

## Introduction

One of the things that I have attempted to do during my thirty-six years of ministry is to connect with people in my messages. Instead of generic, off-the-shelf illustrations, I have tried to incorporate personal stories and examples as much as possible. I have shared about the oak trees that were planted in my yard by the county, and the cocktail tree that was another answer to prayer. I have shared the mistakes that I have made, so that people can learn from them. I believe that personal examples help people make personal applications of the passage, and connect with me as a person, rather than just a teacher.

In Romans 1, Paul told the saints in Rome that he had a desire to go to them, preach the gospel, impart some spiritual gift to them, and obtain some fruit from them. He had planned to come to them, but had been prevented so far. After the introduction, the first eleven chapters of Romans are focused primarily on the gospel message. In Romans 12:1-15:13, Paul taught on living the Christian life, which was full of practical applications. In Romans 15:14, Paul gets very personal in his concluding remarks. I have titled this final section of Romans, Paul's Concluding Remarks.

(Rom 1:10-15) “always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. {11} For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; {12} that is, that I may be encouraged together with you *while* among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. {13} I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles. {14} I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. {15} So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.”

In our passage today, Paul shares his purpose in writing to the Romans. Second, he shares about his ministry. He shares one of his guiding principles, a few remarks on what he has accomplished, what he is currently planning to do, and about his future plans, which include visiting the church in Rome. Third, Paul asks the church in Rome to pray for him, giving them three specific things to pray about. Next week, we will continue with Paul's Concluding Remarks and look at his various greetings to the congregations in Rome, an exhortation and a warning about those that cause dissensions, and then a few greetings from his team members.

### Paul's Concluding Remarks – Part 1

1. Paul's Purpose for Writing Romans (Rom 15:14-16)
2. Paul's Ministry Plans (Rom 15:17-29)
  - a. Accomplished Ministry Plans (Rom 15:17-22)
  - b. Current Ministry Plans (Rom 15:25-27)
  - c. Future Ministry Plans (Rom 15:23-24, 28-29)
3. Paul's Prayer Request (Rom 15:30-33)

(Rom 15:14-16) “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another. {15} But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, {16} to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that *my* offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

(Rom 15:17-29) “Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. {18} For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, {19} in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. {20} And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation; {21} but as it is written, "THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE, AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND." {22} For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you; {23} but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you {24} whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while— {25} but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. {26} For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. {27} Yes, they were pleased *to do so*, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things. {28} Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain. {29} I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.”

(Rom 15:30-33) “Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, {31} that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; {32} so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find *refreshing* rest in your company. {33} Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.”

### 1. Paul's Purpose for Writing Romans (Rom 15:14-16)

In verse fifteen, Paul gives his purpose in writing to the churches in Rome. “I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again. Paul wrote this magnificent letter to remind them of some things. He waited until Romans 15:15 to clearly state his purpose in writing. Luke stated his purpose in the first four verses of Luke 1; he wanted people to know the exact truth in consecutive order. The apostle John wrote his purpose in writing near the end of the book. In John 20:30-31, he said that he had written so that people would believe in Christ, the Son of God, and have life in his name. So, it is not that uncommon to state your purpose at the end. Paul wrote the Romans to remind them of some important truths.

(Rom 15:15) “But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,”

(John 20:30-31) “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; {31} but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

Paul's focus for much of Romans has been the gospel message. He said that he has written very boldly on some points. I think some of these bold points include:

- Everyone is without excuse. The vilest sinners are without excuse because God has revealed His invisible attributes to everyone. The religious people who know the law are without excuse, because they too are sinners.

- Everyone is going to stand before God, who will judge all men according to their deeds.
- All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and that the wage of sin is death.
- The real descendants of Abraham are the children of promise who have believed God.
- We are saved by believing that God raised Jesus from the dead and confessing Him as Lord.
- The Gentiles were always part of God's plan, and the Jews are to accept them and become of one mind so that with one voice they can glorify God.

These are just some of the points that Paul wanted to remind the Romans about again. I am sure that not everyone knew everything that Paul wrote about, so it was a reminder to those that knew, and very instructive to those that might not have heard or gained understanding about these things. The word remind\* is used nineteen times in the Bible. In 2 Peter 1:12, Peter wrote that he will always be ready to remind them of things, even though they already knew them. Jude said a similar thing, "Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all..." When we tell people that we are reminding them, it will be a reminder for those that already know, and it will be new instruction for those that do not know. It is a great approach to sharing things, particularly with those that are knowledgeable in the things of God.

