

LESSON 31: ROMANS 15:14-33
MAY 19, 2021

OVERVIEW

- . Paul's Ministry – Romans 15:14-16
- . Paul's glory: Looking back – Romans 15:17-22
- . Paul's plans: Looking forward – Romans 15:23-33

PAUL'S MINISTRY – ROMANS 15:14-16

- . To the Roman Christians – Romans 15:14
 - . Paul tells the Roman Christians in the opening sentence of his personal remarks that he is convinced they are doing all right
 - . “You yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another”
 - . He had written quite boldly on some points and he knew that they might suppose that he somehow considered them to be deficient
- . The nature of the ministry
 - . The nature of the ministry is to proclaim the whole gospel
 - . The gospel is good news
 - . First, what is the nature of this good news
 - . Answer – God has provided a way for us to be saved from sin through the work of Jesus Christ
 - . What is sin
 - . Sin is lack of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God
 - . What then is the law of God
 - . God's Word – scripture, which reveals God's laws and God's ways
 - . Paul has explored the nature and extent of sin in detail so that we might be able to understand the nature of God's saving grace toward us in Jesus Christ
- . Preaching boldly but with tact
 - . Paul acknowledges that he has written quite boldly on some points
 - . He admits his boldness but also explains it in the context of reminding the Romans Christians of what they probably already know
 - . We learn from this that although it is important to teach the gospel, the whole gospel and nothing but the gospel, it is not necessary to do it in an offensive manner

- . The goal of the ministry
 - . Paul's goal is that the gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit
 - . Sanctified means to be set apart to God, dedicated or consecrated to Him
- . The sufficiency of the Bible
 - . How are the gentiles, or Jews, going to become an offering that is acceptable to God
 - . The answer is in the Bible and is the Bible
 - . "All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching and rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"
2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - . As people learn the truth of God revealed in scripture and allow it to shape their minds and hearts their lives will change
 - . Nothing is a substitute for the authority, sufficiency and efficacy of the Bible
 - . If we trust the Bible, we will preach it, teach it, study it, learn it, and obey it as we rely on God to do the needed work in our lives

PAUL'S GLORY: LOOKING BACK – ROMANS 15:17-22

- . Paul seems to be looking back over the greater part of his lifetime as a missionary and evaluating it from a spiritual perspective
 - . His missionary experience has been difficult
 - . He has experienced hardships, threats, beatings, dangers and rejections
 - . In Romans 15 he boasts about what God had accomplished through him in leading the Gentiles to obey God
 - . At first glance this seems prideful
 - . However, as a disciple of Christ, Paul is pleased with what God has done or is doing through him
 - . Such a pride is actually uplifting and motivational
 - . A right kind of pride is helpful if it is focused properly
- . Glory in what Jesus has done
 - . The main thing we notice about Paul's right kind of pride is that it was boasting in Christ and not in Paul's own personal accomplishments or talents
 - . There was a time in his life when he had gloried in his accomplishments but that was before he met Christ
 - . When Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus he learned that these worldly accomplishments were not what he thought them to be
 - . They did not add up to righteousness before God

- . They did not earn God's approval
 - . "But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord"
Philippians 3:7-8
- . Glory in what Jesus has done
 - . God had taken this proud, stubborn, self-righteous murderer of God's people and had turned him into the greatest pioneer missionary the world has ever known
- . What Paul accomplished
 - . In Romans 15:18-20 Paul tells what he has accomplished under Christ's direction by His power and for His glory
- . The scope of Paul's evangelistic work – Romans 15:19
 - . Paul is claiming that he had evangelized the area of the world that we call Turkey, Macedonia and Greece
 - . He started out in the east and pushed on north and west as quickly as he could, consistent with his goal of establishing sound churches in each region
 - . We see here a glimpse into the unique nature of Paul's work, which was to preach the gospel where Christ was not known

PAUL'S PLAN LOOKING FORWARD – ROMANS 15:23-33

- . Paul now spells out his missionary plans and desires for the future
 - . He says that although he wants to spend some profitable time with them, he does not want to settle in Rome permanently
 - . His plan is make it a stopping-off place on an anticipated fourth missionary journey to Spain
- . Did Paul get to Spain
 - . This is an open question, depending on whether there were one or two Roman imprisonments
 - . If there was only one, which is what most biblical scholars believe, then Paul did not get to Spain
 - . If there were two imprisonments, which some read into 2 Timothy 4:16-18, then Paul could have gone to Spain, returned to Rome, been arrested again, and then martyred
 - . Against the idea that Paul may have gotten to Spain is the fact there are no historical records from Spain to show that he was there

- . There are two non-biblical records as evidence that Paul may have been in Spain
 - . Clement of Rome, one of the apostolic fathers, writes in his *Epistle to the Corinthians* that Paul reached “the limits” of the west
 - . He does not use the word Spain but “limits of the west” probably meant Spain to Clement
 - . The other record is the *Muratorian Canon*, which mentions the departure of Paul from the city on his journey to Spain
 - . These records are interesting but fall short of proof
- . Help for the outward journey
 - . We know from Acts that Paul always tried to work with a missionary team
 - . By now most of his team has been left behind
 - . Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete
 - . By the time he finally reaches Rome, Luke is the only one left
 - . Here he seems to be trying to recruit members of the church in Rome to become what he calls his home support team
 - . Up to this point his home church was in Antioch in Syria
 - . With his sites on Spain, Antioch would be too far away and Rome would make more sense for his base
- . Paul urges the Christians at Rome to pray for him
 - . This is a strong impassioned plea, undoubtedly because of difficulties Paul foresaw in going to Jerusalem
 - . Paul ends with a benediction, as he does in every one of his letters
 - . It is significant that Paul’s benediction follows immediately upon his request for prayer from them

NEXT LESSON - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 2021 - ROMANS 16