

Romans 15:8-33

A Heart for the World

We saw In Chapter 14-15 How to handle Disputable matters

A) Main issue was eating meat –

Aa) Jewish believers – we shouldn't

1) Gentile believers – We have liberty in Christ

B) Paul spends a chapter and a half laying out – how the believers were to consider one another in matters like this.

C) Those more Rigid are Not judge to condemn... And those more liberty and not despise – but to dwell together in Unity

Paul concludes his exhortation in V.7 with this word: ⁷ **Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.**

A) Paul is going to proceed to share how Jesus plan from the beginning was to bring the two groups Jews and Gentiles together

B) To form one new humanity in Christ !

1) Jews and Gentiles dwelling together in Unity in Jesus

8 Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers,

Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors.

9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written:

Paul proceeds to quote from several OT verses to reveal that this was always God's plan – to use the Jews to save the Gentiles

V.9b “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.”

2 Samuel 22:50 / Psalm 18:44

10 And again he says:

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”

Deuteronomy 32:43

11 And again:

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles!

Laud Him, all you peoples!” Psalm 117:1

12 And again, Isaiah says:

“There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope.” Isaiah 11:10

Paul quoted from the three categories of the Jewish Bible—the Psalms, the law, and the prophets—

A) In order to drive home the fact that Jesus came for the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

B) God's plan has always been for his people to proclaim to the nations that God is to be praised,

1) and to draw the nations into his people under the rule and hope of his chosen King

C) The Lord is so big. Yet we can be so small and so narrow in our thinking!

Jesus people movement: Large groups of Christians had disdain for the hippies –

A) Yet God wanted to reach them and do a work through them that would spread all over the world

B) I wonder who are the hippies of our day?

1) Who are the outcast that society and many in the church look at negatively

C) They could be the very people that God wants to do a new work through!

D) Gospel unity across every divide and disagreement is what God has always been working toward.

Paul powerfully reveals that God's plan from the very beginning was always to bring together as one in Christ -these two warring Factions – Jew/ Gentile

A) Form One new humanity in Christ!

B) That is the beauty of the Church – so many different people races, tribes, tongues –

1) Social, economic, educational differences – ONE

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

A) **The Greatest thing we have in common is our common Hope in Jesus Christ**

B) **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.** 1 Peter 1:3

C) **What is hope? Hope is the absolute expectation of coming good.**

1) Hope is the antidote for divisiveness and defensiveness.

D) **And throughout Scripture, hope is most often referred to in conjunction with the coming of Jesus Christ.**

E) **Hebrews refers to the Hope we have in this fact that God keeps His promises –**

1) **Is like an anchor for our souls Hebrews 6:19**

F) **Coming Series – Unshakeable Hope**

The Hope that we have in Jesus is a Hope that needs to be shared!

A) **So After spending a chapter and half talking the believers in the church on how to dwell in unity and receive one another especially in Disputable matters**

B) Paul shifts gears to discuss GOSPEL ministry in the world. Why?

C) **Because the two are very closely related. When does unity in the church happen?**

1) When people are ministering in the world.

A tourist approached a farmer in Iowa and said, “Don’t you think all these fences ruin the beauty of the fields out here?”

“Yep,” said the farmer—“until the corn starts growing. When the corn starts growing you don’t even see the fences.”

D) **When are fences seen in the church? When there’s no fruit.**

1) That’s when the divisions become real and pronounced.

But when there’s growth and fruit, evangelism and ministry, the fences of our disagreements disappear.

A) **That is why the more evangelistic a church is, the less divided it becomes.**

B) **In the rest of Chapter 15 Paul lays out his strategy for GOSPEL ministry and reaching the world**

His Goal V.14-16

14 Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, 16 that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Paul was commissioned by God to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the gentiles

A) **His goal was to present the gentiles as being acceptable to the Lord**

B) **Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.**

Colossians 1:28

Paul’s heart is a heart that sees its mission as entirely sacred.

A) Here Paul appropriates the vivid imagery of a Hebrew priest ministering at the altar in the Temple.

B) The word translated “minister” V.16 is the same root word from which we derive the word liturgy.

C) **The word even sounds like it—lietourgon.**

1) This is most significant, because Paul could have used other words to describe himself.

D) For example, he could have used the common term *doulos* to indicate a servant of Jesus Christ,

E) or he could have used diakonos, which means “servant” or “minister.”

