

Studies in Romans-10

by William MacDonald

Paul's confidence in the Romans and his desire to visit them motivates him to write to them, sharing his ministry as a priest, boasting in Christ, and appealing for prayer.

Duration: 22:35

Scripture: Romans 15:14, Romans 15:16, Ephesians 2:20, Ephesians 3:5, Ephesians 4:6, Ephesians 6:19-20

Topics: "Studies"

Description

In this sermon, G. Campbell Morgan emphasizes the profound impact of preaching the gospel. He highlights that every soul that is saved through the preaching of the gospel is not only brought into a place of safety and blessing, but also becomes an offering to God, bringing Him satisfaction. The preacher's role is not to boast in their own accomplishments, but to recognize that it is God working through them to accomplish His purposes. Paul's ministry serves as an example, as he acknowledges that it is God who confirmed his message through miracles and various manifestations of the Spirit's power. The sermon also includes a warning against ungodly teachers who may try to deceive and destroy the faith of believers.

Transcript

We're in chapter 15 of Romans and now begin with the 14th verse. In the rest of this chapter, the Apostle states his reason for writing to the Romans and his great desire to visit them. Though he has never met them, he is assured through what he has heard of their goodness, which would ensure their welcoming of his admonitions.

And he is assured of their knowledge of Christian doctrine, which would enable them to admonish others. Verse 15. In spite of his confidence in their spiritual progress, and in spite of the fact that he was a stranger to them, Paul didn't hesitate to remind them of some of their privileges and responsibilities.

His frankness in writing as he did arose from the grace that God had given to him, that is, the grace that appointed him as an Apostle. Verse 16. He was appointed by God to be a sort of serving priest of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

He looked upon his work of ministering the gospel of God as a priestly function, in which he presented saved Gentiles as an acceptable offering to God, since they had been set apart by the Holy Spirit unto God through the new birth. G. Campbell Morgan comments here, What a radiant light this sheds on all our

evangelistic and pastoral effort. Every soul won by the preaching of the gospel is not only brought into a place of safety and of blessing, he is an offering to God, a gift which gives God satisfaction, the very offering he is seeking.

Every soul carefully and patiently instructed in the things of Christ, and so made conformable to his likeness, is a soul in whom the Father takes pleasure. Thus we labor, not only for the saving of men, but for the satisfying of the heart of God. This is the most powerful motive.

Verse 17. If Paul engages in boasting, it is not in his own person he boasts, but in Christ Jesus, and it is not in his own accomplishments, but in what God has been pleased to do through him. A humble servant of Christ does not engage in unseemly boasting, but yet he is conscious of the fact that God is using him to accomplish his purposes.

Any temptation to pride is tempered by the realization that he, that is the worker, is nothing, and he has nothing but what he has received, and he can do nothing for God except by the power of the Holy Spirit. Verse 18. In speaking of his ministry, Paul confines himself to those things which the Lord has done through him as he called on the Gentiles to obey the gospel.

He was aware of how wonderfully God had used others, but he would not include their preaching and labors, only his own. Verse 19. The Lord confirmed the apostles' message by miracles that taught spiritual lessons and that inspired amazement, and by various manifestations of the Spirit's power.

The result was that he had fully preached the gospel, beginning at Jerusalem and extending in a circle to Illyricum, which was north of Macedonia on the Adriatic. Verse 20. In following this route, Paul's aim was to preach the gospel in virgin territory.

His audiences were composed primarily of Gentiles who had never heard of Christ before. Thus he was not building on anyone else's foundation. Verse 21.

This foundational work among the Gentiles was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in chapter 52, verse 15, where Isaiah said that the Gentiles who had never previously been evangelized would see, and that those who had never previously heard the good news would understand and respond in true faith. Verse 22. In his desire to plow untilled territory, Paul had been too occupied to get to Rome in the past.

Verse 23. Now, however, the foundation had been laid in the region described in verse 19. Others could build on the foundation.

Paul was therefore free to fulfill his desire of long-standing to visit Rome. Verse 24. His plan was to stop off at Rome en route to Spain.

He would not be able to stay long enough to enjoy all the fellowship with them that he would like, but his desire to enjoy their company would be partially satisfied at least. Then he knew that they would give whatever help was needed to complete his trip to Spain. Verse 25.

But in the meantime, he had to go to Jerusalem to deliver the funds which had been collected among Gentile assemblies for the needy saints in Judea. This is the collection that we read about in 1 Corinthians 16, verse 1 and 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9. Verse 26. The believers in Macedonia and Achaia had gladly contributed to a fund to relieve the distress among the poor Christians.

