

## Romans

Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish  
June 18, 2025  
Romans 15:14-21



Romans 15:14-21

Vss. 14-16

- Paul shifts to begin wrapping up his letter and perhaps had his secretary, Tertius, who we meet in the next chapter, read it all back to him and perhaps he felt he had been a little too much like a cranky school master, that maybe he felt he was shaking his finger at the people of this great church a bit too much. He doesn't mean to scold them, only to remind them of what they already know. Paul knows that the people of the Roman church are "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge" and that they are more than able to properly correct and admonish one another without causing disharmony in the church.
- No, Paul's goal in writing was simply to remind them of the great things of God they already know and to push them to take all that they know and put it into practice more effectively. As with everyone he ever met, Paul was less concerned about the people that they were and more concerned about who they could be for the cause of Christ. It was said of Michaelangelo that as he stood before a huge block of granite his goal was to release the angel inside the stone. This is the example Paul set in how we are to see one another: not merely as they are, but as they could be!
- Paul calls himself a "minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles". The word he uses here for "minister" is a surprising word, but a great word. The word is "**leitourgos**". It is a word concerning one who will spare no expense in his civic duty for his city. A person who was a "leitourgos" may be appointed but usually it was voluntary. In Athens there were five primary duties for such a person: assume the cost of one of the city's naval warships; financially support one of the city's ten athletic teams; assume the cost of the banquet when all ten teams met together; underwrite the costs of the chorus in the city's theater; and underwrite the costs of any diplomatic entourage as it perhaps would travel to other cities or the Oracle at Delphi, where the reputation of the city is tied to how well the diplomatics project power and wealth. No price would be too high for the glory of Athens. Paul is saying that a "minister", a "leitourgos", of Christ Jesus, this is who he is as he brings Christ to the Gentile world. He will bear any cost and go to any length. No price is too high for the glory of God.

Vss. 17-19

- The first line in Rick Warren's "Purpose Driven Life" is: "It's not about you". Paul here is making it clear that it's not about him, but rather it's all about Jesus. "For I will not presume to speak of

anything except what Christ has accomplished through me...". It has been said that when we quit asking "What can I do?" and surrender to the question of "What can the Holy Spirit do through me?" that amazing things can begin to happen. DL Moody was attending a revival meeting as a young, new Christian and heard a preacher say: "If only one man would give himself entirely and without reserve to the Holy Spirit, what that Spirit might do with him!" Moody said to himself: "Why should I not be that man?" The result was that he became the greatest preacher of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, preaching to hundreds of thousands from British Columbia on the Pacific coast and all the way to Great Britain and every place in between...but perhaps not all the way to Illyricum (roughly modern day Albania).

Vss. 20-21

- Paul's goal was to be a pioneer of evangelism. I suspect this is why he hadn't gone to Rome previously as the Word had already taken root there and the Roman church was flourishing. It was said of Dr. Livingston, as he volunteered as a missionary with the London Missionary Society, that when he was asked where he would like to go, he said, "Anywhere, as long as it's forward". Likewise, it was Paul's goal to carry the Good news of Jesus Christ to people who had never heard it.
- Paul quotes Isaiah 52:15 – "Thus He will sprinkle many nations. Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him. For what had not been told them, they will see. And what they had not heard they will understand."
- But understand that this was not **HIS** goal, but the goal that Christ has set before him. Paul's life, all of it, every bit, has been swallowed up "in Christ Jesus" (vs. 17). He tells the Galatians, "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20). Paul as a person was not strongly impressive. In 2 Corinthians 10:1 he admits to being meek when he was with them. Further down in 10:10 he responds to their accusations that "his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible". So Paul was not especially good looking, did not have a dynamic personality, and wasn't a very good public speaker. In other words, he had none of the qualities that we generally assign to great preachers and leaders. But what he did have was a great God, "in whom he moved and lived and had his being" (Acts 17:28) and who empowered Paul to accomplish all that was asked of him. It wasn't about Paul. It's not about you. It's entirely about Jesus.