F)But he chose liturgy because he saw his missionary work like that of a priest offering sacred worship to God.

But Paul saw his priestly offering not as a lamb or a grain offering, but as Gentile converts.

A)As he expresses it in verse 16: “that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

B)Here we are exposed to Paul’s remarkable sense of self-perception.

C)It is common knowledge today that how we perceive ourselves greatly determines how we live our lives.

All the time that Paul was traveling on foot and ships to spread the gospel – long journeys – toil

A)Suffering from exposure, threats, beatings, and rejection,

B)His heart beats as a Priest – bringing his offering to the temple.

1)There is nothing mundane or routine about it at all!

C)Paul is offering a sacred sacrifice – his life and effort and the people he is ministering to JESUS

Can I encourage you in this: That is how we all need to see – what we are called to do!

A)Nehemiah building a wall – CAN’T COME DOWN -GREAT WORK

B)Peter says we are priest – ⁹But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 1 Peter 2:9-10

C)One of the ways we proclaim his praises is by simply doing what we are called to do – for him

- 1)Priestly ministry Mom –
- 2)On the Job – Representing Jesus
- 3)Leading a home group –
- 4)Teaching a Sunday school class

D)When we view life that way even The most mundane daily occurrences are holy.

1)Kitchen Sink – Sign – Divine service.... 3X a day

E)A pie baked for a neighbor becomes an offering to God.

His Goal: Gentiles..... #2 His Motive

¹⁷ Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things *which pertain* to God

A)His motive was to bring glory to Jesus Christ!

B)Paul’s motive was not to become famous or to make a name for himself or to get people to like him

1)His motive was to bring glory to Jesus Christ

C)Every single one of us has a calling – Our priestly ministry – bringing something to Jesus – Kids – Co-workers

1)The Lord is looking for us to be found faithful

D)Jesus in John 15 – Lesson on Abiding – Vine branches – Abide in me – connected to me – bear fruit

“By this the father is glorified when you bear much fruit” John 15:8

#3 The Means of Paul’s ministry

¹⁸ For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient, in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ

The Means for winning people: Word and deed!

A)This means he did not only get the message of the gospel across by speaking, but by his life and actions.

B)People don’t know how much you know until they know how much you care!

C)This shows that Paul saw evangelism as “incarnational.” Jesus took on flesh/ blood

We are not only to tell people the gospel, but to embody it in our attitudes and relationships.

A)We are to be the hands and feet of Jesus!

B)We are to invite people to look into us deeply and see what a human life rearranged by the gospel looks like.

John Stott

“This combination of words and works, the verbal and the visual, is a recognition that human beings often learn more through their eyes than through their ears. Words explain works, but works dramatize words.”

C)I like that Paul connects this with various signs and wonders –

1)because God often works in the supernatural through very natural means.

D)Young boys shares his lunch – natural – I can help

1)this is all I have and Jesus takes something very natural 5 loaves and 2 fish -do something supernatural

Ministry takes place when divine resources meet human needs through loving channels to the glory of God. – Warren Wiersbe

E)That is a great description of the means through which Paul did Ministry

#4 The Method

20 And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, **lest I should build on another man’s foundation**, 21 but as it is written:

“To whom **He was not announced**, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand.”

First, it was pioneering.

A)Paul says: “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”** V.20

to witness to those who had never heard of Christ (v 21).

B)So Paul traveled `1400 miles on foot to go to a place where the gospel had not been heard.

1)Distance from Vista to Vancouver Canada – walking – to take the gospel of Jesus

C)So Convicted – sometimes I complain about having to get on an airplane and fly 10 hrs to go preach somewhere.

D)If Paul walked 8 hrs a day it would take him 58 days to make such a Journey.

But Paul had a Pioneering spirit – new territory

A)Lacking today – New Churches springing up all the time where there are already plenty and the result so often is what we call transfer growth –

B)Where people just transfer one church to another!

