

**Not Ashamed
(Week 36)
Romans 15:14-21
“Make Disciples”**

Introduction

...Those who were not told about Him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.
Romans 15:21

When we get into the closing section of Paul's letter to the Romans, it becomes clear that Paul not only was not the founder of the church there, but more than likely, he did not know many of its members (the few there that Paul did know, he had met elsewhere). He had heard of their faithfulness, and as a preacher of the gospel, he wanted to make certain that they were fully aware of all the doctrines of the faith. He sent the letter that is now commonly known as The New Testament “Book of *Romans*” in care of a godly emissary named Phoebe, in hopes that it would be graciously received by the church. Paul doesn't rebuke the church at Rome for any cause, but rather, he praises it for its faithfulness and sound doctrine. His purpose in writing was to formally introduce himself to the congregants through Phoebe, in hopes that one day he would be able to visit them personally. Paul, like any brother in Christ, longed for the fellowship of other Believers.

In **Romans 15:14-15**, Paul actually offers an apology for coming on so strong in his letter. He doesn't want the church to think that he is critiquing them, but rather, he feels that it is his obligation to make sure that the church there has been established upon sound doctrine. This is why the book of *Romans* is so completely saturated with the tenants of the Christian faith. We today, can be thankful that Paul felt compelled to write such a letter to the church at Rome, for it has become a lasting treasure to those who have come to faith in Jesus Christ. Romans is the very essence of our faith consolidated into one wondrous document. The Spirit of God knew full well what He was doing when He compelled Paul to write this letter, even though Paul himself could not have possibly known that it would be handed down from generation to generation of Believers all around the world! We serve an amazing God indeed!

In his closing remarks to the Romans, Paul gives us some personal insight into the very heart of this faithful missionary. He, of all men, lived up to his full potential as an ambassador of Christ. He is an example for us all by his zeal to share the gospel with those who have not heard. We would do well to emulate him in this, for I do believe that the time is short and The Day of The LORD is at hand. Paul was a man on a mission, and he tirelessly pursued those who were lost without hope. He was the embodiment The LORD'S great commission:

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of The Father, and of The Son, and of The Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.
Matthew 28:19-20

Sadly, when many Believers read these words, they think that they are meant for someone else. But they are a command for us all to obey. We, the Church of Christ, are commissioned to make disciples everywhere we go. We are to faithfully share the gospel with those who will hear. No one is “exempt” from the great commission!

Many Christians feel that they are somehow inadequate to share their faith however. We often get discouraged, because we think that we aren't as gifted or as talented as others in the faith. This discouragement is invalid, for the plain truth of it is that God has made the gospel so easy to understand that even a child can share it with ease.

If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is LORD,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
Romans 10:9

It's that simple! So share it with those you meet. In **Romans 15:14-21**, we will plainly see that we have been Selected, Supplied, and Sent to go into all the world and make disciples. Please allow me to explain.

Selected (vs. 15-17)

Nevertheless I have written to remind you more boldly on some points because of the grace given me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving as a priest of the gospel of God. God's purpose is that the Gentiles may be an acceptable offering, sanctified by The Holy Spirit. Therefore I have reason to boast in Christ Jesus regarding what pertains to God. **Romans 15:15-17**

Paul wanted the Romans to know that he had been chosen by God. And that was his sole reason for writing to the church at Rome. In fact, it was his sole reason for everything that he did. God had, in His sovereignty, chosen Paul to be a preacher of the Gospel. And Paul gave God all the glory for it. His only boast was in Christ, Who had bestowed him with such marvelous grace.

I never cease to be amazed at the transforming power of God! And Paul is a perfect example. He went from being Saul, the Pharisee, zealous in his persecution of Christ and His Church. To Paul, a missionary of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now that is a major transformation! Not only that, but as a stalwart Jew, he wouldn't have even given any Gentile the time of day. But when Christ got through with him, his whole life's purpose became about reaching Gentiles!

I love how Paul describes himself in this passage. He calls himself a "priest of the gospel of God", not because he was assuming the mediator role between Christ and the Believer. We only have but one Priest that serves as Mediator, and that is Christ Himself. On the contrary, Paul saw himself as a priest taking the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles, so that every Gentile that he reached was offered up as a "living sacrifice" on the altar of God. What a beautiful picture of a soul winner! A person who acts as a priest offering souls for Christ upon the altar. That is what each of us has been chosen by God to do, be a royal priesthood to those who are perishing.

As you come to Him, a living stone — rejected by people but chosen and honored by God — you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **1 Peter 2:4-6**

Have you ever thought of yourself as a priest? Well you are, if you are in Christ Jesus. And every time you make a disciple of Christ, you are placing another soul upon his altar to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. That is such an amazing description of what we have been chosen for: Priestly service, bringing offerings to God.

So you see, Paul was not the only one chosen to become a missionary. All of us were. It was always God's plan for you to go and serve as a priest. This is why God chose you in the first place. You were selected for service, before the world began.

For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those He predestined, he also called; and those He called, He also justified; and those He justified; He also glorified. **Romans 8:29-30**

So, not only had Paul been chosen by God, but so had the church at Rome, and so have we, if we be in Christ. Therefore, we are all called as a Royal Priesthood to go and make disciples to be offered

up as living sacrifices upon the altar of God. Simple as that, my friend. If you belong to Christ, then you have been selected by God Himself, so that you may serve as one of His priests in this fallen world.

Supplied (vs. 14,18-19)

My brothers and sisters. I myself am convinced about you that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.

