

A Ministry That Glorifies God and Advances His Kingdom

Romans 15:14-22

Thought for the Day: God's work done in God's way will experience God's blessing (guidance, empowerment and the provision of necessary resources).

Beginning at Romans 15:14, Paul is starting to conclude his letter to the believers in Rome. In this passage, he sets forth his reasons for writing. It is not because he believes that there is anything lacking in their spiritual knowledge or maturity. Rather, he's writing to fulfill the ministry which God had entrusted to him. Paul viewed his ministry as a stewardship from God, of which he would give an account to the Lord, and he wanted to be found faithful in the fulfillment of that stewardship. May God find us equally faithful to His calling on our lives! These verses set forth five important principles that can help us to Glorify God and Advance His Kingdom in our work for Him.

I. Is Received by God's Grace (15:14-15)

14 I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

- Paul was convinced that he was writing to a spiritually mature body of believers who were:
 - Full of goodness = Christlike character. (Grow)
 - Complete in knowledge = knowledge of God and understanding of the Gospel. (Know)
 - Competent to instruct one another = their concern and capacity to share the truths of God with others. (Show)

15 I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again

- There are some things worth remembering and that bear repeating! (2 Peter 1:12-15)

... because of the grace God gave me ...

- 1 Corinthians 15:8-11.

II. Is Centered in God's Gospel (15:16)

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

- Paul was called *by* God to proclaim the gospel *of* God.
- Just as Peter had been called to be the Apostle to the Jews, so Paul was called to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. (Cp. Acts 9:4-16; 22:21; 26:15-18; Galatians 2:6-9; 1 Timothy 2:7; Romans 11:13)
- Paul viewed his ministry as a priestly duty—an act of worship unto God.
 - This perspective can transform our ministry from dreary drudgery to an exciting adventure with God!
 - His ministry was two-fold:
 - 1) To proclaim the gospel of God—evangelism.
 - 2) To present the Gentiles as an acceptable offering to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit—discipleship. (Colossians 1:28-29; Matthew 25:21)

III. Is Done for God's Glory (15:17)

17 Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God.

- "Glory" = "boasting or taking pride in."
 - Paul was not bragging about what he had done; he was boasting and taking pride in what the Lord had done.
 - He recognized that he was an instrument, a tool in the hands of God. The glory does not go to the hammer but to the Carpenter!
- Here is the enigma of the Gospel ministry to which we have been called:
 - On the one hand, it is a stewardship from God which we have a responsibility to fulfill and for which we will be held accountable by the Lord.
 - On the other hand, if anything of eternal significance takes place, it is because of the power of the Holy Spirit and for the glory of God.

IV. Is Accomplished by God's Power (15:18-19)

18 I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— 19 by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit.

- In the energy of the flesh, we can accomplish nothing of eternal significance.
- We must learn how to appropriate the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.
- Ministry is a Divine/human partnership.

V. Is According to God's Plan (15:20-22)

So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.

- Jerusalem is located in Israel and Illyricum, also known as Dalmatia, was a Roman province due east from Italy, across the Adriatic Sea.
 - There is no biblical record of Paul having been in this area, but it is possible that while he was in Macedonia, he crossed over into this province. (2 Timothy 4:10)
 - The point is that Paul had preached the Gospel throughout much of the Roman empire.
- From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum covers about 14,000 miles! (*Wiersbe, Be Right, p. 179*)

20 It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. 21 Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand." 22 This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

- We need to recognize God's sovereignty and timing in our lives and ministries.
- If it is His will, in His time and way, it will take place.