

Series: Romans
Title: The Minister of Jesus Christ
Text: Rom 15:14-16
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Romans 15: 14: And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 15: Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, 16: That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God,...

It is good to see how Paul admonished the Romans. The word signifies “to comfort as well as to exhort.” This whole letter is the example. Paul began by commending them (Rom 1: 8). Then he comforted them with the gospel of God throughout the letter. Then towards the end he salted in some admonition (Rom 12-15). After hearing the gospel of what Christ did for his people the admonition comes as reasonable service. Then he ends, here, by commending them again. It is done in love, care, tenderness, compassion which softens the heart and makes believers easy to be entreated.

But my subject is what each believer, is “The Minister of Jesus Christ.”

What is a minister? A minister is not the one at the table being served, a minister is the one doing the serving

Proposition: None are apostles today and not all are preachers but all God’s believing children are ministers of Christ who minister—who serve one another.

Galatians 5:13: For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Every believer is a minister, wherever Christ has planted us to minister or serve our brethren. Paul tells us how and why

Divisions: 1) By God’s grace—**Romans 15: 15:...grace...is given to me of God, 16: That I should be the minister**

2) Whose minister are we—**16:...the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles,**

3) How do we serve? **16:...ministering the gospel of God,...**4) The purpose of ministering—**16:...that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.**

4) Who gets the glory—**17: I have therefore whereof I may glory [only in or] through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. 18: For 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, 19: Through 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.**

MADE MINISTERS BY GRACE

Romans 15: 15:...grace that is given to me of God, 16: That I should be the minister...

Every believer is what he is by the grace of God—by the unmerited, demerited, free favor of God. Like Paul every true child of God was chosen and separated by God’s grace before we were even born.

Galatians 1:15: But when it **pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace,** 16: To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Jeremiah 1: 4: Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 5: Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Like Paul, like Jeremiah, God separated every true child of God in Christ in election and the Spirit of God calls us in time—all by God’s free grace. We are not saved by our worth or works but by God’s grace.

Romans 11:6: And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more

Everything Paul was, every gift he possessed and everything Paul was enabled to do, was freely given and worked in him by God’s grace—and us too.

Ephesians 3:7: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

Ephesians 4: 7: But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Brethren, our election, regeneration, conversion, justification, redemption, sanctification, faith, love, gifts, deeds are all given and worked in us by God's sovereign, free grace—we have no reason to glory in ourselves.

MINISTERS OF JESUS CHRIST

Romans 15: 16: That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles,...

Paul was especially the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. You and I who believe are the ministers of Christ to our brethren and to lost sinners Jew or Gentile. This phrase “the minister of Jesus Christ” has at least two meanings.

One, Paul was a minister *of* Christ in the sense he was made and sent by Christ—and so are you and I. Concerning pastors, Christ said,

Jeremiah 3: 15: And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

As Saul of Tarsus, Paul hated Christ and his people. He was on his way to kill Christ's people. But Christ arrested Paul on the road to Damascus, revealed himself and called him—so Paul was made a minister by Christ. Each believer here who Christ has made a servant will say it was Christ that arrested us in our rebellion and made us his servant. He made us servants, not we ourselves.

Two, being the “minister of Christ” means Paul was Christ's personal minister doing Christ's bidding—when the Lord told Ananias to go to Paul, Ananias was afraid because of Saul's reputation.

Acts 9: 15: But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake

Paul was Christ's personal minister to the Gentiles. Likewise, every believer is Christ's personal servant to our brethren. We are ministers “by” Christ—we are made and sent by him. We are ministers “of” Christ as his personal servants—chosen vessels unto Christ to bear Christ's name and suffer for his name.

1 Corinthians 7: 23: Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

Philippians 1:1: Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ,...

WITH WHAT DO WE MINISTER?

Romans 15: 16:...ministering the gospel of God,...

Christ's minister serves “*the gospel of God.*” We serve needy sinners by preaching the gospel of God, Christ and him crucified.

