

Romans

Closing Remarks, Stated Intentions

June 05, 2016

I. Closing Remarks and Stated Intentions

- A. Romans 15:14-33 ... And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another. [15] But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, [16] to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. [17] Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. [18] For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, [19] in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Il-lyr'-i-cum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. [20] And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation; [21] but as it is written, "They who had no news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand" (Isaiah 52:15). [22] For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you; [23] but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you [24] whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while— [25] but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. [26] For Macedonia and A-chā'-iā have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. [27] Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them (saints in Jerusalem). For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them (saints in Jerusalem) also in material things. [28] Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs (Gentile saints), I will go on by way of you to Spain. [29] I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. [30] Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, [31] that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea (Jews), and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; [32] so that I may come to you in joy by the will

of God and find refreshing rest in your company. [33] Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

B. Prayer

II. Closing Remarks and Stated Intentions

- A. This section of Romans 15 represents the first part of Paul's closing remarks. In this section, Paul explains why he wrote this letter, who God called him to serve, why he wanted to stop in Rome, why he had not come to Rome before now, why he was going to Jerusalem, and his expectation of passing through Rome in the near future.
- B. Romans 15:14 . . . And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.
 - 1. As you may recall, Paul begin this letter with an affirmation about the strength of these Christians' faith. We read in Romans 1:8, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world."
 - 2. Here at the close of this letter, Paul is commenting on the extent of their spiritual growth and the quality of their Christian life. And in praising them, he mentions three things.
 - a. They are full of goodness:
 - (1) Generally speaking, goodness is the quality of being good in some area of life or character quality. For example, goodness speaks of living an excellent or praiseworthy life, or living according to the virtues, or being consistently kind, or being generous – especially toward those in need.
 - (2) In this context, it most likely speaks of the believers commitment to live an excellent Christian life – that is, to live up to what they knew about living the Christian life.
 - b. Full of all knowledge: Here again, the context implies that they were well taught in the doctrines and practices of Christianity. This does not mean they were fully taught – so as to need no more teaching, but rather that they were well taught and were making good use of the knowledge given them.
 - c. Able to admonish one another:
 - (1) To admonish is to warn, caution, or advise each other against going back into sin, and gently reproving and calling back to godliness those who have gone back into sin.

- (2) To “be able” to admonish one another, we must – first of all – judge ourselves rightly, and then we must have the Holy Spirit’s empowerment, a sufficient grasp of God’s word, practical insight into how to apply the truth of God’s word, and an awareness of the way admonishing is to be done.
 - d. In applying these three qualities to our church, it means we will function best as a church as we – together – are committed to living an excellent godly life, and as we pursue a good understanding of God’s word and how to apply it in practical ways to ourselves, and as we admonish and encourage each other to persevere in putting to death sin and putting on Christ-likeness.
3. Admonishing one another is always two sided.
 - a. The first side focuses on what is wrong or what is about to go wrong and seeks to correct or prevent the wrong.
 - b. The second side focuses on what is right and godly and God pleasing. And it supplements this focus with advice and help on how to resist temptation, how to persevere in doing right in the face of temptation, and where to get help in remaining faithful to doing what is godly.

- C. Romans 15:15-16a . . . But I have written very boldly (in other words, he risked speaking about some things that could possibly upset them or make them feel that he had no right to speak to them about such things) to you on some points (Paul was selective about the topics he wrote about) so as to remind you again, (Then Paul explains why he wrote as he did, and he says it is because God called him to this task of teaching and preaching the gospel and truths of God to both unbelievers and believers) because of the grace that was given me from God, [16] to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God.
1. The one phrase I want to focus on in this section are the words, “to remind you again.”
 2. Peter used similar language in 2 Peter 1:12-13 . . . Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. [13] I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up (arouse to action) by way of reminder.
 3. The point I want to remind you of today is that learning, in most cases, is a process – and this is true in the spiritual realm as well. To learn godly truth and how to apply that truth in practical ways, you must hear or read the truth more than once. Then you must

ponder and meditate on that truth while praying for wisdom and insight as to how to apply that truth in your life. You must examine your thoughts, desires, words, and behaviors, many times, in the light of that truth. And you will probably need to seek wise counsel for help in examining yourself and in applying the truth. And finally, you must persevere in living according to the truth until living that way becomes natural to you.

4. Therefore, I am urging all of us to work this process, doing what is necessary to go the distance in learning godly truth and applying it to every area of our life, so that individually and as a group we are living up to what we know, so that Jesus Christ is able to shine through us – individually and corporately – to the world around us.

D. Romans 15:16b . . . so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

1. For me, this is a thought provoking statement. Paul is saying that he wants the fruit of his work to be acceptable to God. In fact, he wants it to be so acceptable that the Holy Spirit will be actively involved in sanctifying those who have both come to faith and are growing in the faith.
2. In other words, Paul does not want to get to the end of his life and discover that his work as God's servant was so spiritually poor or bereft of life-transforming truth that the fruit from his years of ministry is of such a poor spiritual quality as to be unacceptable to God and unable to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
3. Paul speaks of this potential failure in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 where he writes that those who lead must be careful that they lead their followers to Jesus Christ and the narrow path of godliness, lest in the end – when their work is tested by fire – it burns up just as if it were wood, hay, and stubble. And if it is burned up, the Christian worker – whatever his role or position may be – will suffer an incredibly great loss, even though he himself may still be saved.
4. This is one of the reasons why personal holiness is always to come before Christian service.

