

# Reach

May 31, 2020

## Romans 15:14-21, 30-33

As we conclude our study of Romans, let us look back at the Paul's passion to reach people for Christ.

Saul of Tarsus from Cilicia of Asia Minor was a Pharisee who traced his lineage to the tribe of Benjamin (Romans 11:1). He claimed Roman citizenship but was zealous concerning his Israelite faith and heritage (Galatians 1:14). He was brought up in Jerusalem and trained at the feet of Gamaliel, a leader of the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:3). He exhibited authority and was fervent in his persecution of Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1).

It was on the road to Damascus to arrest Christians when a bright light struck him down (Acts 9:1-9). A voice asked him, "*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?*" When Saul asked who it was, Jesus identified himself with his Church - "*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.*" Paul briefly refers to his **Conversion** experience in two of his letters - Galatians 1:11-17, First Corinthians 9:1 and 15:8-11; the Acts of the Apostles records the event three times (9:1-9, 22:6-16, 26:12-23). Saul was called Paul on his first missionary journey to Cyprus (Acts 13:9).

St. Paul then became just as passionate spreading Christianity as he was in persecuting Christians before his conversion. He began preaching in the synagogues of Damascus that Jesus was the Son of God and proclaiming that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 9:20-22). A tentmaker by trade (Acts 18:3), he took four missionary journeys throughout Asia, Asia Minor, and Europe as far as Rome, preaching in synagogues, and spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Paul concludes his letter to the Romans encouraging all believers (*including you and me*) to share their faith with everyone.

### **Fulfill Your Calling** (Romans 15:14-16)

- The church was created for the purpose of reaching the world with the gospel.
- Paul felt his work in Greece and modern-day Turkey was drawing to an end, and he felt God was leading him to areas where the Gospel was not known, specifically Spain.
  - Paul had intended to travel to Rome on his way to Spain.
  - However, when he carried an offering to the saints in Jerusalem, he was arrested.
- Priscilla and Aquila were in Rome and had informed Paul of the Roman church.
  - Division among Gentile and Jewish believers which Paul has already addressed.
  - The believers' goodness and knowledge in Christ.
  - Their ability to teach one another about the truths and application of the gospel.
- Paul refers to himself as "minister" (public servant) instead of Apostle.
  - Paul was a minister/public servant to the Gentiles in bringing them the gospel.
- Note Paul attributes his work to the triune of God: ***"a minister of Jesus Christ ... the gospel of God ... sanctified by the Holy Ghost."***
  - **Does the church have a responsibility to teach the gospel truths and application today?**
  - **How does God want you to be involved in this?**



San Paolo fuori le Mura – St. Paul outside the walls – is one of four major basilicas in Rome.



**Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about to Illyricum...**

**—Romans 15:19**

**Boast About Jesus/Seek the Lost** (Romans 14:17-19; 20-21)

- Paul wrote about what Christ had accomplished through him to bring non-Jewish peoples to obedience to God.
    - Christ had done this by word and deed.
    - Christ did this work by the power of signs and wonders.
    - And by the power of the Spirit of God.
  - Paul states that he cannot take the credit for the transformation of the Gentile people through faith in Christ.
  - God used supernatural miracles to convince Paul's listeners.
    - These miracles included evidence of the Holy Spirit's power, especially when groups of people believed in Christ and received the Spirit.
  - Paul understood that none of the results of his ministry were his doing.
    - He was the one who showed up with the message of God's grace for the Gentiles.
  - It was God's Word, the mighty signs of the Holy Spirit and the gospel that transformed people.
  - From Jerusalem to Illyricum (northern Macedonia), Paul had been faithful in presenting the gospel. But Paul did not boast of his work, he boasts of the power of God working through him.
  - Paul aspired to preach the gospel ***"not where Christ was named"***.
  - That is still the case with ministry today. He sends. We go.
    - Believers obey God by showing up to serve in whatever way He has made available.
    - He provides the power to do the work. He accomplishes His purpose through us.
  - We still need to seek ways to engage those who have never heard the name of Jesus.
- **How many people in America have yet to hear the true name (person) of Jesus?**
- **Is it better to be a 'lone ranger' when sharing the gospel or to work with others?**

**Partner With Others** (Romans 15:30-33)

- Paul's planned trip to take the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem an offering weighed on his mind.
    - He likely had been warned the Jews would cause trouble for him.
  - Paul asked the Roman believers to ***"strive together"*** (unity) in prayer that he may be:
    - ***"delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea"***
  - Paul also asked for prayer that the Gentile offering be accepted by the Jewish Christians:
    - ***"accepted of the saints"*** – Paul desired unity of both Gentiles and Jews within the church.
  - Finally, Paul asked for prayer that he may come to Rome by the will of God:
    - ***"That I may come unto you with joy ... be refreshed"***
- **Why does Paul place such emphasis on unity within the church?**
- **What can you do this week to promote unity and peace amongst believers?**

**Biblical Truth:** *Believers must make every effort to share the gospel with everyone.*

**The Great Commission**

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* Matthew 28:16-20

Now I beseech you, brethren,  
for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake,  
and for the love of the Spirit,  
that ye *strive together* with me  
in your prayers to God for me  
Romans 15:30