

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 11TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

PURPOSE (ROMANS 15:14-16)

"I MYSELF AM CONVINCED ABOUT YOU..."

Though Paul was not the founder of the church in Rome, he was convinced, possibly by Priscilla and Aquila, that they were a reputable church.

- The Bible is clear that a **good reputation is of great value** (Pro 22:1; Ecc 7:1) and something we should strive to earn and maintain as representatives of Christ.

Even with the Jewish-Gentile differences and disputes that Paul addresses in earlier parts of his letter, he still compliments the church in Rome.

- Though he has a genuine need for the church, he is not being insincere in his compliments nor is he manipulating them with flattery. **"Love must be sincere** (12:9)"

This is a stark contrast to how other early churches were addressed. The church in Corinth was described as "worldly infants." The writer of Hebrews says they were "slow to learn...infants."

- **The perfect church doesn't exist** because it is full of imperfect people! **Doesn't mean we neglect gathering together** (Heb 10:25)!

"FULL OF GOODNESS"

Though they were in a very hedonistic culture they were able to walk in a general "uprightness," showing "kindness" and "generosity" to those around them.

- **The culture around us should not dictate how we act!** While we are not to "be conformed to this age (12:2)," we can still be found to be "full of goodness."

"FILLED WITH ALL KNOWLEDGE"

Paul says that the church in Rome had a comprehensive understanding of the Christian faith. Which begs the question, "why write such a lengthy letter?"

- Paul wanted to tell them of his calling from God ("remind you boldly on some points"), then show them how their calling aligns with his.

"ABLE TO INSTRUCT ONE ANOTHER"

They were "self-sufficient." Having a basis of morality in knowledge through the spirit, they were able to train and correct one another.

- Paul did not need to be there to oversee the inner workings of the church but could focus on their purpose given by grace. Paul needed them as a partner to extend the gospel west to Spain.

PAUL'S PRIESTLY DUTY

Paul's language of priesthood draws a comparison of his ministry, given by God, to that of a priest offering sacrifices on behalf of the people.

- Just as a priest would prepare a sacrifice before placing it on the altar, he, through his "ministering" to the Gentiles, would prepare them to be an "acceptable offering" to God.

Offerings presented by the priest and the offering of the Gentiles, through the holy spirit, are "sanctified."

- Sanctification simply means "set apart for the purpose of God." In the same way offerings on an altar were separated for a particular purpose, the Gentiles are also set apart for a purpose.

ACCOMPLISHMENT (ROMANS 15:17-19)

"...BOAST IN CHRIST JESUS..."

Paul knew the sanctification process that he and the Gentiles experienced was a work of the Holy Spirit and not of anything they had done.

- The only thing we can do is **submit to the work of the Holy Spirit and allow ourselves to be changed and set apart for the purposes of God.**

Paul doesn't want to draw attention to himself or anything that he has done. Instead, he only speaks of what "Christ has accomplished through [him]."

- The realization of **who he was before meeting Christ** gives Paul a certainty that the transformation he went through can **only be credited to Christ.**

GOSPEL PROCLAIMED

The H.S. empowered Paul to minister and enabled him to perform "mighty signs and wonders" to "make the Gentiles obedient."

- To "fully" proclaim the Gospel meant that **everywhere Paul went** ("from Jerusalem to Illyricum"), **he was reliant on the Spirit of God to accomplish the purpose of God!**

Paul was probably on his 3rd missionary journey as he wrote the letter of Romans from the city of Corinth.

- He had proclaimed the Gospel from as far east as Jerusalem to as far west as Illyricum (covers about 1,400mi), but Paul knew that **he had not accomplished all he was called to.**

GOALS (ROMANS 15:20-29)

"PREACH WHERE CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN NAMED"

Paul did not want to "build on" another apostle's "foundation," so he went into areas where the Gospel had not been preached.

- This is not because it was wrong of him to continue the work of another (Jn 4:38), but because Paul knew there was still a lot of uncovered land with people "who were not told" and "who have not heard (Is 52:15)."

"PREVENTED FROM COMING TO YOU"

It wasn't external hindrances, physical ailments, or geographical obstacles that kept Paul from visiting the Church in Rome.

- Instead, it was Paul's desire to complete the work he had started right where he was. As Christ-followers we should see things through to completion, not leaving a bunch of unfinished tasks in our wake.

"NO LONGER HAVE ANY WORK IN THESE AREAS"

This does not mean that Paul had personally ministered to every single person from Jerusalem to Illyricum.

- It means that in every area he went to, he had left behind witnessing churches and Christians who could carry on the work he had started.

PAUL'S TRAVEL PLANS

His desire for "many years" had been to travel to Rome to visit with the church and "enjoy their company" on the way to Spain.

- Paul's hope was that the Church in Rome would assist him in his travels west, but he emphasized a desire to fellowship with them "first."

Before Paul could go to Rome, he had to travel back to Jerusalem to bring a special offering for the suffering Jewish believers from the Gentile churches in Greece.

- Paul says the contributors were "pleased" to do so, understanding they were "**obligated**" to meet their material needs **because of "shared spiritual benefits."**

Paul was certain that he would make it to Rome. "I will visit you..." "I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing in Christ."

- Paul would make it to Rome but **not as he originally thought.** The book of Acts accounts for Paul being taken to Rome as a prisoner and eventually executed.

FERVENT PRAYER (ROMANS 15:30-33)

PAUL'S PLEA

To close out the letter to the Church in Rome (excl. personal greetings of Rom.16), Paul makes three specific prayer requests.

- (1) for deliverance from unbelieving Jews in Judea, (2) that the gift from Gentile Christians would be welcomed by Jewish Christians, and (3) that he might come to Rome. All three were answered (Acts)!

Paul asked his "brothers and sisters" to "strive together with [him] in prayers." He wants the Romans to partner with him in ministry through their prayers.

- The Greek word translated "strive together" literally means to "agonize together," like the language used by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Paul was wise to ask for prayers of personal safety from unbelieving Jews. To say Paul was met with hostility would be an understatement as Paul was beaten and left for dead multiple times.

- This prayer was answered (Acts 21) when Roman soldiers "rescued" him by taking him into custody to avoid him being killed.

He was also concerned that he would not be received by the believers in Jerusalem.

- There were various conservative Jewish-Christian groups that displayed a distrust in Paul and his teaching of grace to Gentiles. These "Judaizers" wanted the Gentiles to become Jews and accept the Jewish Law.

Paul asked them to pray that he would be able to "come to them with joy." While this prayer was also answered, it was not in a way they expected.

- Acts 28:15 describes that he did "come to them with joy," but he also came in chains, proclaiming the Gospel on the way there and all the way up to his death.

TAKING AN INVENTORY

- Where do we find our purpose?
- What determines and defines success?
- If we say God determines our purpose and defines our success, **then are we relying on the Spirit of God to accomplish the purpose of God?**
- Are we sharing the love of God with those around us in "word and deed?"
- Do we "boast in Christ?" Are we aware the transformation we experience from "death to life" can only be credited to Christ?
- **What has God called us to that we either haven't started or haven't seen to completion?**