E. Romans 15:17-19 . . . Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. [18] For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, [19] in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem

and round about as far as Il-lyr'-i-cum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

1. One of the great challenges of church leadership, and especially for those who teach, is to do the work for God's sake – without hoping to gain any measure of recognition or fame for oneself. Our duty is to serve God and build His kingdom – without using our service to God to gain some of the praise and glory that belongs to God.
2. The fact is, pride is like poison that in any amount is destructive or even deadly to our spiritual health, to the work of God, and to receiving God's favor and blessings.
3. At times, it may sound like Paul is bragging, but he isn't. Like the words from MY TRIBUTE say, "If there be any praise, let it go to Calvary," so Paul is bragging about the gracious work of God – though him – in bringing Gentiles to repentance, to faith in Jesus Christ, and to obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Notice, Paul gives the credit to God in four specific things:
 - a. God, through Jesus Christ, brought unbelieving Gentiles to the obedience of faith in word and deed.
 - b. God used Paul to perform supernatural signs and wonders that gave support and credibility to the message of the gospel.
 - c. God gave Paul the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. And because of God's doing, Paul could say he FULLY preached the gospel of Christ.

F. Romans 15:20-24 . . .

1. Vs 20 – And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation . . .
 - a. Paul saw himself as a church planter – which requires evangelism, discipleship, teaching the essential doctrines and practices of the Christian faith, and establishing qualified leaders to carry on the work begun by the church planter.
 - b. Next, Paul uses a quote from the OT to support his ministry.
2. Vs 21 – but as it is written, "They who had no news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand" (Isaiah 52:15 Septuagint)
3. Vs 22 – For this reason (because he has been busy planting churches in regions where there were no churches) I have often been prevented from coming to you;

4. Vs 23-24 – but now, with no further place for me in these regions (he has covered all the areas he believes he has been sent to), and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you [24] whenever I go to Spain (Paul has wanted for some number of years to visit the Christians in Rome on his way to plant churches in Spain) – for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you (most probably financial or other material support to help him make the journey and have more time to minister when he gets there), when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—
 - a. To our knowledge, Paul had not yet been to Spain and there is no record that he ever went. So it is probable he never fulfilled this part of his plan to preach the gospel and plant churches among Gentiles in Spain.
 - b. However, according to history, at that time in the Roman Empire, many of the influential men were Spaniards. For example, there was Lucan, the famous poet, Martial, the master of epigrams (an epigram is a pithy saying or short remark expressing an idea in a clever or amusing way), Quintilian, the greatest teacher of speech making in his day, and Seneca, to Stoic philosopher who also served, for a time, as Nero's prime minister.
 - c. My reason for pointing this out is that it is possible Paul saw the influence Spaniards were having in the Roman Empire and decided that if some could be brought to faith in Christ, they could influence many more for the cause of Christ.
 - d. We see this kind of thinking in Joe Lorencz's work among the well-educated and potentially influential Chinese scholars.
- G. Romans 15:25-27 . . . but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. [26] For Macedonia (a large region controlled by Greece, and included the cities of Philippi and Thessalonica) and A-chā'-iā (another large region controlled by Greece, whose capitol was Corinth) have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. [27] Yes, they were pleased to do so, and (besides) they (the believing Gentiles) are indebted to them (the Jewish believers in Jerusalem). (Paul then goes on to state his reason for saying the Gentile believers are indebted to the Jewish believers.) For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.
- H. Romans 15:28-29 . . . Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs (In essence, Paul is saying that it is his

responsibility to make sure the money gets to Jerusalem and is used as intended.), I will go on by way of you to Spain. [29] I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ (In essence, Paul is saying that the blessings of Christ won't end with turning the offerings over to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, there is an abundance of blessings, though spiritual, that Paul will bring to the church in Rome.)

- I. Romans 15:30-32 . . . Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit (this phrase most probably refers to the godly love that the Holy Spirit stirs up within us, nurtures, and encourages us to use for the good of others), to strive together (that is, to work hard and earnestly) with me in your prayers to God for me, [31] that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea (the unbelieving Jews who were wanting to kill Paul in order to end his teaching which they were convinced was heretical), and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; [32] so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.
 1. There are many prayers, references to prayer, and encouragement to pray in the Bible. I want to read just two statements on prayer at this point because they fit the context and may encourage you to pray more!
 2. 2 Corinthians 1:11 . . . [Help]...us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.
 3. Colossians 4:12 . . . Epaphras, who is one of your number (a member of your church), a slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, [he is] always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

III. Conclusion

- A. Romans 15:33 . . . Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.