

## EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

### Message #54

Romans 15:14-21

In the mind of Paul there was a major difference between a ministry and a ministry that brought glory to God.

Paul now begins the longest benediction found in the entire Bible. It starts at **15:14** and runs to the end of chapter 16. The message is this:

**WE MUST CONTINUALLY STRIVE FOR A LIFE AND MINISTRY THAT PLEASES AND GLORIFIES GOD.**

**ELEMENT #1** – God-glorifying ministry admonishes one another. **15:14**

The word “admonish” means to place in the mind of one another. Paul was convinced that the believers of Rome would develop in the faith to the extent that they could place into each other’s minds the things of God.

Now the verb “convinced” and the participle “filled” are both passive which indicates that some outside agent convinced Paul of these things and some outside agent would fill these believers with the ability to do this. That outside agent was none other than the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:9). Both verbs are perfect tense, which indicates that Paul was looking back on a specific moment when he knew that some agent made them good and had given them the potential to grow in the knowledge of God to the extent that they could admonish one another. That moment was the moment of salvation. In other words, we have the potential to grow in the knowledge of God to the extent that we can minister to each other and God expects us to grow.

Now the pronoun “another” means another of the same kind and the thing that enables us to be able to admonish one another is that we are after the good things of God and are filled with all knowledge of God. God-glorifying people grow deep in their knowledge of God’s Word to the point that they can give good, godly admonishments to other believers.

Paul is saying that the moment the Romans trusted Christ as Savior, they received the potential power to develop to the point where they could challenge one another in the things of God.

Remember this - when Paul wrote these words, these believers didn’t own Bibles, so the potential for us is much greater today.

**ELEMENT #2** – A God-glorifying ministry preaches God’s Word. **15:15-16**

Paul was a bold preacher and teacher.

The thing that prompted Paul to keep writing, teaching and preaching when he wasn’t too popular, was the grace that God had given to him that saved him and gave him a unique ability to comprehend God’s Word and communicate God’s Word (**15:15b**).

**Detail #1** - He was a minister of Christ Jesus . **15:16a**

That word “minister” (λειτουργος) is one that means Paul considered himself to be a public . servant, whose job it was to communicate God’s Word even when it cost him personally (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 267). Paul is saying God’s grace made him a public servant of Christ Jesus. Notice the word order, “Christ Jesus.” Paul is recognizing the Jew first, Gentile second concept.

We are to do this by the way we live and by the things we say and by a demonstration of the fruit of the Spirit. Our assignment is not to bother people but publically represent Jesus Christ to them.

**Detail #2** - He was a minister to the Gentiles . **15:16b**

Paul, for the most part, did not aim his ministry at Jews. He aimed it at the Gentiles (Galatians 1:14-16). He is the apostle for this Gentile Age of Grace. **God does call people to specific ministries.** He certainly did with Paul. Don’t be surprised if God calls you to a ministry which is totally opposite of what you expected. Our job is to represent Jesus Christ where God puts us.

**Detail #3** - He had a ministry of preaching . **15:16c**

His job was to minister, to write and to proclaim the Gospel of God which includes the entire book of Romans. The second word “ministering” (ιερουργεω) is a different word which means to perform a sacred duty. It was used of a priest performing the sacred duty of offering a sacrifice (*Ibid.*, p. 214).

**Paul believed he had the sacred duty of ministering the Word of God.** Notice, he considered his primary ministry not that of calling or picketing or protesting or fighting, but of ministering the Gospel of God as a priest of God. That is what he believed would make Gentiles become acceptable and pleasing to God and set apart by the Holy Spirit.

The thing that will produce sanctification, the thing that will produce people who will glorify God is not a film series, not a bake sale or circus; it is the teaching of the Word of God.

God has not promised to bless plays, programs, gimmicks or entertainment. He has not promised to bless bands or marketing strategies. **God has promised to bless the proclamation of His Word. Paul said to young Timothy, a pastor, I charge you: “Preach the Word.”**

**ELEMENT #3** – A God-glorifying ministry exalts Jesus Christ. **15:17-21**

This passage is critical for our day and age when so many want to boast or brag about how much they have accomplished. Paul was a powerful man of God. He addressed thousands in his lifetime. He traveled over the entire Roman world. He was caught up to the third heaven. He personally had Jesus Christ appear to him and teach him yet never once did he take credit for anything; he always gave the credit and glory to God.

**Fact #1** - Paul's ministry praised Jesus Christ. **15:17-18**

Everything Paul did was about exalting Jesus Christ.

**Fact #2** - Paul's ministry preached Jesus Christ. **15:19**

Here is a very important piece of doctrinal information regarding miracles. Paul performed some impressive miracles: 1) He made one man go blind (Acts 13:11); 2) He made a crippled man walk (Acts 14:8-11); 3) He cured diseases with handkerchiefs (Acts 19:11-12); 4) He raised the dead (Acts 20:9-12); 5) He was stoned and got up and walked away (Acts 14:19-20); and 6) He was bitten by a deadly viper and shook it off like nothing (Acts 28:3-6). These are just a few of the things he did.

These are impressive miracles. But the question is **why did Paul do the miracles?** So he could take up an offering and get a lot of money? No, **so he could fully preach the Gospel of Christ.** These signs and wonders demonstrated that his message concerning Jesus Christ was true, and at a time when people did not own Bibles, it was proof that he was telling the truth. In other words, Paul did miracles to verify and substantiate that he was a true apostle proclaiming a true message.

Notice in **verse 16** it is called the "gospel of God" and here in **verse 19** it is called the "gospel of Christ." This is just another of the many evidences that **Jesus Christ is God.**

**Fact #3** - Paul's ministry pioneered Jesus Christ. **15:20-21**

Paul quotes Isaiah 52:15 in **verse 21** which indicates that he considered his ministry to be part of a divinely ordered prophetic program of God. He took the doctrine of the Gospel to new places.

Part of the responsibility of a ministry that glorifies God is to take the Gospel to new untouched people. If nothing else, we can invite them to church. We must glorify God and this kind of ministry will do it!