

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 10TH - 11TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

PURPOSE (ROMANS 15:14-16)

"...ABLE TO INSTRUCT ONE ANOTHER..."

As St. Paul starts to wrap up this letter to the Roman church, he encourages them. He tells them they are "full of goodness...knowledge, and able to instruct one another."

- St. Paul had a purpose, and it wasn't to try and run every Christian community. He knew the importance of **encouraging, equipping, and empowering others to lead.**

"I HAVE WRITTEN TO REMIND YOU..."

Here is how St. Paul empowered others in that Christian community: he boldly reminded them of what their focus was as a church.

- **As a body of Jesus followers, we cannot get distracted from our main mission: The Gospel! To make disciples of Jesus and to transform the earth for His Kingdom (purity, hope, and love)!**

PAUL'S PURPOSE

St. Paul knew the mission, and it became a personal mission on which he was laser focused. He writes, "My purpose is that the Gentiles may be an acceptable offering sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Short and sweet!

- Since Paul knew His purpose, everything he did centered around it. He was determined to bring the Gospel to Gentiles.

OUR PURPOSE

Paul knew His purpose in Jesus, The Messiah. **Do we know our purpose in Jesus, the King of the universe? Are we so confident in it that everything we do in life centers around it?**

- **What is our pinnacle? What is our purpose in life? Whatever is at the top of our list is how we arrange our life and goals.**

SPIRIT-LED (ROMANS 15:17-21)

"I HAVE REASON TO BOAST IN...JESUS..."

There are all sorts of things in this world that people can focus their lives on. Their aim might be wealth, education, retirement, comforts, fitness, or even a great family.

- **But we will never have reason to boast, we will never be fulfilled if our lives are not oriented to the things that pertain to God. What do we frequently boast in?**

"...BY WORD AND DEED..."

St. Paul's purpose, to bring about the obedience of faith to the Gentiles, was only realized in Jesus' powerful work in Pauls' life.

- **When we submit to God and allow Him to work in us, we begin to truly fulfill our human purpose. Here is how we know we are on the right track: God gets the glory for what happens in our lives.**

"...THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT..."

If we can fulfill our grand purposes in the universe and truly impact the world on our own, why would we ever need God? We believe it's only by the power of God's Spirit!

- **The Holy Spirit works in us by reading His Word, through sacrament, and community. So, repent, be baptized, read, commune, and seek Jesus!**

"MY AIM IS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL..."

As a result of our obedient faith, God propels us forth, bursting into our one true purpose: to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus and build for His Kingdom, on earth as it is in Heaven!

- **There is a broken world filled with addiction, pain, and evil. Our aim, our pinnacle, is to be a "light upon a hill" to a dark world. Are we living that out?**

STRATEGY (ROMANS 15:22-29)

"...WORK TO DO IN THESE REGIONS..."

When you first read this part of Paul's letter, it reads as if it's a bunch of mundane travel plan mumbo jumbo. It's like when I start to tell my kids about our vacation logistics. I get blank stares and some yawns.

- **In context, we realize God's purposes must be tied to strategy. The old adage is still true today: "A goal without a plan is just a wish."**

STRATEGY THAT SAVES

We may wish for our family and friends to be changed by God. But a wish never saved anyone. If you listen to St. Paul, he's littered the end of this letter with his strategy for leading people to Jesus and making an impact for God's Kingdom.

- **Do we just wish people would get saved and live in The Kingdom of Heaven? Or do we have a strategic plan to get them there?**

TRAVEL PLANS

God may not give you the purpose to reach the entire Gentile world. But maybe it's your next-door neighbor, another parent on the sports team, or perhaps a roommate or classmate. God is calling all of us to make disciples and build for His Kingdom; it just looks different for each of us.

- **Regardless, we must have travel plans!**

TWO PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

We all ought to have strategies to fulfill our purpose of reaching people and making disciples. This might look different for each of us, but here are two simple strategies we can all use:

1. **Keep track of people.**
 2. **Invite others into your space.**
- **We have all sorts of strategies for things. Why wouldn't we make a strategy for this?**

"...MINISTER TO THEM IN MATERIAL NEEDS..."

It should be no surprise, but we are a strategic church. Yet, strategy and mission cost money. That's why St. Paul talks about "the funds" to care for the people and the mission.

- **As a church, we don't give money to build grand buildings. We give to make disciples and to care for others. Finances exist not for our pleasure but to fulfill God's purposes.**

TOGETHER (ROMANS 15:30-33)

"...TOGETHER WITH ME IN FERVENT PRAYERS..."

Here, St. Paul comes to the true engine that fuels our mission and purpose in Jesus: corporate prayer.

- **If we sense God calling us to take a step, we must pray. If we have a grand strategy for reaching the world, we need to pray. Are we fervently praying and inviting others to pray with us?**

"PRAY THAT I MAY BE..."

Our prayers should be specific to our strategy. Look at what St. Paul asks the Roman Church to pray for. It's a list centered around his strategy and plans to fulfill his purpose. We need strategy soaked in prayer.

- **What are some specific things we need to list out to pray for? Who can we ask to pray alongside us?**

BY GOD'S WILL

As Paul concludes this letter, before he gives final greetings, he throws in this little phrase after he tells them about his plans. He says all that he requests and strategizes is "by God's will." It's the echo of the Our Father prayer.

- **All our grand purposes and plans, even those we deem holy, must be submitted to God's will or they become futile.**

OUR PURPOSE

- What is your purpose? Are you fulfilling it and living into it?
- **All of us have a clear purpose: to love God, to love others, and to make disciples of Jesus. It's simple to know, hard to do.**
- **Where does your purpose fit into that broader purpose of God? Are you pursuing something other than that?**
- Whether we know exactly what purpose God is calling us to or not, we need to strategize and pray.
- **Do we have a plan? Strategy for Christians is not a lack of faith. It's faithful.**
- **How is our prayer life? Our plans do not matter if they aren't submitted to God. Let God guide big, scary dreams.**
- **What step do you need to take to fulfill your purpose in Jesus?**