(2 Pet 1:12) "Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know *them*, and have been established in the truth which is present with *you*."

(Jude 1:5) "Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe."

In writing this book, Paul was very aware of two things. First, he was aware of who he was and what God had called him to do. Second, he was aware of the church in Rome. In Romans 1, Paul introduced himself as an apostle to the Gentiles, set apart for the gospel. In our text, Paul said that he was able to write this bold message to them because of the grace given to him by God to be a minister and priest. We have seen that grace is more than just God's unmerited favor and mercy in our lives. God gives grace to each one of us to do the things that He has called us to do. Paul received the gifting, desire, and ability to do the work of an apostle. Because of that grace, he was able to share some very bold things, and even bring correction when needed.

(Rom 15:15-16) "But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, {16} to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that *my* offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

Paul was also very aware of his audience. He said, "Concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to admonish one another." There are four things in that statement which help offset the boldness in the things he wrote. Paul felt confident that he could say what he did because he knew his audience very well. First, he calls them brethren. When he made statements about the Jews, he is a fellow Jew, and he identifies himself as a brother to them. Second, Paul said that they were full of goodness. Even though he has told them that they were sinners; he said they are full of goodness. These are good people that live good lives and do good things. Third, Paul was convinced that they were filled with all knowledge. He can say he is reminding them of these things because he was assured that they were filled with all knowledge. In our communication

with people today, particularly about spiritual matters, many will not be filled with all knowledge. Even in the church today, there are many people who are poorly grounded in God's word, and are basically Biblically ignorant. I encourage people to get on a good daily reading plan and to read through the entire Bible every year. We want people to be filled with all knowledge. Paul was convinced that the church in Rome was filled with all knowledge. Fourth, Paul was convinced that they were able to admonish one another. The Greek word is *noutheto* (Strong's G3560), which means to reprove gently, mildly rebuke, warn, or admonish. Paul felt that they were filled with all knowledge and could reprove and warn one another when someone was beginning to stray.

(Rom 15:16) "And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another."

A number of years ago I was sharing Colossians 1:28-29 with a man, which is one of my life verses. Paul proclaimed Christ, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that he could present every man complete in Christ. This man felt very uncomfortable with the idea of admonishing one another. We live in a day where we are to mind our own business, and are not to say anything to our brother about what they are doing. God tells us to encourage one another, and also to admonish one another. We need the encouragement, exhortations, consolation, and gentle warnings from others so that we can be complete in Christ.

(Col 1:28) "We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ."

When we share something with others, be it our children, spouse, relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers or strangers, we need to follow Paul's example. Paul was personal and humbly related to people as brethren. He knew his audience, and he knew what he could share and how to share it. He said some very positive things about them, but also shared some hard things. Paul taught the whole counsel of God, and did not shrink back from declaring anything that was profitable to them.

(Acts 20:20-27) "how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable... {27} "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God."

2. **Paul's Ministry Plans** (Rom 15:17-29)
  - a. Accomplished Ministry Plans (Rom 15:17-22)
  - b. Current Ministry Plans (Rom 15:25-27)
  - c. Future Ministry Plans (Rom 15:23-24, 28-29)

Some people in the church, particularly the Pentecostal church, want to be led by the Spirit. Making any kind of plans is not acceptable to them, as they believe that it limits our ability to be led by the Spirit. God makes plans, and He has plans for each of you. He also tells us to make plans. He expects us to consult with Him, but He tells us that we have the responsibility to make plans. Paul made plans. We saw in Romans 1 that Paul had often planned to go to Rome, but had been prevented. Our plans don't always work out in our timeframe or the way we want. We make our plans and God directs our steps. Paul planned his ministry, and that is very evident in the passage, even though the word, "plan," is not used.

(Rom 1:13) “I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have **planned** to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.”

(Pr 16:1) “The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.”

(Pr 16:9) “The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.”

After reminding the Romans that he was a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, he then begins to share about what Christ has accomplished through him. Paul had shared the gospel from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum. Illyricum was a territory on the eastern side of the Adriatic Sea, which is now Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, and Albania. The area from Jerusalem through Illyricum would have included Syria, Turkey, Achaia, Greece, Macedonia, Crete, and Cyprus.