God is *the author* of the gospel—“*in the beginning God...*”. The gospel originated with God. The gospel is God's will and purpose. God is the author and revealer of the gospel

Galatians 1: 11: But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

God is the subject of the gospel. We preach God's character—God is holy, sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing, the ever-present God

Exodus 34:6: And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7: Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation

God's works are the subject we preach. We minister by reminding one another that salvation is of the LORD. God the Father willed it and purposed it, choosing his Son and his people in his Son. God the Son accomplished the salvation God purposed for his people laying down his life in our place. God the Holy Spirit applies it: regenerating us, bearing witness of Christ in our hearts, preserving us unto the day of glory.

God in Christ is the object—we preach Christ and him crucified who is “the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” In Christ, every believer is “complete”.

Colossians 2: 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Christ crucified is the gospel of God—there is only one way of salvation, Christ Jesus.

Acts 16:17: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

Christ said, “I am THE Way, THE truth, THE Life...no man cometh to the Father but by me” (Jn 14: 6). The apostle Paul tells us in the first few verses of the Roman letter that the gospel is concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1: 1: Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2: (Which [God] had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3: Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4: And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

Since there is only one gospel the apostle Paul had stern words for any who preached a false gospel.

Galatians 1: 6: I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

So each of us who Christ has made his ministers/servants, minister by declaring the gospel of God; we minister to one another by putting each other in remembrance of our great God and the salvation he has wrought for us by his dear Son, Christ Jesus—the gospel is the children’s bread which we minister.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MINISTRY

Romans 15: 16:...that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Paul is referring to the old testament meat offering—the thank-offering we have been studying in Exodus. Through the gospel, the Holy Spirit of God sanctifies each one God chose and Christ redeemed. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us with the blood of Christ through the preaching of the gospel. As soon as the priests were sanctified and consecrated then they offered up a burnt thank offering praising God for the work.

Instead of offering up a sacrifice, the believer is himself the thank-offering offered up to God and accepted by God in Christ.

Romans 12: 1: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

Here is one of God’s elect Jews, Paul, being used of God to make elect Gentile believers into God’s holy offering. God prophesied that he would do this throughout the old testament.

Zephaniah 3: 8: Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination *is* to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, *even* all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. 9: For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent. 10: From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, *even* the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.

“From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia” means from the remotest parts of the world beyond Israel meaning God’s elect Gentiles. “My suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed” are God’s elect Jews made faithful, which Paul was. God said they “shall bring mine offering”—Paul says the Gentile elect, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, is that meat-offering, the thank-offering offered up to God and accepted in Christ Jesus. God gave the same prophecy through Isaiah and Malachi.

Isaiah 66: 19: And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, *to* Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, *to* Tubal, and Javan, *to* the isles [Gentiles] afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. 20: And they shall bring all your brethren *for* an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

Malachi 1: 11: From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

This shows that Paul knew what the old ceremonial thank-offerings typified. They typified God’s chosen people, made holy through the blood of Christ, offering our whole selves up to God, living sacrificially unto him, and God accepting us through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. That is why Paul and you and I are Christ’s ministers. That is why we must preach the gospel of God. This is the work God promises to do through the preaching of the gospel. What a privilege God has given us!

WHO GETS THE GLORY

Romans 15: 17: I have therefore whereof I may glory through [or in] Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. 18: For 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, 19: Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that [by that same power of God] from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20: Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: 21: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

Every sinner who is truly called and saved by Christ gives all the glory to God. We take no credit for any aspect of our salvation.

Paul said, "*I have whereof I may glory, but only, in and through Jesus Christ.*" He said, "*I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought.*" Paul said, He used me but the "*mighty signs and wonders are by the power of the Spirit of God.*" Paul glorified God alone when writing to all the brethren in every church,

1 Corinthians 15:10: But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Colossians 1:29: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Philippians 2:13: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Philippians 4:13: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

2 Corinthians 2: 14: Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. 15: For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16: To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things? 17: For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. 2 Cor 3: 1: Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you? 2: Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: 3: *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. 4: And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: 5: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God; 6: Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament;

2 Corinthians 4: 5: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7: But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Paul did what all believers do, he attributed his salvation, his conversion and his apostleship to the grace of God and the works of Christ giving God the Father, Son and Spirit all the glory.

Believer, remember, it is Christ with us giving us direction, power and gifts to minister the gospel of God as Christ commands. When you have opportunity to minister the gospel, remember what the Lord said to Paul at Corinth.

Acts 18: 9: Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11: And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Amen!