Romans 15:14

Paul did not want the church at Rome to think that he had written them because he felt they were in some way lacking. On the contrary, he had every confidence that the same God, Who had chosen them, had also equipped them for the work He had chosen them to do. This is an immutable truth about God: Those whom He calls, He equips for the calling. You do not have to be concerned my friend that you do not have what it takes to be a priest in God's kingdom. He will see to it that you do!

Paul tells the church that they have been given by The Spirit exactly what they need to flourish. First, they are full of "goodness". This simply means that they had been made holy. God sanctifies us in order to use us. As we have said previously, do not confuse holiness with service, as some believers often do. Many think that they serve God, simply by abstaining from sin. That is not service, that is holiness. The reason that we are made holy is so that we CAN SERVE. In *The Old Testament*, before a priest could perform his duties, he would purify himself by ceremonial washing. Before he was able to serve as a priest for God's people, he must himself be made clean. The same is true for us. We must be made holy, before we can serve. If a priest had simply bathed and then neglected his priestly service, then he would not have been much of a priest now would he? We too are to be holy, in order to serve.

Second, the church in Rome was filled with "knowledge". This means that they had a very good grasp on the spiritual truths of Scripture. They knew what they believed. You can't lead others, if you yourself don't really know where you are going. This is the reason that we try so very diligently to teach The Word of God here in the church. So that the saints will be filled with knowledge, and they can take that knowledge and go and make disciples.

Thirdly, the church at Rome, because they had holiness and knowledge, were more than capable of teaching. Just as previously stated, you have to know what you believe in order to instruct others. It is the responsibility of every Believer to become familiar with The Word. And in so doing, use it diligently to instruct others. Remember the words of Christ:

...teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.

Matthew 28:20

In Paul's day, when the gospel was fresh and new, God allowed his servants to perform miraculous signs to prove the legitimacy of the message.

For I would not dare say anything except what Christ has accomplished through me by word and deed for the obedience of the Gentiles, by the power of miraculous signs and wonders, and by the power of God's Spirit.

Romans 15:18-19a

God gave his apostles miraculous power in order to proclaim the gospel message. When the apostles performed miracles, the people could see the power of God in their message. They didn't have a *New Testament* to open up and expound the truths of the gospel to those who would hear. Why? Because they were still writing it! Now, we no longer need miraculous signs to prove the legitimacy of the message. We have the complete word of God's truth at our disposal. The Spirit uses the Word to convince us of the truth, and that is sufficient for all who will believe to be able to do so. Were you saved because you saw a miracle, or because you heard the message and believed it? I would dare say for the most of you, it is the latter, rather than the former. Does God still perform miracles? Of course, but we have been given all that we need to make disciples, when we have the knowledge of God's Word.

So there you have it. You have not only been selected, you have been adequately supplied for that for which you have been selected. You have been given goodness (holiness) and Knowledge (God's Word). So you are now ready to instruct.

Sent (vs. 19b-21)

As a result I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum. My aim is to preach the gospel where Christ has not been named, so that I will not build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, Those who were not told about Him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.

Romans 15:19b-21

God had Selected Paul, Supplied Paul, and then Sent Paul to his mission field. No one would ever be able to stand and accuse Paul of not living up to his calling to preach the gospel of Christ. He had proclaimed the good news faithfully, planting churches along the way from Jerusalem to Illyricum (modern day Croatia). He went wherever he had been sent. He wasn't as concerned about the places where the gospel had already been proclaimed (like Rome). No, he was consumed with getting it within earshot of those who had never heard. It was his passion, and his sole purpose for living. Otherwise, he would have just as soon gone on to be with The LORD.

For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:21

One of Paul's favorite *Old Testament* verses, the one that spurred him ever onward, is from the Septuagint version of Isaiah:

...Those who were not told about Him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.

Romans 15:21 (Isaiah 52:15 Septuagint)

The old missionary used this verse as his motivation for reaching those whom no one had reached with the gospel. This too should compel us to *go therefore unto all the world and make disciples*.

Unlike Paul, most of us have not been called to travel the globe preaching the gospel, but we have been sent to the mission field nonetheless. Every Sunday, when we disperse from the church, we go our separate ways. We travel many different paths to multiple destinations. It is to those places that we have been sent to make disciples. Those locations are our mission fields. It is our responsibility to go where we have been sent and to "bloom where we have been planted". The places you frequent, your neighborhood, school, or place of business, didn't just happen by chance. God, in His sovereign wisdom, has called you there. He has equipped you to serve there, and He requires you to be His priest in that place. No one is better qualified than you to serve in the place you have been sent... SO SERVE THERE. Go and make disciples, bringing them to the altar of God as living sacrifices for His glory! This is, in fact, why we are here.

So, ask yourself this morning, "Am I doing all I can to work MY mission field?" If the answer is no, then just remember that time is short. Jesus is coming soon. May He find us serving in our fields faithfully, when He comes. Paul desperately wanted to visit the church at Rome, but he didn't feel comfortable doing so, before he had completed all the tasks that God had set before him. He wasn't about to leave his mission field, before he had reached all those he had been sent to reach. Paul was focused on the harvest. This is the heart of a living sacrifice. It is a missionary's heart. Is this the kind of heart that beats within you? Then go and bring forth the harvest, so that you will have something to show for your labor. Go and bring souls to offer as living sacrifices to God. Go and be the priest that God has Selected, Supplied, and Sent to make disciples. If you do not work your field, then who else will?

Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to The LORD of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.'

Matthew 9:37-38

So go and work your mission field. By so doing, you may just be the answer to someone's prayers!

And let all of God's missionaries say... TRUTH!!!