



“The Gospel for the Gentiles”¹

Romans 15:14-21

I’m intrigued by the fact that children tend to learn their parent’s voices. I mean, I know that sometimes we can wonder if our children can hear us, but they know the difference between my voice and some other man’s voice. If they hear “Durey’s, let’s go!” Or, even if I were simply laughing or speaking, they’d be able to hear my voice if they were listening for it. I remember how it was as a child. I could be at my church and I’d hear my mom laugh. I knew her laugh. It was distinct from others laughter. As children, knowing our parent’s voice is critical, especially if we feel lost. We start to listen to see if we hear our parents – not just any adult, but our parent’s voice.

Imagine if you were at church and some other parent said, “Kids, let’s get in the vain.” Would you follow that family? Sure, you could say, “You said ‘kids,’ and I’m a kid.” But you know what they mean. There’s a parental relationship. They’re not your parents. You are not their child.

Why do I use this illustration? Well, it’s important to know who is talking to you. Some people could be speaking, but their voice doesn’t matter to you. There’s no influence in your life. So, really, who cares what they say. But if your parent or a loved one or a close friend were speaking, those words would matter more. What about God’s Words? How important are they? Jesus says that his sheep hear his voice and they listen to him. And, in the text we’re studying today in Romans, Paul emphasizes his ministry to the Roman church. While he begins the letter to the Roman church by stating his calling as an apostle, he begins his conclusion of the letter by emphasizing what his apostleship looks like. I believe he does this in order to emphasize that the words spoken here are necessary for God’s children. This means that the book of Romans is necessary for us! But what does that mean for us? I hope this sermon compels us to rejoice in God all the more and to continue to remind ourselves of the truths in Romans.

You know, Ventura, we have only 1½ chapters left of Romans. We began this series about 19 months ago! Can you believe it? And, as we enter Paul’s closing thoughts, I want to challenge us to seek to *not forget* lessons we’ve learned. Sometimes we can be so focused on what’s next, that we allow our minds to forget the words we have already heard. But Paul’s words in the book of Romans are the inspired and perfect words from God for the Lord’s church.

So, take time to review sermon notes. Re-read the book of Romans in one or two sittings. Think through sermons that reached to you and that you think you might need to listen to again. In Romans 15:14-21, Paul gives his defense as to why he wrote the letter to the Romans. And, in this defense and explanation, we are reminded how important it is to take and apply Paul’s words. So, with this understanding, as fellow children of God, spiritual brothers of Paul, let’s pray together and then read from Romans 15:14-21. [Pray for Bernice VL; Piatt’s; Central Avenue CRC]

¹ This manuscript is still in the rough draft phase. I recommend you utilize these notes in conjunction to the sermon to gain greater insight and clarity.

¹⁴ I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. ¹⁵ But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷ In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. ¹⁸ For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; ²⁰ and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else’s foundation, ²¹ but as it is written, “Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.”²

At first, when studying this text, I thought to myself, “How in the world am I going to be able to make an outline of this?!” Paul’s making statements about his personal calling as an apostle. And, since that’s the case, what application is there for me?! Have you ever studied the Bible saying, “What is the point of this?!” In some ways, I felt that, too. But I’m tremendously grateful for the Spirit and for good Christian writing that I can help me gain better insight. As I looked at this text and read through it several times, I came to see some things more clearly. While Paul’s writing is very structured, he seems to be giving bullet points. But these points are all under a big picture, a main idea, which I think is this: **Paul, by Jesus’ grace, has faithfully proclaimed and applied the gospel to the Romans and to many Gentiles.**

Again, you can say, “What does this have to do with me then?” Well, as I asked last week, “How many people here are non-Jewish?” By raised hands, we then admit that Paul’s teaching is faithful to us as Gentiles – meaning, we should listen to his voice. We should cling to the words of Romans – not simply because they’re Paul’s words, but they’re God’s words through Paul. When we feel lost or when we are simply living our daily life, we should want to hear our Father’s voice as declared in Romans. Whether the words are confrontational or comforting, may we heed the words for God’s glory and our eternal good!

With this understanding, let’s get into what I’ll call Paul’s “bullet points.” I see five points. **Paul gives a commendation to the church. Then he states his concern for the church. He moves on to remind them of his calling and how that relates to the commendation and concern. Moving from his calling, he expresses his joy in the Lord. And finally he moves into his zeal for future ministry.** So, let’s first look into Paul’s commendation.

1. Paul’s Commendation (v. 14).

Paul has just finished his final, lengthy teaching section to the Roman church. The section was on how the members of the church should be treating each other. There seems to have been some

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 15:14–21.

judgmentalism and also some despising of one another over periphery issues. So, Paul writes with care, love and authority. He calls them to be a people pursuing Jesus together, not simply a people pursuing practices or preferences together. When Jesus is central, they can all grow in godliness.

As we have gone through this section, I think you'd admit that you can sense Paul's firmness in his heartfelt concern for the believers. That said, it would be wrong of you to assume that Paul is angry or has almost given up on the Roman church. There are some people, maybe even here, that when you hear more firm words, you think that person is against you or judging you in all sorts of negative ways. You could place emotions and thoughts onto someone else that aren't even there.

