weren't the only ones who had blazed a trail through the woods. For we found out that someone, from a different angle, had not just blazed a trail, but they had taken territory by building a rope swing. And that day we lived in the blessing of a trailblazer. You see:

***A trailblazer is not just someone who makes a new path for themselves, but a trailblazer is someone who marks a new way forward that triggers a blessing for a future generation.***

And that is why today I want to talk to you from the following subject: Triggering our next Trail for a future generation

The text I want to use today is out of Romans 15, and I want to give you two versions to think on today:

**14** Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. **15** Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on *some* points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, **16** that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. **17** Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things *which pertain* to God. **18** For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient — **19** in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. **20** And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, **21** but as it is written: "To whom He was not announced,

they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand." <sup>22</sup> For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. <sup>23</sup> But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. <sup>26</sup> For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. <sup>29</sup> But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

Now I want to give you the Message version. This is a paraphrase and should not be used for your initial study, but I enjoy using it like a commentary at times, and I only use it in sermons when I feel as though the language captures the historical language in a modern tone.

**17-21** Looking back over what has been accomplished and what I have observed, I must say I am most pleased—in the context of Jesus, I'd even say *proud*, but only in that context. I have no interest in giving you a chatty account of my adventures, only the wondrously powerful and transformingly present words and deeds of Christ in me that triggered a believing response among the outsiders. In such ways I have trailblazed a preaching of the Message of Jesus all the way from Jerusalem far into northwestern Greece. This has all been pioneer work, bringing the Message only into those places where Jesus was not yet known and worshiped. My text has been, Those who were never told of him— they'll see him! Those who've never heard of him— they'll get the message!

Lets pray!

In todays text, Paul, our writer, is ending one of the most extraordinary theological letters we have on record. He is writing to the church in Rome because he plans to stop there and be refreshed and financially supported on his way to Spain. He has already trailblazed in a round about way from Jerusalem and to Illyricum (e-lyric-um), and now with no more new paths to blaze there he has decided to to travel to Jerusalem and then visit Rome on his way to Spain to blaze new trails in another wild land. And to do this, he writes many things to help give them a theological framework for the gospel or the good news and how that should directly impact their unity and their mission in Rome. One thing we must see though

is this: Paul is not simply asking them to support him. Paul is inviting them into the true gospel message. And as he is doing that, he doesn't just tell them what to do, but he shows them how the gospel message has impacted his life. Because before a community ever can trailblaze a message.... a trailblazer has to be transformed by the gospel.

The individual must first be transformed by the gospel to the place of understanding it is now my mission to blaze new trails for anyone I know to experience the gospel I have experienced.

NT Wright in his commentary mentions how Paul from the very beginning understood that the gospel was not supposed to stop with him, but was supposed to spread through him. Paul time and time again found himself standing in synagogues and markets and private houses and public halls and before magistrates and rulers and before ordinary folk in towns and villages, but it didn't matter who was in front of him, Paul understood that it was the call of the Christian to boldly bring the gospel to every place he found himself in.

Paul understood that the Christian life wasn't an invitation to comfort but an invitation to a call.

In Pelagius's Commentary on Romans Chrysotom makes a note: His note was to take notice of Paul as a trailblazer... That Paul went to where the labor was more and the toil was greater.

**\*A HOLY HINDERANCE\***

Here's an observation for you in the text: Paul mentions this in verse 23 For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.

Paul's plans were hindered for the purpose of the gospel in others' lives

When was the last time your plans were hindered for the purpose of the gospel in others' lives

A trailblazer allows God to transform them to the place where they are willing to take the path that hinders their plans for their future in order to aim their life at those who are hurting, hopeless, and have not yet heard the gospel of Jesus.

This week I had the opportunity to make a hospital visit for a sweet family in our church. I won't mention their name to you because I didn't ask for permission. But as I watched a trailblazer in action, I was compelled. I watched someone in our church caring so deeply and passionately for someone that is vulnerable and hurting. Not hopeless and without Jesus. But vulnerable and hurting. And I watched this woman give her entire self to care for the vulnerable. And I left that hospital room I was triggered by a modern day trailblazer.

And if I could make it real simple for you... This is how I would ask it:

Are you choosing to live a comfortable life? Or are you choosing to live a compelling life?

Paul chose a compelling life.

Our church member is choosing a compelling life.

It is far from comfortable in the natural, but that cost of discomfort is so small considered to the cost that Jesus paid to own our lives and it is so small compared to the future glory that awaits us on our foundation in heaven for our obedience to Jesus.

Paul wasn't just introducing himself as a trailblazer, Paul was also inviting the Romans in to a lifestyle of trailblazing as a community.

**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.

Paul understood the power of the Roman church. That the Roman church was in the capital of an empire. He understood the infrastructure of Rome. He understood how Rome could serve the mission of Jesus. May I remind you that any influence, any infrastructure, any income we possess as believers has one single priority: serve the mission of Jesus. And Paul was looking at this Roman church, and he had been taking time to give them theology around mission and theology around Jew and Gentile unity because Paul understood that a blessed church that was unified and generous could accelerate the mission of Jesus.