Verse 27. It was quite voluntary on the part of the donors and quite appropriate too for them to give. After all, they had benefited spiritually by the coming of the gospel to them through Jewish believers, so it was not too much to expect that they would share with their Jewish brethren in a financial way.

Verse 28. As soon as Paul had accomplished this mission, delivering the funds as promised, he would visit Rome on his way to Spain. Verse 29.

He had every confidence that his visit to Rome would be accompanied by the full blessing which Christ always pours out when God's word is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. Verse 30. The apostle closes this section with a fervent appeal for prayer.

The basis on which he appeals is their mutual union with the Lord Jesus Christ and their love which came from the Holy Spirit. He asked them to agonize in prayer to God for him. As Linsky says, this calls for prayers into which one puts his whole heart and soul as do the contestants in the arena.

Verse 31. Four specific prayer requests are given. First, the apostle asks for prayer that he will be protected from zealots in Judea who were fanatically opposed to the gospel just like he himself had been.

Second, he wants the Romans to pray that the Jewish saints will accept the relief funds in good grace. Strong religious prejudices remained against Gentile believers and against those who preach to the Gentiles. Then there's always the possibility of people being offended at the idea of receiving charity.

It often takes more grace to be on the receiving end than on the giving end. Verse 32. The third request was that the Lord might see fit to make the visit to Rome a joyful one.

And last of all, he asks that his visit might be one in which he finds a measure of rest in the midst of a tumultuous and fatiguing ministry. Verse 33. And now Paul closes the chapter with the prayer that the God who is the source of peace might be their portion.

In this chapter, the Lord has been named the God of patience and consolation, verse 5, the God of hope, verse 13, and now the God of peace. He is the source of everything good and of everything a poor sinner needs now and eternally. Chapter 16 and verse 1. At first glance, the closing chapter of Romans seems to be an uninteresting catalog of names that have little or no meaning for us today.

However, upon closer study, this neglected chapter yields many precious lessons for the believer. Phoebe is introduced as a servant or deaconess of the church in Syncrea. We need not think of her as belonging to some special religious order.

Any sister who serves in connection with a local assembly is a deaconess. Verse 2. Whenever the early Christians traveled from one assembly to another, they carried letters of introduction. This was a real courtesy to the assembly being visited and a help to the visitor.

So the apostle here introduces Phoebe and asks that she be welcomed as a true believer in a manner worthy of fellow believers. He further asks that she be assisted in every way possible. Her commendation is that she has given herself to the ministry of helping others, including Paul himself.

Perhaps she was a tireless sister who was forever showing hospitality to preachers and other believers in Syncrea. Verse 3. Next, Paul sends greetings to Prisca and Aquila, who had been such valiant co-workers of his in the service of Christ Jesus. How we can thank God for Christian couples who pour themselves

out in sacrificial labor for the cause of Christ.

Verse 4. On one occasion, Prisca and Aquila actually risked their lives for Paul, a heroic act of which no details are given. But the apostle is grateful, and so are the assemblies of converted Gentiles to whom he ministered. Verse 5. Salute the church that is in their house.

This means that an actual congregation of believers met in their home. Actually, church buildings were unknown until the second century. Eponitis means praiseworthy.

No doubt this first convert in the province of Asia was true to his name, because Paul speaks of him as my beloved. Verse 6. The prominence of women's names in this chapter emphasizes their wide sphere of usefulness. Verses 1, 3, 6, 12, and so forth.

Mary worked like a Trojan for the saints. Verse 7. We do not know when Andronicus and Junius were fellow prisoners of Paul. All he tells us is that they were Jews, that they had been saved before him, and that they were held in high esteem by the apostles.

Verse 8. Next we meet Ampliatus, beloved by the apostle. We would never have heard of many of these people, except for their connection with Calvary. That is the only greatness about any of us.

Verse 9. Urbanus wins the title fellow worker, and Stachys, my beloved. Romans 16 is like a miniature of the judgment seat of Christ, when there will be praise for every instance of faithfulness to Christ. Verse 10.

Apelles had come through some great trial with flying colors and won the seal of approved in Christ. Paul salutes the household of Aristobulus, probably meaning Christian slaves belonging to this grandson of Herod the Great. Verse 11.