C)Sometimes we think that we are building the Kingdom and reaching new people for Christ but so often –

1)it is just the shifting of sheep from one pasture to another

Some of the most exciting ministry I have ever been a part of is taking the gospel of Jesus into a culture that hasn’t really heard it –

A)Russia/ Eastern Europe – Hungary

B)Or taking a new style of ministry Like Calvary Chapel into an area where that has not been exposed to it

C)CC is distinct even more so 40 yrs ago

1) Teaching verse by verse – Balance in the area of the Holy Spirit

D)A distinction of being Spirit led and not program driven-

Bringing CC to a new territory –

A)Church plant in Oregon and some of the Church plants we have helped start

B)Helped plant the first two CC in Virginia – Troy and Tony

1)As well as the first 3 churches in Costa Rica

C)I will say this Pioneering is harder! – Takes time –

D)Grueling – you want to quit – hard to see the fruit – patient plodding –

1)in time you see what God is doing

E)Transfer growth is a lot easier –

Paul wanted to be a Pioneer – not build on another man’s foundation

Second thing: Partnering V.22-28

A)Paul had no desire to do this alone –

B)He knew that he needed the help of the rest of the Body of Christ to pull off what he was being called to do.

22 For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.

Keep in mind when Paul wrote this, he was in Corinth, wanting desperately to go to Rome.

23 But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, 24 whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you.

For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while.

B)Paul so desperately wanted to get to Rome and made a plan to stop there on his way to Spain.

1)Twofold reason – to receive Help –

2)No doubt this would be in the form of financial funds as well as resources

C)Paul knew the principle and preached it readily that we have been blessed to be a blessing

1)We see an example of this idea in the verses that follow.

25 But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. 26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. 27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

A)We know from the book of 2 Corinthians Chapter 8 that Paul was on his way to Jerusalem with an offering from the churches in Achaia and Macedonia for the Church in Jerusalem

B)The Church in Jerusalem suffering because of a famine that had hit the area.

C)These two churches in Macedonia and Achaia though they were poor themselves – insisting on helping

1)Paul says in V.27 – they saw it as their debt – Knowing that the gospel had come to their cities out of Jerusalem

D)They realized – we would be lost if it wasn't for the Pioneering heart of the believers in Jerusalem

1)where it all started – to take the gospel to the world

Paul revealed another reason for their generosity in 2 Corinthians 8:5 but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.

A)When someone becomes sold out to Jesus – they naturally become generous givers because Jesus is the ultimate generous giver

B)He gave Himself for us!

C)So First Paul wanted to come to them – so they could partner with him in supporting the work that God would do through him

D)But he also wanted to come to them to enjoy fellowship with them!

v.24 For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while.

E)We need fellowship – No man is an island!

1)Life – growing distant

So Paul's Method of ministry was Pioneering Partnering – not a Lone Ranger mentality

Finally Third Marked by Prayer

28 Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. 29 But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

30 Now **I beg you, brethren**, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that **you strive together with me in prayers to God for me**, 31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. 33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

A)Paul's ministry was founded on prayer The word translated “strive” V.30is *sunagonizomai*, from which we get our word “agonize.”

B)In other words, Paul was asking for passionate, fervent prayer Knowing Danger awaited him

C) Everywhere Paul went – warned – danger awaits you in Jerusalem

D) Paul asked prayer for three things:

#1 Deliverance in V.31

#2 Acceptance to the saints V.31

#3 Furtherance of his ministry – he would make it to Rome v.32

God answered all three – but in a different way than expected

A) The Christians in Jerusalem welcomed Paul

B) But the orthodox Jews literally tried to Kill him several times

1) Each time God intervened and protected Paul

C) He ended up in the Custody of the Romans – Imprisoned in Caesarea Long story in the book of Acts –

1) Paul is before King Agrippa – he appeals to Caesar!

D) Paul is going to make it to Rome – all expense paid trip – courtesy of the Roman GOVT

Commentators and Theologians are not sure if Paul ever made it to Spain – but he definitely made it to Rome.

A) His primary ministry there was from a Prison cell.

B) Gospel spread throughout the whole Palace Guard

C) Paul wrote: Prison Epistles – Letters: Ephesians, Philippians Colossians, and Philemon

As we come to a close tonight in considering Paul's strategy and heart for ministry – we can glean these 4 ideas

#1 A missionary heart is *a heart that sees its mission as entirely sacred.*

The sacredness of the work comes from seeing oneself as a priest offering up his or her service as a fragrant offering to Christ.

#2 A missionary heart is *a heart that serves for the glory of God above everything else*

#3 A missionary heart is *a heart that is visionary. Do we have a dream—a Spain?*

A) If not, let us ask God for one.

B) Content but never complacent – Always open to God doing More!

#4 A missionary heart is *a heart that is dependent on prayer.*