

# SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

## *In The Grip of God's Grace*

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

### **Romans 15:14-22 - "Paul's Marvelous Ministry"**

Romans 15:14-22, *"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. 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, 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. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. 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, 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. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you."*

At Chapter 15:13, we came to the conclusion of the teaching portion of Paul's letter to the Romans; the remainder of the letter forms an epilogue.

It's personal, explaining why he wrote it, and assisting us to understand his ministry and mission.

In our text today we get an inside peek at his marvelous ministry.

What kind of ministry did Paul have?

We will find five marks to his ministry which are all true for us too.

I. It was given to him by Grace (vs. 14-15)

Romans 15:14-15, *"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. 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,"*

A. In verse 14, Paul commended the church in Rome for three important qualities. James Boice called them, "check-off points for a good church."

1. *full of goodness* – not inless or perfect

It's moral goodness or excellence in their motives and lifestyle.

- They strove to do what was right
- They were motivated by a sense of goodness
- It was evidence of true conversion – the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5)

Check yourself!

2. *filled with all knowledge* – It's not omniscient – only God knows everything.

It meant that they had a sound, practical understanding of the Christian faith that issued in wholesome conduct.

To me, the great need in the church today is a working knowledge of the teachings of the Bible.

3. *able also to admonish one another*

Charles Swindoll (Bible Study Guide, pg. 47) – The Greek term translated *admonish* comes from two other words – one that means “mind” and another which means “to put something somewhere.” When these words are combined to form the term *admonish*, they convey the idea of “placing something in the mind.” ... “It is an appeal to the mind where opposition is present. The person is led away from a false way through warning, instruction, reminding, teaching, and encouraging and his conduct is to be corrected.” In other words, the Roman Christians cared so deeply about one another that they took the time and the risk to lovingly confront those in their midst who were veering off the right path. Many of us fail to handle conflicts as they did. Indeed, we often opt for other alternatives, such as (1) avoiding the confrontation altogether, (2) facing it head-on but with a prideful attitude, or (3) acknowledging the problem but shrugging it off for the sake of maintaining friendship or harmony. However, none of these responses are right. If we truly love someone, then we will care enough to express our love through confrontation no matter how painful it may be. As Proverbs 27:6 states, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.”

It's a comprehensive term for counseling – J. Adams Book – “Competent to Counsel”

The marks of a great church!

If they were so great why then did Paul write to them?

- B. Two reasons Paul wrote to them (vs. 15)

1. To remind them of some important truths

*putting you in mind*

It's important to remember the truths of scripture

- we forget what we want to remember
- we remember what we want to forget

2. Because of God's Grace, calling him to minister to the Gentiles.

- God saves us by grace
- God sanctifies us by grace

We serve God by grace

*Romans 12:6, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us,..."*

Paul's calling as an Apostle to the Gentiles was all by God's Grace.

So too us!

II. It was centered in the Gospel (vs. 16)

*Romans 15:16, "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."*

The word Paul used for "minister" is where we get the word "liturgy".

It's a noun and verb used in the New Testament exclusively of religious and ritual services.

Paul is picturing his ministry as priestly.

In what way was Paul's ministry priestly?

Note: it's not the sacramental meditation we see today in the Roman Catholic Church.

But rather:

1. The preaching of the Gospel

Ministers are to be preachers

What are they to preach?

The Gospel, the whole Gospel; and nothing but the Gospel!

This is what the book of Romans is.

This is how the great need is met.

2. The offering up of the Gentiles to God.

*be acceptable* – Gentiles were not permitted in the temple

Application for us today – Worship & Witness

III. It was done for God's Glory (vs. 17-18)

Romans 15:17-18, *"I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. 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,"*

1. Paul's glory or boasting was not in his own person, but in Jesus Christ

2. He knew that it was Christ's working through him (vs. 18).

Paul had great natural abilities yet he was humble (used by God)

Grace leads to glory!

The purpose of ministry is to glorify God

Galatians 6:14, *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."*

How about you?

Are you willing to serve for His glory?

IV. Done through God's power (vs. 19)

Romans 15:19, *"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."*

A. Christ's ministry through Paul was by the power of signs and wonders.

The Biblical terms for the supernatural or miracles

1. Signs – their significance – God’s kingdom
2. Wonders – their effect – upon people

*by the power of the Spirit of God*

The signs of a true apostle:

*2 Corinthians 12:12, “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.”*

Should we expect God to do the same today?

Today the Spirit of God works through the preaching of the Word of God.

*I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.*

Remember the great commission?

*Mark 16:15, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”*

Paul did it in sandals and changed the world!

One saved sinner at a time.

Every conversion is a power encounter in which the Spirit, through the gospel, rescues and regenerates the sinner.

In verse 19 we see:

- The scope of Paul’s ministry
- The power of Paul’s ministry
- The nature of Paul’s ministry – preaching the Gospel

So too for us – the scope, power & nature!

V. It was according to God’s plan (vs. 20-21)

*Romans 15:20-21, “Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.”*

Paul had a Priestly ministry

Paul had a Powerful ministry

Paul had a Pioneer ministry

Illustration: David Livingstone (London Missionary Society) asked where he'd like to go replied, "anywhere, so long as it is forward."

This is not true of everyone – 1 Corinthians 3:6, *"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."*

But God does give us the desires of our hearts.

Have you heard the Gospel?

Review:

1. Given to him by Grace
2. Centered in the Gospel
3. Done for God's glory
4. Done through God's power
5. According to God's plan