

The Book of Romans - Part 45

Paul the apostle knew that it was a good life, living for the Lord, and that's the reason it blesses my heart so much when I'm able to get into the Word of God and read what Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has written to us. I trust that you have your Bible open as we go through these lessons. We're in Romans chapter 15 and we're going to pick up with verse 15 today. I trust that you are receiving a blessing, not from me but from God's Word as we study it together.

Let me invite you to look at our Website today, www.LRWM.org. On the Website, you'll be able to download a transcript of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life." You'll also be able to download the program itself, and you'll be able to listen to these programs again. Once again, let me remind you that this has been a series of lessons on the book of Romans, and you can go back and hear every lesson that we've gone through. You can replay those broadcasts on www.LRWM.org. You can also download every transcript of every program that we've presented in this chapter, not only chapter 15 that we're going through today, but also from chapter 1 of the book of Romans all the through the study on the book of Romans. So look at that today, www.LRWM.org.

Well, we left off with Romans chapter 15 and verse 15. Remember, in verse 14 Paul says, *And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren...* speaking to the saved people there, not only the Jewish believers but the Gentile believers... He says, *that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.* Paul had confidence in these people at Rome.

Now, verse 15: *Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind.* He's saying, "I

want to remind you of something" *because of the grace that is given to me of God.* That's the reason he's writing to them.

Now, Paul's source of authority did not come from Paul. Paul's source of authority came from God Himself. The last part of that verse says "because of the grace that is given to me of God." God gave Paul the authority to send this letter to the people at Rome to understand that he had the authority to admonish, to give the plan of salvation, to let the people know there that they should give the plan of salvation to other people, that the people there should get along with each other, should help one another because they are in the body of Christ; they should grow together in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ; and he could do that, he says, because of God. God gave him the authority to do these things.

Chapter 15:16 says, *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.* Now, once again, Paul is talking about the Gentiles here. He wants the Jewish believers to know that Jesus Christ is not only their Savior, but that Jesus Christ is also the Savior of the Gentiles. It says, *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God...* And we see in that verse that Paul's mission was to minister.

Now, Romans 15:17-19. Paul says, *¹⁷I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. ¹⁸For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, ¹⁹Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto*

Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Paul gives any credit of success to God in his travels in these verses. He says, *I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ...* It's not in the things that he has done, but it's through the things which pertain to God. He is serving God, and he's not going to speak of those things which Christ has not done through him. In other words, he's not going to brag about the things that he's done, because everything that he has done, he's going to speak the truth and he's going to say that anything that has taken place in his life, it's by God. It's by the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul gives all the credit of his success to God in his travels.

Verses 20-21: *²⁰Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: ²¹But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.*

Paul's principle of ministry is this: to preach the Gospel. You can see that in verses 20-21. That was what he was called to do. And if you look in verse 21 and compare that with Isaiah 52:15 where it says, *So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.* Paul is simply fulfilling Scripture there. He's simply going about preaching the Gospel. And might I say that you and I, as we give out the Word of God, we're fulfilling Scripture. We're giving out the Word of God. As we do that, I believe that Paul the apostle was possibly the greatest minister who ever lived outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, of course, being the greatest. But Paul the apostle was a great man of God. He preached the Word of God, and it's a great privilege for us to be in like company

as Paul the apostle, because God says that He's called us to proclaim the Word of God, just like He called the apostle, not in the same sense, as we are not apostles, but we have the same responsibility of giving out the Word of God. So, our ministry is also to preach the Gospel, whether you're a man or a woman.

Now, when I say "preach the Gospel," I'm talking about proclaiming the Gospel, not standing in the pulpit and preaching. I believe that God has given that to men. It talks about that in the Word of God, that it's men who have been called to fill pulpits around the world, but it's up to all of us, men and women, to give out the Gospel. That's to proclaim, that's to preach the Gospel to every living creature.

Romans 15:22 says, *For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.* Now, Paul wanted to come to the Roman church on several different occasions, but here in this verse, he says that there was opposition and that prevented him from traveling to Rome. Now, of course, we know that by studying Scripture, by studying history, that Paul the apostle went to Rome and he was offered on the altar of sacrifice there for the Lord. It doesn't mean that he gave his life that anyone could be saved; it simply means he gave his life for the Lord. If you study this, you'll find that Paul was killed in Rome.

Well, what were Paul's future plans as he was traveling to Rome? We see this in verses 23-33. Verse 23 says, *But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you...* Paul is ready to travel. He's ready to go, and Paul believed that his work was finished in the area where he had been ministering, according to verse 23.

Verse 24 says, *Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be*

somewhat filled with your company. Here we see that Paul did have plans to visit Rome at that time.

Verses 25-27 say: *²⁵But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.* Paul is going to Jerusalem now. *²⁶For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. ²⁷It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.*

Paul is saying that he had something do before he came to Rome. He was to deliver offerings from the Gentiles to the poor saints at Jerusalem. It's something how that we give out of our poverty, and we are to give to those in need, and we are to help our brothers and sisters in Christ. We have the example here of Paul talking about the saints of Jerusalem. These people were poor, but they sent to help other poor saints at Jerusalem, possibly those people in Jerusalem didn't have as much as those he was bringing an offering from, from Macedonia, and that is Christian love.

Verse 28 says, *When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.* Now Paul intends to make sure the saints at Jerusalem receive their love offering, and then to go on to Rome. Paul had intended after taking the offering collected from the various churches of Greece and Asia, he intended to take this back to the needy Christians at Jerusalem to make his next missionary journey a journey to Rome and then to Spain after all of that took place. He did not know he would reach Rome only as a prisoner, according to Acts 28:16. As far as the record goes, he never even got to Spain. Nevertheless, we see that his inspired epistles have actually reached every nation and almost every tribe on the Earth. God has blessed us through Paul the apostle.

Verse 29 says, *And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.* Paul expects to be blessed and encouraged by the saints at Rome, because not of himself, but because of the Gospel.

Verses 30-32, *³⁰Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; ³¹That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; ³²That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.*

There's a mutual ministry mentioned here. The saints were to pray along with Paul the apostle. "Pray for me," Paul says, "And pray for the love offering of the saints."

And verse 33 says, *Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.* This is the benediction of blessing that Paul the apostle gives, and, of course, it's not the end of the book. We've got another chapter to go through. Paul normally ended each of his epistles with a benediction such as this one. It's not the end of the letter, and we're going to see that next time.

Until then, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.