(Rom 15:17-19) “Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. {18} For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, {19} in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”

Paul also shared one of his goals, which was not to preach the gospel where Christ had already been named. He did not want to build on another man's foundation. Apostles lay foundations, so he went where there were no foundations laid, and preached the gospel in those regions. He wanted to take the gospel to those who had never heard, so that they could see and have understanding.

(Rom 15:20-21) “And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation; {21} but as it is written, “THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE, AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND.”

In Romans 1, Paul had shared that he had planned to visit them, but had been prevented thus far. He has had a longing to go to them for many years, but had been prevented from going to them. Now, he tells them the reason that he had been prevented. He had focused his ministry to the areas that had never received the gospel. Rome had already heard the gospel, so until he had preached in all the other regions and did not have other regions to go to, he did not have the liberty to go there. He was planning to go to Rome in the future, but it would be after he goes to Jerusalem, and on his way to Spain. He hopes to see them in passing, and to be helped on his way there by them, after he has first enjoyed their company.

(Rom 15:22-24) “For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you; {23} but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you, {24} whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while.”

Currently, Paul is on his way to Jerusalem serving the saints. The churches in Macedonia and Achaia took and offering and were contributing to the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. When Paul finishes taking the offering to them, his plan is to go to Rome on his way to Spain. He also

mentions that when he comes, he will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. Paul knows that it will be in the Lord's timing and according to His will, so it will come with the fullness of God's blessing.

(Rom 15:24-29) “but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. {26} For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem....{28} Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain. {29} I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.”

Paul makes a comment about the attitude of the saints in Macedonia and Achaia. Paul mentions the word, “pleased”, twice. The word for pleased that is used is *eudokeo* (Strong's G2106), which means to think well or approve. These believers were not giving under compulsion or pressure; they were giving because they thought it was a good thing and they approved of it. Notice that Paul uses the word, *indebted*, twice. The Gentiles in Macedonia and Achaia felt indebted to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. They had shared in the spiritual things, and they felt indebted to minister to them with material things.

(Rom 15:27) “Yes, they were pleased *to do so*, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.”

In 1 Corinthians 9:7-11, Paul wrote about this spiritual principle of sharing material things with those who sowed spiritually. He said that soldiers and farmers do not eat at their own expense; but are paid from the fruit of their labors. Then, he quotes Deuteronomy 25:4 about not muzzling an ox while he is threshing, and applies that principle to people. He concludes, “If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?” The churches in Macedonia and Achaia understood this principle and were willing to give to those that had sowed into them spiritually. When we have guest speakers, we should give an offering for them, and we should cover their expenses. We should take care of the pastors in our churches that are feeding us spiritually. (In Paul's case, he said that he did not use this right, but offered the gospel at no charge.)

(1 Cor 9:7-11) “Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? {8} I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? {9} For it is written in the Law of Moses, “YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING.” God is not concerned about oxen, is He? {10} Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*. {11} If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?”

(Deut 25:4) “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.”

### 3. Paul's Prayer Request (Rom 15:30-33)

After sharing the purpose of his letter, and his plans, Paul urges the brethren to strive together with him in their prayers for him. He gives them three specific things to pray about. I like to pray about specific things, rather than general prayers. For example, I did not pray for some trees in my yard in Orlando, I prayed for an oak tree in the front yard. I prayed for a cocktail citrus tree

in the back yard. When Orange County came and planted two oak trees in my front yard, it was a specific answer to prayer, and they did not plant oak trees at any other house in our neighborhood. When Fred Dunn called me to bless us with a cocktail citrus tree at the birth of our son, David, it was a specific answer to prayer. I like to pray specifically.

(Rom 15:30) “Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,”

What were the three things that Paul asked them to join him in prayer about? His first request was that he would be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea. Paul knew that there were many Jews in Jerusalem that were upset with him. It is prophetic because Paul would end up being rescued by Roman soldiers when he was being lynched by a mob of angry Jews. Second, he was rescued from a planned lynching, and taken to Caesarea by a military escort. Third, he stayed imprisoned and was eventually sent to Rome when he made an appeal to Caesar after being asked to stand trial in Jerusalem, where he knew that he would not have a fair trial.

(Rom 15:31-32) “that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; {32} so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find *refreshing* rest in your company.”

