

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 15

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through Romans

A letter that Paul writes to the believers in Rome and to us – about the Gospel of grace.

About embracing grace and responding in grace – to the work that God has done and continues to do in us and through us

And also living in grace – as He conforms us to be like Jesus by the renewing of our mind – through the power of the Holy Spirit in in us – we will find ourselves serving one another and loving one another - pursuing the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

And as I mentioned last week –

We have two more weeks in Romans – and then after Christmas, we will start our study through the book of Ephesians –

**Let's pray...**

Read Text –

After His resurrection – our Lord and Savior – gave His disciples and us – the Great Commission

Matthew 28 -

**[Mat 28:18-20 NKJV] 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age." Amen.**

The Apostle Paul was a man on a mission to help people find and follow Jesus

It is the same mission Jesus has given to every single person who places their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

I mentioned it last week –

Any believer who has truly experienced God's forgiveness, any believer who has truly experienced God's love –

What Jesus has done for us compels us to share it with those who are hurting, for those who are broken, with those who have no hope –

Paul – as he is wrapping up his letter –

He is giving the believers in Rome and us today – a glimpse into the heart of a minister.

This is why I am writing this letter –

This is my motivation

At the beginning of the letter -

**[Rom 1:9-12 NKJV] 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, 10 making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established-- 12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.**

And so Paul – over the last two weeks – here in Ch 15

He has reminded us that he is writing these things to remind us

He has reminded us that he is writing these things because it is God's will – that it is his purpose – that Jesus chose him to preach the gospel to areas where it hadn't been preached, that everything he has done – it is the work of Jesus.

But Paul has also reminded us and made the case that this work is not his alone.

That all of us are ministers of hope.

And that we are to faithfully fulfill our divine calling – which is to present Christ to a watching world.

We are to be a man or woman on mission – and fulfill the mission we were called to so.

And so, what Paul does here at the end of ch 15 –

He provides for us a little help for us by giving us practical instructions to help us in our walk.

**[Rom 15:22-33 NKJV] 22 For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.**

Paul wrote the letter to the believers in Rome on his third missionary journey – while he was in Corinth, ministering to the Corinthians.

Paul, in his travels, had heard stories of the believers in Rome.

He has a desire to go to Rome – to fellowship with the Roman believers – to minister to the Roman believers.

This is what Paul wanted to do –

But what prevents Paul from doing what he wanted to do?

I had you make a note of the phrase – “for this reason”

Because what prevents Paul from doing what he wanted to do – was doing what he needed to do – which is God's will.

Go back to verse 18

**[Rom 15:18-20 NKJV] 18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient-- 19 in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20 And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation,**

Paul desired to go to Rome –

In CH 1 – he said he was prevented, here he says he has been hindered.

It was the call of God on his life that prevented him and hindered him from doing what he wanted to do.

Remember church – as we are led by the Spirit, it is His timing, it is His will that we need to long for.

**23 But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, 24 whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your [company] for a while.**

For the past couple of verse, Paul has been telling us what he has been up to –

Now, he tells us his plans.

He says – I have accomplished the work that God has called me to do here – I am planning on going to Spain – but I plan on making a pitstop and spend time with you all.

Paul is looking forward to encouragement from those in Rome – he is looking for their help – financial support, prayer – he is saying - “partner with me and let’s get the gospel to Spain”

That was Paul’s plan – to share the gospel where it hadn’t been shared before.

It was little over 8 years ago where my pastor told me – “What is your plan, where is God leading you to?”,

He was essentially saying - you no longer have a place in these parts – it’s time to move on. It’s time to fulfill your gift

And after praying about it – I told him that God had put Nogales in my heart – my plan.

Now – was there work and ministries in Sahuarita that I could have done – absolutely –

But here is the thing – and this is something that God placed in my heart later as I was coming out here –

That work was not mine – it was not God’s will for me.

When Paul says that he no longer having a place in these parts – it doesn't mean that everyone was saved in Corinth or that everyone was spiritually mature in Corinth – it simply means that his ministry there was done – the other work, God has reserved for someone else to do.

So we are to ask ourselves this morning –

What is our plan for ministry?

What is our vision for ministry?

Love for Jesus and concern for the lost, motivated Paul to have plan and a vision to share the gospel

And the same thing goes for us –

What is our plan – we all need to have a plan.

We all need to step out to where God is calling us.

**[Phi 2:5 NKJV] 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,**

What is that mind of Christ?

It is to reach out

It is to do something

It is to share

It is to take up our cross and follow Him

It is to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

That is the mind of Christ -

**25 But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. 26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. 27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.**

Paul's long term vision is to go to Spain – by way of Rome

His short term vision – is to meet the needs of the saints in Jerusalem – which is 100 miles in the opposite direction.

Even though Paul has a plan for the future – he is not neglecting the present.

In AD 46 and AD 48 – there was a severe famine in the Roman Empire –

And one of the areas that was greatly affected was the area of Jerusalem –

So Paul, as he is ministering to the Gentiles – he is taking up an offering among the saints – to help the believers back in Jerusalem.

Christians who had never seen each other's faces were coming together to meet the needs of God's people.

