

WHAT'S THE USE?

Romans 15:14-33

Have you ever wondered what made Paul tick?

Rom closes with 1½ ch. of personal matters!

8 MAIN PRINCIPLES of Paul's ministry

Motives for letter—1st: He wants us to know that...

He's confident God's people are capable of ministering to each other 14

Paul's spoken firmly & counseled them frankly, in strong tones.

They might get impression he doesn't have confidence in them.

He speaks frankly because he *does* have confidence in them.

14 *"I'm... convinced... that you're... full of goodness, complete in knowledge & competent to instruct one another."*

Paul acknowledges work God's done in His people.

God's people are **full**.

We aren't lacking anything we need!

God's people are full of goodness=> **actions** overflow

God's people are full of knowledge=> **understand truth**

God's people are able to **instruct each other**

1st P: Count on God's people to minister to each other

We can serve *each other*; don't have to *hire* someone!

2nd reason: He wants his ministry to God's people to be pleasing to God 15-29

He reminds us of things we should already know

15-16 *"I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me ¹⁶to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. with the priestly duty of*

proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

He'd rather risk *boring* us, than risk we might forget

2nd P: Don't be afraid to repeat what people have heard before—remind people of God's truth.

God gave him gift: privilege of ministering to Gentiles—proclaiming good news—to lost pagan people—to people who had NO hope!

He wants to bring acceptable offering to God: Gentiles/ **PAGANS (people from godless culture) whose lives are *transformed* by God's power**

This IS the mission! —bring godless people to God!

Bringing people to Christ is priestly service to God:

Pie given to neighbor, offering to God—*NOT burnt* offering!

Kind word spoken in love, is acceptable sacrifice.

Sharing what Christ has done for us = spiritual worship.

Paul boasts about what *Christ* has done 17-29

His boast isn't what *others* have done, nor what *he* accomplishes but ***what Christ has done* through him**

17-18a *"I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. ¹⁸I will not venture to speak of anything except **what Christ has accomplished** through me"*

Christ does the work! He deserves glory.

3rd P: Bragging focuses on what God has done

"If I'm going to talk about what's happening, I want to focus on what GOD's doing—not my performance."

Gentiles heard gospel & responded to God's Word.
18b-19 *"...what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said & done—¹⁹by the power of signs & miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ."*

People from Jeru. to Croatia heard about Jesus' love

Paul proclaims Christ where His name isn't known
20-21 *"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. ²¹Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."*

He doesn't want to go where others have already gone

People who've *never heard* good news understand the truth
4th P: Target people who've never heard gospel
 LOST people should be priority!

Paul desires to enjoy fellowship with them on his way to proclaim good news in Spain
22-24 *"This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you. ²³But now that there's no more place for me to work in these regions, & since I've been longing for many years to see you, ²⁴I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through & to have you assist me on my journey there, after I've enjoyed your company for a while."*

Dedication to reach people who never heard keeps him away

Now he's finished his job. There's no more territory to cover.

Each church can carry on it's own work

Many people haven't heard, but each center has a church.

Responsibility to reach surrounding communities is theirs

Now Paul can set out for a new center: Spain.

Wants to enjoy fellowship & be helped on way

Why Spain? It's becoming strategic cultural center

If he reaches Spain, God might start great work there!

5th P: Priority given to strategic centers

Passing through Rome, Paul can achieve 2 purposes:

(1) He can have ministry among them

(2) He can involve them in ministry to Spain

Paul wants to enjoy fellowship with God's people –share God's blessings—& be sent on his mission by God's people.

1st he must visit Jerusalem **25-26** *"Now, however, I'm on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. ²⁶For Macedonia & Achaia were pleased to make a contri-bution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem."*

Paul desires to deliver contribution from Gentile churches to poor believers in Jeru. 25-27

Churches of Macedonia & Achaia begged to help!

6th P: Motivation should be: serve each other

Paul's going to Jeru. To serve—not be served

He's taking offering to help poor

Gentiles received from Jeru., when they had nothing.

Now it's their turn to share *material* goods

7th P: God's gifts are intended to be shared

God gives possessions to share with people who have none.

People who receive spiritual blessings owe a material debt to those who minister to them.

27 *"They were pleased to do it, & indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings."*

We benefit, because someone cared about "pagans" far away

Since we received, we use *our* resources to help others hear.

Paul plans to visit them on way to Spain 28-29

He wants to be identified with this act of love for God's people in Jerusalem

28 *"After I have completed this task & have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain & visit you on the way."*

He wants to share blessing, together with them

29 *"I know that when I come to you, I'll come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ."*

Paul urges us to collaborate in prayer for one another 30-33

"I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ & by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. ³¹Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea & that my service in Jeru. may be acceptable to the saints there, ³²so that by God's will I may come to you with joy & together with you be refreshed. ³³The God of peace be with you all. Amen."

Concern arose regarding what might happen in Jeru.

He prays: "Lay it on heart of Rom. to support me on journey!"

He never imagined Roman govt. would send him!

Trip to Jerusalem results in plot to kill him; 2 yrs in jail in Caesarea; 2 in Rome. He had reason to ask them to pray!

8th: Join in ministry by praying for each other

Paul's prayer reveals 2 concerns:

- 1) He's afraid of unbelieving Jews who reject gospel.
He doesn't know how far they'll go to stop him
- 2) He's concerned about brethren in Jerusalem.
Jews dedicated selves to destroy his credibility.
He isn't sure what to expect from brethren there

His concerns lead to 3 prayer requests:

- * Pray for protection from those who oppose truth
- * Pray that ministry be welcomed by God's people
- * Pray that ministry result in refreshing fellowship

Focus on ministry to ONE ANOTHER

Paul understands why God called him.

Philippians, he's in jail—isn't sure he'll get out

Phil. 1: he hasn't finished job. He'd prefer to die & graduate!

Living is Christ; dying improves situation—removes barriers.

He's confident they still need him. ***His work isn't done yet!***

2 Tim: back in jail; "I've *finished* the race!"

What *was* Paul about? What made him tick?

God gave him **heart to reach lost pagans**—in darkness.

Not trying to get people to leave their church & come to his!

He wants to go where Jesus *isn't* known, so people who've never heard learn about salvation by trusting Christ

Passion: *share good news with people who don't know!*

If Paul's going to get excited and brag about something,

It won't be about beautiful facilities (buildings!)

It won't be about singers or beautiful music

It'll be about *what GOD's doing*, bringing lost people to light.

In his dreams, Paul's planning where to go next with good news.

**Wherever Paul went he told lost people about Jesus
God's heart is set on lost people.**

OT looks ahead to when people in darkness see great light.

Jesus came to seek & save lost. He died for lost people!

Paul's heart is set on the lost.

What's OUR heart set on?

Seems we only get passionate about our sports team!

What's happened to our passion for Jesus?

Paul's excited — he's priest with a mission.

He wants to bring offering — lost people — to Jesus.

Paul began assuring us we have knowledge to share

We can tell others what God has shown us!

People in our community haven't heard good news about
salvation through trusting Christ alone.

God hasn't called us to get *Christians* to come to our church.

God *has* called US to seek lost people, to share good news!

PRAY FOR TWO!