

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 41

I. Exposition of Chapter Fifteen (Continued).

A. Verses 14-16 - Paul's reason for writing.

1. Verse 14 – “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”

a. Paul is complimenting this church. He mentions three things that he is confident about with the church at Rome.

1) They are “...full of goodness...” - The word “goodness” means; “uprightness of heart and life, goodness, kindness.”¹

2) They are “...full of knowledge...” – The word “knowledge” here means; “the general knowledge of Christian religion.”²

“The goodness referred to is the practical manifestation of inner character. Thus the word often refers to kindness, benevolence, generosity, and similar demonstrations of inner goodness. Their knowledge includes comprehension of the basic doctrines of Christianity. ‘All’ knowledge means utmost knowledge, knowledge that is thorough and detailed.”³

3) They are able “...to admonish one another.” – The word “admonish” means; “to warn”; “to teach”; and “to exhort.”

“Goodness’ is moral excellence that comes through the working of God's Spirit (Gal. 5:22; cf. Rom. 6:13). Goodness is necessary to apply the truth to life, as is knowledge. This was primarily a self-taught church (6:17), and the believers were able to instruct one another. ‘Admonish’ or ‘instruct’ means to inculcate (cf. Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:14).”⁴

“Morally, they were ‘full of goodness,’ intellectually they were ‘complete in knowledge,’ and functionally they were ‘competent to instruct one another.’”⁵

2. Verse 15 – “Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on *some* points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God,”

a. By using the word “nevertheless”, Paul implies here that even though they were doing well spiritually, it seems, it was still necessary to write. The word “boldly” means, “courage” and “daring”.⁶ He might have stated this because he hadn’t ever met the Roman believers before. (cf. 1:10, 13 and 15:22-23).

b. “...as reminding you...” – This is a commonly thought need used by Peter as well (cf. II Peter 1:12; 3:1-2). This is something that every believer needs. No matter how much we know, we need to be reminded of truth. (See also Hebrews 2:1-3).

c. Paul also states that he wrote “...because of the grace given to me by God.” In saying this, Paul is basically saying that this is the ministry the Lord has given me. (cf. Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:7-8; I Corinthians 15:10.)

3. Verse 16 – “...that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

a. This verse has several “priestly” terms. These would be “minister”, “ministering”, “offering” and “acceptable.”

b. As we have seen, Paul’s primary ministry was to the Gentiles (1:13; Acts 9:15; Galatians 2:7-8). He regarded the Gentiles who were coming to faith and growing through his ministry as his offering to God. These Gentiles would be acceptable to God as the Holy Spirit set them apart (“sanctified”) which happened when they received salvation (cf. I Corinthians 6:11).

“Paul sees himself as something of a New Testament priest, who deals not with the tabernacle-temple ritual, but the service of the gospel; who offers not animal sacrifices but living persons to God, a sacrifice He will be pleased

¹Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

²Ibid.

³Robert E. Picirilli, *Romans*. (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 306.

⁴Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Romans*, (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2013), 170.

⁵Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*. The New American Commentary series. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 266.

⁶Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

with, a sacrifice ‘consecrated’ by the work of the Holy Spirit within those He offers. Paul’s sacrifice offered to God consists of the souls he wins and establishes in the faith.”⁷

B. Verses 17-19 - Paul glories in the work God has done through him.

1. **Verse 17** – “**Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God.**”
Naturally speaking, Paul had grounds to boast because Gentiles had come to Jesus Christ through his Ministry, but Paul was careful to give all the credit for what had happened to Jesus Christ. Every believer needs to always keep in mind that anything we do for the Lord, it’s only possible because God has enabled and empowered us to do it. (cf. **II Corinthians 3:4-6**)
2. **Verses 18-19** - Paul listed the different ways his ministry to the Gentiles had been effective:
 - a. “**...in word...**” – This would refer to the message preached. We know from **Romans 10:17** that faith to be saved comes from hearing the Word of God. (cf. **1:16-17**).
 - b. “**...in...deed...**” – Probably refers to the energy expended by Paul to travel, to disciple, possibly the suffering he went through.
 - c. “**...in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God...**” – The terms “**signs**” and “**wonders**” are often used together and seem to be synonymous terms. (cf. **II Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4; Acts 4:30; 5:12; 14:3; 15:12**).
 - 1) Jesus is known to confirm His Word with signs following – **Mark 16:15-20**.
 - 2) The apostles testified of the resurrection of Jesus Christ with great power – **Acts 4:33**.
 - 3) Paul said his speech and preaching were not just words but also in “**...demonstration of the Spirit and of power.**” – **I Corinthians 2:4**.
 - d. “**...so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.**”
 - 1) “**Illyricum**” is a region known in part today as Northern Albania and parts of Croatia and more.
 - 2) It seems that Paul didn’t consider himself to have “**...fully preached the gospel of Christ**” if there were no signs and wonders accompanying the preaching.

C. Verses 20-21 - Paul’s desire to preach the Gospel in new places.

1. **Verse 20** - Paul did not want to “**...build on another man’s foundation...**” This doesn’t mean that there is anything necessarily wrong with continuing the work of another or even adding to the work of another, but it seems that Paul is aware that his calling was to go and pioneer new works. (cf. **I Corinthians 3:5-10**).
2. **Verse 21** - This is a quote from **Isaiah 52:15** which speaks of the Gentiles hearing about God. Paul chose this prophecy as his missionary strategy.

D. Verses 22-29 - Paul’s desire to come to Rome.

1. **Verses 22-24 - Why Paul hasn’t visited the Christians in Rome yet.**
 - a. **Verse 22** – “**For this reason...**” – What hindered him was the work mentioned in **verses 19-21**.
 - b. **Verse 23** – “**But now no longer having a place in these parts...**” – This means that he had completed the work in the areas he mentioned above.
 - c. **Verse 24** - Therefore, Paul supposes that he will visit the Romans on a future trip to Spain, where Paul planned on preaching the Gospel. Stopping off in Rome on the way, Paul anticipates that he can enjoy the support and fellowship of the Romans before he goes to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond. Paul had these plans; yet things did not work out according to his plans. He did go to Rome, yet not as a missionary on his way to Spain. He went to Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial before Caesar.

⁷Picirilli, *Romans*. (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 308.