Though Rome did not own the gospel, Rome had been blessed to be a blessing. And the gospel was meant to flow through Rome. The gospel is meant to flow through places that have found favor in God's sight. The gospel is not meant to be centralized and it is meant to be mobilized by those who have been blessed mightily by God. Paul is not begging for bread, but rather

Paul is inviting those who have been given much into the responsibility and honor of aiding much.

In Pelagius Commentary to the Romans Ambrosiaster mentions that Paul wrote this section of scripture to tell the Romans that they ought to be concerned with this type of thing.

They ought to be concerned with giving and being benevolent to outsiders in order to show mercy to others how God showed mercy to them.

Paul is exhorting the Romans to use their influence, to use their favor, to use their blessing in unity together to contribute to the advancement of the gospel. Paul knew of the people in Jerusalem who had been so accurately transformed by the gospel that they laid at the feet of the apostles their possessions and devoted themselves to prayer and teaching and reading. Paul is aware of those in Macedonia and Achaia and how they made some contribution. And if those people, with far less of a blessing, had made that much of an impact then he is saying Rome I am exhorting you to do the same.

To give of yourself extravagantly so that that the gospel that reached you can reach others. When a place is shown the favor of God, a people should become more generous and more on mission not less, because favor is meant to flow through you not just fill you.

May the favor that God has blessed life church with flow through us and not make us fat. Jesus parable about fat barns...

We want it to FLOW THROUGH US. TRANSFER VS TRANSFORMATION

This year we want it to flow through us to\*THIS IS OUR AIM\*:

- Our community:
  - Life Pop Ups
  - Serve Days
  - Life Parent Resources
- Our Nation:
  - Life College
  - Family HQ Seeds of Faith
  - Church Plants
    - Waco & Seattle & Beyond
  - VBS Mission Trips
  - Linger Co Mission Tour
- Global
  - Childrens Bibles
  - Foursquare Missions Press
  - Apologetics Podcast

ORU Baseball + Life Church

"The privilege of playing meant the responsibility of paying, but it wasn't a task, it was an honor because I was in love and on mission."

Hear me church

"The privilege of salvation means the responsibility of laying down your life, but it isn't a task if you are in love, its an honor."

Paul understood this honor of laying down your life for the sake of the gospel reaching others. And Paul wasn't asking for provision from the people of Rome to make his wallet fat. Paul was asking for provision from Rome because he was a priest.

**16** to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Paul's greatest offering was the people who God entrusted to his care. He trailblazed because he cared about people. And he just wanted Rome in on this great invitation. Because Paul understood that in the Kingdom of God, the inheritance wasn't gold, wasn't silver, wasn't things made by human hands, but it was the people that God loved and made and created and formed and fashioned coming to know Him that was the real inheritance. The inheritance wasn't what Paul could bring into heaven as accolades and it wasn't what Rome could bring into heaven as influence. We won't get to heaven and God say wow you were apart of a church with a lot of buildings. Wow you were a part of a church that trailblazed a Wednesday night program. Wow look at those screens and look at that camera and look at all of the influence you gained. What will be on our foundation in heaven as treasure will be there because it helped people come to know Jesus. And as we set out to blaze new trails this year you may wonder well how long are we going to blaze trails for people to hear the gospel. And I hear Paul say until those who have yet seen see and those who have yet heard hear. How long? Until Jesus comes back or our final breathe.

What's fascinating about Paul is that he never made it to Spain. He made it to Rome, but he never made it to Spain because his visit to Rome put him in chains. But what I love about the heart of a trailblazer is no excuses. Because a trailblazer understands that chains can't stop God's cause. No chain can stop the call of God on your life.

And it was from Rome, that influential city, where Paul may have gained some of his greatest inheritances. For from Rome, in chains, came a letter to the Philippians where you learned that you could do all things through Christ who strengthens you, from Rome, in chains, came a letter to the Ephesians that recently reminded you that you serve a God who can fill you with all the fullness of God and is able to do the exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think or dream or imagine. For from Rome, in chains, came a letter to the Colossians that reminds you that your debt is cancelled for it has been nailed to an old rugged cross. For from Rome, in chains, came a letter to Philemon where we are reminded that in Christ the slave becomes a beloved brother. For from Rome, in chains,

came a letter that we find out in Philippians 4:22 reached the imperial household of Caesar. What am I telling you church....

**When your aim becomes eternal, your inheritance becomes eternal.**

For Paul did not know that those who had yet to hear or see, that would hear or see, through his letters that he blazed in chains, in 2026, would be a part of his inheritance in heaven. All he knew was that until Jesus came back or he breathed his last breathe, whether chains or wearing a royal crown, whether in plenty or in lack, whether in suffering or in comfort he had learned to be content to make it the aim of His life to blaze new trails for the gospel so that those who had yet seen would see and those who had yet heard would hear.

Let that be our testimony. 40 years ago a few women prayed bring life to Angleton. And their prayer was not in vain. For their prayers accomplished a lighthouse in a county, but now let us realize that favor either ends with a generation or it is entrusted to a generation. Let us take the favor their prayers provided for us and let us be a vessel and an instrument through which Gods favor can flow through and touch a county and touch a nation and touch a world. From here to the ends of the earth. Until all have heard, we breathe our last or Jesus comes back let us BLAZE NEW TRAILS TOGETHER FOR A FUTURE GENERATION.