



## Lesson 20

### A Minister Of Christ

#### Romans 15.14-16.27

*“the **grace** that was given me from God, to be a **minister** of Christ Jesus...”*

**Romans 15.15-16**

Paul has now accomplished the purposes for which he penned his letter to the Roman Christians. He has explained the basis for justification that God has made possible in the gospel, that all men can be justified **ONLY** by faith in Christ. In doing so he not only showed how the Gentiles could be saved without observance of the Law, but also answered Jewish objections and questions about how the “chosen” people could still be lost. Furthermore, Paul detailed the benefits that are found in Christ, the new life and new Spirit that belongs to those who are in Him. He reflected on the Jews’ rejection of the gospel, longing for their salvation and revealing how God’s plan would bring about the salvation of “all Israel,” that is all the Gentiles and Jews that would have faith in Christ. Paul then sought to make application of the wonderful truths of the gospel, namely that Christians should give themselves completely to the will of God (i.e. living sacrifices) and that they should pay particular attention to each other, respecting each other’s conscience.

As Paul concludes his letter, he gives these Christians a picture into why Paul wrote them, why he was going to Jerusalem and why he hoped to see them. Everything Paul did was “because of the grace that was given me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus...” (15.15-16).

## **Paul’s Work As A Minister Of Christ Jesus (15.14-33)**

Romans 15:14–33 (NASB95)

14And 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.

15But 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,

16to 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.

17Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.

18For 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,

19in 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.

20And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man’s foundation;

21but as it is written, “THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE, AND

THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND.”

22For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;

23but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you

24whenever 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—

25but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

26For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

27Yes, 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.

28Therefore, 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.

29I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

30Now 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,

31that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;

32so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.

33Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

1. Romans probably was not an easy letter to pen. Paul loved his brethren dearly, whether they were Jew or Gentile. He had a special commission to the Gentiles (vss. 15-16), but he also longed for the salvation of his kinsmen (see 10.1). Within this letter Paul has had to say some hard things to his kinsmen, all the while warning the Gentiles of any arrogance on their part. As Paul says, “I have written very boldly to you on some points,” but the reason for Paul’s boldness was his gracious call to be a minister of Christ. Being a minister of Christ meant that Paul needed to write these things to the Roman Christians, no matter how difficult it was for him to do so.
2. Paul’s call to be a minister of Jesus also dictated where and how he preached the gospel. His desire was to “preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named,” (vs. 20), but in new territory. Paul says that was the reason he had not yet been to Rome (vs. 22), but his hope was to go to Rome and ultimately make his way to Spain (vss. 23-24). As far as we know, Paul never made it to Spain, but he would make it to Rome, just not in the way he foresaw.
3. Paul could not go to Rome at the time, because he was going to Jerusalem bearing a contribution for the needy saints there (vss. 25-28). We know of this collection from other passages, namely 1Cor. 16; 2Cor 8-9, but here we get a glimpse into what Paul hoped this contribution would achieve: harmony between Gentile and Jewish Christians. After all, the

Gentile Christians had shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, so they should help in their physical needs. Paul was going to put his "seal on this fruit of theirs," (vs. 28) and hoped that this service would "prove acceptable to the saints," (vs. 31).

4. But there were dangers. The Jews had persecuted Paul everywhere he had been, and he knew there could be trouble in Jerusalem when he arrived. For that reason, he urged the saints in Rome to pray for him, that he would be "rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea," (vs. 30). As we know from Acts 21-28, things did not go as Paul hoped. He was "rescued" from a Jewish mob, imprisoned by the Romans and ultimately arrived in Rome wearing chains. Yet, through it all, Paul remained a "minister of Christ Jesus."

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## Greetings (16.1-16)

Romans 16:1-16 (NASB95)

- 1I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;
- 2that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.
- 3Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,
- 4who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;
- 5also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.
- 6Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.
- 7Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.
- 8Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.
- 9Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.
- 10Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.
- 11Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.
- 12Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.
- 13Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.
- 14Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.
- 15Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.
- 16Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

1. Much comment is unneeded in this section, but that doesn't mean it should be ignored. We may be tempted to gloss over these names, knowing that they may have meant much to Paul, but not to us.
2. However, a point needs to be made from this section. We know of the work Paul did because of what Luke records about him in Acts and because of Paul's own letters. But there were many others engaged in the work, doing whatever they could in the cause of Christ. We don't know what they did, but as was said of Persis, they "worked hard in the Lord." (vs. 12).
3. Our names will most likely not be remembered in 100 years, probably not in 60. Doesn't matter. All that matters is that we also work hard in the Lord.

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## Warning Against False Teachers (16.17-20)

Romans 16:17–20 (NASB95)

17Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

18For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

19For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

20The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

1. Paul had gone to great lengths to explain the truth of the gospel to these saints, but he knew that false teachers would try and pervert the truth. It is likely that Paul had Judaizing teachers in mind, like those we read about in Acts 15 who wanted to compel Gentile converts to accept circumcision and the Law.
2. We should share in Paul's wish for all Christians, that we "be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil," (vs. 19), realizing that the only way we can do that is to follow in the Word that has been clearly delivered from God. We have every reason to believe that the NT authors delivered God's Word to us. Let's stand on them, and not give heed to the latest fad teaching that makes its way around.

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## Greetings From Paul's Co-Workers (16. 21-24)

Romans 16:21–24 (NASB95)

21Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

22I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

23Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

24The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

1. Brief historical note, the Erastus in vs. 23 may be the same Erastus mentioned in this Corinthian inscription: “Erastus in return for his aedilship laid [the pavement] at his own expense.”

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## Concluding Doxology (16.25-27)

Romans 16:25–27 (NASB95)

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;

27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

1. It is fitting that Paul concluded this letter with a doxology, a word of praise to God. Significantly, Paul phrased the gospel into the means by which God should be praised. The gospel is what could establish them, it is what has now been made known to all nations, it is what compels men to have obedient faith. Thus, the gospel is reason to glorify God!
2. “to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.”