Paul's second prayer request was that his service in Jerusalem would prove acceptable to the saints. He was bringing an offering to them and he wanted that service to be acceptable. But Paul was more than a mailman bringing a letter with an offering. Paul was an apostle and teacher, and he wanted his service as a minister to be acceptable. One of the things that Karen and I pray on a daily basis is that God would use us. We pray for divine appointments and opportunities. We want to be used by the Lord, and to be fruitful. We want our service to be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord.

The third specific prayer request is that he would be able to come to them in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in their company. I appreciate that prayer because of the timing. Paul had a desire for many years to go to Rome, and had been prevented. It had not been the right time; God had other places for him to go to that had not received the gospel. He wanted to go to Rome by the will of God. When we do something and we know that we are in the will of God, there is great joy in doing it. Paul did not just want to go to Rome, but he wanted them to pray that he would find refreshing rest when he was with them.

Our passage today ends with a blessing. Paul prays a blessing that the God of peace would be with all of them. It would appear that this would be the end of the letter to the Romans, but it is not. In Romans 16, we will continue Paul's concluding remarks. He has greetings for the many home churches, an exhortation, and some words by his team members.

(Rom 15:33) “Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.”

When we have people over, praying a blessing over them before they leave is a good way to end. We need to get in the habit of praying for people. We need to pray for specific requests that they may have, and we should pray for God's peace and blessing on their lives.

## Conclusion and Applications

In Paul's concluding remarks, he stated his purpose for writing, which was to remind them of some important truths. All of us need reminders because we either forget some things we have learned, or we have focused on other things and are not on the forefront of our minds. Paul also shared about his ministry plans. I believe that each of us need to know who we are, what we have been called to do, and to seek God's leading and blessing on our work. This passage was a good reminder to me to spend some time planning our new work in Rome. We can't just focus on what God has done with us in the past, but we have to look ahead to what He wants us to do now and in the future. Take a little time to write down the desires of your heart and the things that you would like to do, and then develop some plans for how to accomplish them. Pray and commit these plans to the Lord. We can learn from Paul's example about the importance of planning our ministries.

Paul was personal, and endeared himself to the church in Rome. He shared his desire to be with them. When someone tells you that they want to spend time with you, that is very endearing. When someone shares their goals and desires with you, that is endearing. Paul also asked the church to pray with him about three specific things. When you ask others to pray for you, that honors them and demonstrates humility on your part. We should share our prayer requests with others, and we should pray for one another. This week I received an email from Tom, and he had four specific prayer requests for one of his children. I welcome the opportunity to pray for these specific things. These things bring Tom and I closer together, and they also help establish God's kingdom in our lives. Pray for others and ask them to pray with you about things. Open up and share the burdens that you have. The early church was devoted to prayer, and this was both individually and corporately. The Connection Church is a house of prayer that is devoted to prayer, both corporately and individually.

## Prayer

Father God, help us to know who we are and what You have called us to do. Help us to plan our lives and ministries, and to accomplish the ministries that you have called us to do. Help us to connect with one another, by being transparent with one another. Help us to be vulnerable and share our burdens and prayer requests with others. Help us to faithfully lift up others in prayer. Help us to be that house of prayer in Rome. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Q & A

- Do you share boldly with others? What did Paul say allowed him to share boldly? What will it take in your life to share boldly with others?
- In Acts 4:29-31, what did the church do that gave them boldness, and what was the result of their request?
- Paul said he was a minister of Christ Jesus and a priest. What are the ways that we serve as priests today?
- Do we sow materially with those that sow spiritually into us? When we give, do we give because we are pleased to give, or do we give because we feel obligated to give?

- Do we share our specific prayer requests with others and ask them to pray for us? Do we pray for others and ask them for specific things that we can pray for them?
- Paul wanted to visit Rome and find refreshing rest in their company. What kind of atmosphere and environment is needed for people to find rest in our church and company?

**Introduction** (Rom 1:10-15, 15:14-33)

1. **Paul's Purpose for Writing Romans** (Rom 15:14-16, John 20:30-31, 2 Pet 1:12, Jude 1:5, Col 1:28, Acts 20:20-27)
2. **Paul's Ministry Plans** (Rom 15:17-29, Rom 1:13, Pr 16:1, 16:9, 1 Cor 9:7-11, Deut 25:4)
3. **Paul's Prayer Request** (Rom 15:30-33)

**Conclusion and Applications**