So – as much as Paul wanted to go to Rome and minister to them and as much as Paul wanted to go to Spain and preach the gospel there – there was a pressing need he had to attend - now

Paul is not neglecting the present while he is thinking about the future –

Turn to 2 Cor 8

Paul provides us a little more insight on the generosity of the gentiles in their giving to their fellow brothers and sisters in need I Jerusalem.

**[2Co 8:1-5 NKJV] 1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 3 For I bear witness that according to [their] ability, yes, and beyond [their] ability, [they were] freely willing, 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5 And not [only] as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and [then] to us by the will of God.**

The Gentiles gave – not because they were abundant in resources, the gentile believers gave because they were overflowing in love.

So – they found a way

They made a way to meet the immediate needs of family.

**28 Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.**

Paul's plan –

I am going to take this offering back to Jerusalem and then I am going to come back this way – go through Rome as I make my way to Spain.

This is what believes – that this is how things are going to work out.

For those of us who have read the book of Acts –

We know that this is not the case.

Paul goes back to Jerusalem –

Paul delivers the much needed financial support to the believers there

Paul goes to the temple and a riot breaks out

He is arrested and taken prisoner

He is taken to Caesaria where he is held prisoner for two years

Finally, he appeals to Caesar

And he is given an all-expense paid trip – courtesy of the Roman government to Rome.

Where Paul faces Nero

Where Paul is placed under house arrest

Where church history tells us that Paul was beheaded in 67 AD

Paul's plan was to go to Spain –

The truth is – we really don't know whether or not he ever made it to Spain

There are some who say he did – others say that he even made it all the way to England –

But we don't see find this in scripture -

But here is the amazing thing

As a believer – one day, when we stand before God, we don't have to worry about having to apologize because we have failed ministry goals or because our life didn't turn out the way we planned -

David had a plan and a vision to build the temple.

How many bricks did he lay? None.

He didn't lay one brick – but he certainly helped in the gathering of the materials to build the temple.

Because God cares about the process -

**29 But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.**

Very important verse here for the believer

Paul says here that his primary goal and our primary goal is the gospel.

His primary goal is not to provide social services

His primary goal is to serve the gospel and the Jesus that the gospel represents.

There is no other message that can meet the need of lost human beings

There is no amount of social services that can make ones sin go away, or bring us into fellowship with God or to give us peace and hope.

**[Rom 1:14-15 NKJV] 14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. 15 So, as much as is in me, [I am] ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.**

So what Paul is telling the Romans here is that – he will get to Rome, when it is God's will for him to get to Rome.

When Jesus is in it

Once again, we see Paul – fully submissive in the will of God for him

If I am to do something or arrive at any point – it is only because Christ has blessed me to do it.

He is submissive to God's will and he is resolved to fulfill God's will

**30 Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, 31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. 33 Now the God of peace [be] with you all. Amen.**

If the Apostle Paul is willing to ask for fellow believers to pray for him, I think this should move all of us, to ask for our fellow brothers and sisters to pray for us as well.

The Lord calls us to pray for one another

To pray without ceasing

But for some reason – sometimes when we are dealing with something in our lives – we have this mindset that we don't want to bug people.

We don't want to bother them or burden them

Paul is making an appeal here –

He is begging for prayer and he is not ashamed to do so

“Please, I need you to pray continuously for me”

He is asking for prayers – not only for himself – but so that he could fulfill the ministry that he was called to do – not just his plans or what he wanted to do – but God’s will for his life.

He wants prayer for deliverance from the religious rulers as he goes to Jerusalem.

By the way – this answered prayer is recorded for us in Acts 21,22,23

I had you make a note of the phrase - and may be refreshed together with you

The point being that Paul isn’t going to Rome to simply give the Roman believers something –

Paul is going there to receive something as well

Paul would minister, encourage and provide to them and they would minister encourage and provide for Paul.

A time of refreshing –

**[Act 3:19 NKJV] 19 “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,**

Did Paul have joy when he got to Rome?

He was thankful.

Was he refreshed?

He "took courage" when he saw the Christians from Rome.

Was it God's will for Paul to go to Rome?

Absolutely.

He made it to Rome.

Just not the way the Paul had probably envisioned.

We need to Be flexible in how God may actually fulfill His will in our life.

Paul finishes the chapter in asking for prayer – and as he is asking for prayer – he prays for the believers in Rome –

The prayer is simple and forceful

Now the God of peace [be] with you all, Amen

When the God of peace is with you,

There is peace in your heart, there is peace with one another, there is peace in the circumstances that we face day after day –

Real peace comes when a person has a real relationship with a real God –

When we are no longer at war with God but we are walking with God

Not only is there peace with God but the peace of God – this is something that Paul experienced

Where God's will, God's plan would be done through the power of prayer and fellowship and that he would receive all that God had for him.

And the same goes for us

Amen

Let's pray...

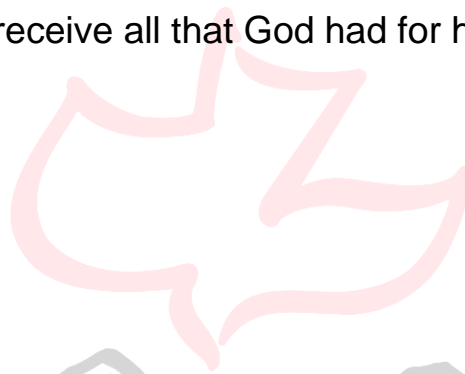
To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.



CALVARY  
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Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'



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