

Romans 15:14~19

The gospel is all about changing lives... Its starts with the “*new birth*,” referring to the *initial change* the gospel makes in our lives, *is that of direction*, we turn (*repent*) from our life of sin, that of living to self, to this world, to follow Christ. At this point, nothing has really changed in our lives, (*were still the same person*) other than the fact that we now have a “*love for God*” in our hearts that was not there before. “*Born again...new birth*,” refer to this “*new life*,” this “*new desire*” that is now in us. It pictures that of a “*newborn*,” that of “*infant*,” which is a good analogy, because it describes “*a brand new life*.” When I first heard the gospel and received Christ into my life, at the age of 25, my life literally started all over! Where my life was at that night, was a result of 25 years of living to self, and to this world. But that night, I laid it every bit down, and turned from it, to start on a new journey, a new life...that of following Christ. That was the initial change the gospel made in my life, *it changed my direction*. Starting that day, I embarked on a journey that will continue, the rest of my life! It’s been 16 years since that day, and in those 16 years, God has been at work in my life, shaping me and molding me after His good pleasure. God has been in the process of *changing my life*, through His word. Through the preaching and teaching of God’s word, He has convicted me of things that are in my life, that shouldn’t be, and then replacing them with His way. God has been “*transforming my life*” by the “*renewing of my mind*.”

In scripture, the word *saved* is often used in the verb sense, carrying the meaning of “*being saved*.” We are in the process of *being delivered*! Which is accomplished through God’s word. That’s what the church is all about! God established the church for the purpose of changing the lives of those who come to Christ. God has called pastors and teachers...*for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ*... According to God’s divine plan, believers are to gather together, subjecting themselves to the preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ. And as a result, lives are changed! It’s all a God thing; God takes His word, declared through “*His man*” and transforms the lives of those who hear it!

15:14...through the rest of this letter, Paul closes out by speaking of “*his calling*” from God. Paul was God’s chosen man to establish the church and to strengthen the church, throughout the Gentile world. Paul’s calling was to preach the gospel to the Gentile world, taking those who believed in every city, and establish a church. Taking oversight of it, seeing that proper leadership was put in place. It is literally the beginning stages of the establishment of the Church as we know it... What an awesome responsibility he had been given. He is but another of the great men that God has chosen and set apart to carry out his purposes in this world. Men like Abraham, the father of our faith. Moses, the one who delivered Israel and established them as a nation, the give of the Law. Now here’s Paul, Gods’ chosen man, to usher in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Vs 14~15) “*You really don’t need me to preach to you...*” There’s no doubt in my mind, that you are really good people, full of good works, with a good understanding of the message of Christ, so much so, you are capable of teaching yourselves. *You don’t need me “preaching” to you...* But...even so, I have preached to you, and some of it, I must say, has been rather “*bold*.”

Bold...describes very blunt speaking...Cutting to the chase...Not mincing words...Speaking the truth without any reservations...speaking with great confidence. It’s almost the *absence of gentleness*. Speaking the truth without holding anything back! It may be best described of being *very forceful*...

For those of you who have been here during our verse-by-verse study of this letter, I don’t need to tell you, that Paul has spoken some pretty tough words. Some of it’s been some very deep stuff, hard to comprehend, hard to handle. This has been a tough book for me to preach through, I’ve struggled a lot. This book is packed with TRUTH...heavy stuff. I’ll say this about it, if you love truth, you’ll love it. But if you truly don’t love truth, this book will offend you.

Paul has declared some “weighty things,” some “hard stuff” here in this letter, and he did so very boldly, very forceful, “preaching to them” what they should and shouldn’t do. Add to that the fact, that he had never been to Rome, that most in the church had never seen his face, Its not hard to imagine how they might respond to his letter... “Who does he think he is?”...

(Vs 16) Well Paul answers that question here... “*I am the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles...*” I am God’s chosen man, God’s chosen servant, to establish and strengthen the church of Jesus Christ.

Paul was God’s chosen man...an **apostle to the Gentiles**... Meaning, that he was God’s chosen man to *establish the truth* and instruction the church was to abide by, **doctrine!** He had no manuscripts, no instruction, Paul had only the O.T. scripture, and the Spirit of Christ within him! And God used him to declare the “*Gospel of Christ*” and the doctrines that the church was to be built on! Prophets of old gave us the prophecies of Christ; here God’s apostle gives us the teachings, the doctrines of Christ.