Herodian was probably a slave also, but singled out because perhaps the only Jewish slave belonging to Aristobulus. Then some of the slaves belonging to Narcissus were also believers, and Paul includes them in his greetings. Even those who are lowest on the social ladder are not excluded from the choicest blessings of Christianity.

The inclusion of slaves in this list of names is a lovely reminder that we are all one in Christ Jesus. Verse 12. Triphina and Triphosa had names that meant dainty and luxurious, but they were veritable workhorses in their service for the Lord.

The beloved Persis was another of those workers that are so needed in local churches, but seldom appreciated till they're gone. Verse 13. Rufus may be the son of Simon who carried the cross for Jesus.

He was chosen in the Lord, not only as to his salvation, but as to his Christian character. That is, he was a choice saint. The mother of Rufus had shown maternal kindness to Paul, and this earned his affectionate title, My Mother.

Perhaps Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Petrobos, and Hermas were active in a household church, like the one in the house of Prisca and Aquila. Verse 15. And Philologus, Nereus, his sister, and Olympus may have been the nucleus of another household church.

Verse 16. The holy kiss was the common mode of affectionate greetings among the saints. It is still practiced in some countries where the men and women sit separately.

It is designated as a holy kiss to guard against impropriety. In our culture the kiss has been replaced by the handshake. The churches in Achaia, where Paul was writing, joined in sending their greetings.

Verse 17. The apostle cannot close the letter without a warning against ungodly teachers who might worm their way into the assembly. The Christians should be on their guard against any such who form parties around themselves and set traps to destroy the faith of the unwary.

They should be on the lookout for any whose teaching is contrary to the sound doctrine which the Christians had received, and should avoid them completely. Verse 18. These false teachers are not obedient to our Lord Christ.

They obey their own appetites, and they are all too successful in hoodwinking the unsuspecting by their winsome and flattering speech. Verse 19. Paul rejoiced that his reader's obedience to the Lord was well known, but still he wanted them to be able to discern and obey sound teaching, and to be unresponsive to all that was evil.

Verse 20. In this way the God who is the source of peace would give them a swift victory over Satan. The apostle's characteristic benediction wishes all needed enablement for the saints as they journey toward glory.

Verse 21. We know Timothy, Paul's son in the faith and faithful co-worker. We know nothing of Lucius except that he, like Paul, was of Jewish parentage.

We may have previously met Jason in Acts 17.5 and Sosipater in Acts 20.4. These two were also Jews. Verse 22. Tertius was the one to whom Paul had dictated the letter.

He takes the liberty of adding his personal well-wishes to the reader's. Verse 23. Several men by the name of Gaius are mentioned in the New Testament, and who can say the final word concerning which of any of them is referred to here? It is sufficient to know that this one was noted for his hospitality not only to Paul, but to any Christians who needed it.

Erastus was treasurer of the city of Corinth, but was he the same person mentioned in Acts 19.22 and or 2 Timothy 4.20? We cannot be sure. Quartus is mentioned simply as a brother, but after all, what an honor, what a dignity. Verse 24.

Textual authorities are disagreed as to whether this verse should be included. The balance is on the side of those who believe it should not. All agree, however, that it rightfully belongs in verse 20b.

Verse 25. The epistle closes with a doxology. It is addressed to the God who is able to make his people stand firm in accordance with the gospel which Paul preached, and which he calls my gospel.

There is only one gospel way of salvation, of course, but it was entrusted to him as the apostle to the Gentiles, whereas Peter, for example, preached it to the Jews. It is, in short, the public heralding of the message concerning Jesus Christ, and it is concerned with the revelation of a marvelous truth which has been kept hidden since the world began. The mystery in the New Testament is a truth never previously known, and a truth which human intellect could never discover, but one which has now been made known.

Verse 26. The particular mystery spoken of here is the truth that believing Jews and believing Gentiles are made fellow heirs, fellow members of the body of Christ, and fellow partakers of his promise in Christ by

the gospel. It has now been made manifest by the writing of the prophets, not the prophets of the Old Testament, but the New Testament prophets.

It was unknown in the Old Testament scriptures, but has been revealed in the prophetic writings of the New. And you have this in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 20, and chapter 3, verse 5. It's the gospel message which God has commanded to be made known to all the nations in order that men might obey the message and be saved. And finally, verse 27.

God alone is the source and display of pure wisdom, and to him belongs glory through Jesus Christ our mediator forever. And so ends Paul's magnificent epistle. How indebted we are to the Lord for it, and how poor we would be without it.

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