It’s passages like this that we sometimes see as insignificant...but this may well be one of the most significant passages. For the simple reason that if Paul is NOT God’s man, if he is NOT truly an apostle of Christ, if he’s not who he claims to be...we best lock the doors and sell this place, and get on with our lives. Because “*this man*” is responsible for 13 of the 27 books of the N.T. It is his letters, which give the doctrine for the church. Thus, whether or not he’s who he claims to be...is vital to the very existence of the church!

Paul is God’s chosen man... In verses 17~19, Paul points to all that Christ has done through him to validate his claims! *Mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God!* Things that only God could do! He points to the “*Changed lives*” that resulted from his preaching! Gentiles all over the world were being saved, and becoming obedient to God both in word and deed! Paul was God’s chosen man, witnessed by all the changed lives, the mighty signs and wonders that God did through him...

Paul was God’s man...chosen and called by God to instruct, reprove, correct and exhort the children of God in the ways of God. His call was first to establish the church, and then raise it up to be what God wants it to be.

A good way to see Paul’s calling, is that of the illustration of a Parent... As parents, we are constantly “*Preaching*” to our children. Preaching is simply the proclamation of Truth! Raising children requires constant reproof, correction and instruction. (*Even though many parents today don’t agree with that. Parents today are destroying their children by lack of discipline/correction.*) Parenting requires constant work, shaping our children’s lives with truth! In a very real sense, the parents are to be the “*preachers in the home.*” We need to preach to our children, correcting them, reproofing their erroneous ways, exhorting them in the way of truth... It is a non-ceasing task! We are constantly shaping and molding our children in truth. Even if our children are well-behaved, well mannered, we never stop preaching! Parents, you ever had your child say, “*Mom, I know...I know...*” As to say, “*you can stop preaching...*”

Well...that’s really the essence of what Paul is saying here. You at Rome are no doubt a good bunch of people, whose lives had been transformed by the love the Lord Jesus, they understood the message of Christ, so much that you are quiet capable of preaching yourselves...but none the less, there are some things I want to reaffirm and make more solid.

Paul was God’s man, called to be the “*Father figure*” of the Children of God. Called to reprove and correct and exhort God’s children. To grow them up, to mature them in the faith. To raise them up to be obedient to God’s truth, to walk in obedience to His ways!

(Vs 16) ¹⁶*That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, **ministering the gospel of God**, that the offering up of the Gentiles **might be acceptable**, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

...*ministering the gospel of God*... Paul's responsibility was to take the "teachings" of Christ and shape the lives of those in the church, to those teachings! To give clear, sound instruction in the ways of Christ.

Which would result in...*that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable*...Paul's calling was to see that the Gentiles were living in a way that *was acceptable* and *pleasing* to God! Which was very important, for the Gentiles (Church) were going to be the "example" to the Jews first, then the rest of the world what God requires!

Paul was preaching to them so "...*that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable*..." *Acceptable* goes back to chapter 12, when Paul began this section in the instruction of believers.

(Romans 12) ¹*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* ²*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

The Gentiles would be the example of what God requires and accepts. This is a contrast to the "unacceptable" worship of the Jews. "And be not conformed to this world..." is a reference to the nation Israel, and the worship they offered God, which had become corrupt, empty and full of hypocrisy! God is not interested in the offering up of "sacrificial animals," mere dead bodies, God wants US! We are to offer God our lives! As "living sacrifices," set apart for Him!

Paul declares that the Gentiles, (the Church) is to set the "example" to the rest of the world what God expects and requires of every man!

...*that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Not merely so called "good deeds," but the humbling of ourselves before God, walking in humility, yielding our lives to Christ, to serve His will! Our lives are to manifest a true "fear of God," submission and obedience to God, a genuine love for God...

Paul uses "acceptable" again in 14:18...

¹⁸*For he that in these things serves Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

Speaking of walking in love... Loving our neighbor as ourselves, showing mercy and compassion to the weak. Bearing the infirmities of the weak. By walking in the way Christ walked...

Paul was God's called man...the man God chose to establish and strengthen the church. My call in life, is to lead the church, by preaching the truths of the Gospel that Paul laid down. To instruct, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. So that "this body of believers" will be able to know and to do the will of God in their life! To behave and conduct ourselves in a way that is pleasing to God almighty!

Much of what I preach, you may already know. And no doubt, you are a "Good people." And the truth is, you may not need me to preach to you... But my calling is to remind you, to continually shape and mold your lives according to the life of Christ! That we may grow more and more in the likeness of Christ, so that we might reach others with the love of God...