I think Paul might have perceived that type of tendency in the Romans. Why else does he say in verse 14, ¹⁴ I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.³ Do you see the emphasis of Paul? Some suggest that Paul is speaking in hyperbole here. Others think Paul might be trying to butter the Romans up with very kind speech after having spoken confrontationally. But Paul's not a liar. He speaks the truth, and here I think we see his genuine love for the Romans. Confrontation isn't always unloving. In fact, the Proverbs say that the kisses of an enemy are profuse, but the wounds of a friend are *faithful* (see Prov. 27:6). Paul is a friend and brother in Christ. And, he also affirms that just because there are serious areas that need growth that the Christians in Rome are also growing believers.

This is a great lesson for all of us here. As a people pursuing Jesus together, we need friends who can give "faithful wounds." And, we should not assume they're trying to destroy us or to say that there's no growth in our lives. This statement should also teach us how to communicate to our brothers and sisters in Christ. The emphasis of Paul's wording actually shows a deep concern Paul has for the Romans. He doesn't simply say "I am satisfied." He says "I myself am satisfied." I genuinely and truly am satisfied. Then he uses the word "satisfied." Think of that word. I remember talking with a person once, and I used that word, and he had an understanding of "satisfied" like the word simply mean that things were ok. Like if you said to a child on Christmas, after opening presents, and you ask the child if they had a good Christmas, then they say, "I'm satisfied." Don't think of that word like this. Think of the word instead like being asked how your Thanksgiving feast was. You're not painfully stuffed, but you were able to eat all the different types of food you wanted, and you simply don't want anything else. Someone asks you, "Do you want more mashed potatoes?" And you respond, "Oh no! I am satisfied."

Paul's longings for the Romans church are being met. They know Jesus. They love the Lord. They're wanting to follow after him. In other words, they're full of goodness. This word should probably be taken in a general way. "Goodness" is a word that shows up in Paul's Fruit of the Spirit list in Galatians 5. And, it can simply be taken as a good, God-honoring way of living life with others as a servant of the Lord and others. The people are filled with this.

Paul moves on and describes how the "goodness" is expressed in the church. They're filled with all knowledge. They know the truth. They're obviously gifted with the Spirit's gift of knowledge to be able to receive this letter of Romans. There are a lot of complex truths in this book, which Paul believes they'll be able to be challenged and grow in. And Paul also says they're able to instruct one another. This doesn't mean that everyone is a preacher, but that everyone is able to disciple. Wow, Ventura! This is a church that Paul says is able to be a disciple-making church.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 15:14.

When I read verse 14, I can't help but think of Ventura. I know I'm biased – like a parent with their children – but I genuinely believe verse 14 applies to us as well. I love you, Ventura, so let me simply state these words towards you: ¹⁴I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.⁴

The implication of Paul's statement here is that then the Roman church would be encouraged while also exhorted to live this way. Continue to live in goodness. The same is true for us, Ventura. **God has gifted us to embrace and apply Paul's exhortations and to live as disciple-making disciples, pursuing Jesus together.** So, this is Paul's commendation to the Romans. From this commendation, Paul addresses his concern.

2. Paul's concern (v. 15a).

The beginning of verse 15 states, "¹⁵But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder. . ."⁵ What has he written boldly? Think of chapter 12, where Paul emphasizes their need to show service in various ways within the church and then he speaks on how we should treat the people in the world around us. He states that we are to not take vengeance, but trust the Lord at the end of chapter 12. In chapter 13, he says we're supposed to pay taxes, too!

In all seriousness, Paul is not afraid to be "bold." And, Paul admits he's been bold, but this boldness has led him to a two-fold concern. One, he's concerned for the Romans. Two, though, I think he's also concerned that they know his intent. Have you ever spoken to someone with boldness and then walked away thinking, "I hope they didn't misunderstand me." As a pastor, I've felt that many times. Honestly, I hate speaking boldly, but I've done it before. Internally, I'm shaking. And, sometimes, I'm even shaking on the outside! Why do I do this to myself? All I can say is that by God's pure mercy and grace I'm concerned about God's glory and their good. I love them. I recall a situation once where someone said to me, "I hate you right now." And, in that moment there are a lot of things you could say, right? I could have said, "How dare you!" Or, "I'm out." Or, "I hate you, too." You know what God gave me in my heart and in my words? I responded by saying, "That's ok. I love you."

I don't share this about me in order to say, "Hey, look at me! I really know how to love." NO WAY! I'm saying this because I can relate to Paul's concern. Paul's experienced people not liking him because of his boldness. Read 1 Corinthians. And can relate to that concern, and I can imagine you can relate to this, too. Paul's human like the rest of us! But that shouldn't keep us from speaking the truth in love, when needed. The church needed the reminders.

By the way, the word "reminder" implies they generally knew these truths, and Paul needed to remind them of the truth. They could have said, "We already know this stuff," but you know what? We can know things and forget their applications, can't we? We need the book of Romans to remind us over and over again of God's justice, our sinfulness, God's grace and mercy in Christ, our status in the Lord, our need to depend on the Spirit, our eternal future hope, our God who keeps all his promises, our privilege to live as sacrifices for his glory. We need these reminders – and sometimes we need them boldly. And, may we take these bold reminders as they're intended: from a heart of love and concern for us and for God's glory.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 15:14.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 15:15.

And, may we learn from this, too. May we be a people who can lovingly remind one another of our Lord and his truth – even if it has to be bold at times. So, we hear Paul’s commendation. We also hear Paul’s concern. Then we move into Paul explaining his calling.

3. Paul’s calling (vv. 15b-16).

Paul explains his calling from God, I think, in order to give a defense of his boldness, but it also moves him to boast all the more in the Lord. So, let’s read the end of verse 15 through verse 16: because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.⁶

He spoke boldly because of the grace given to him by God. What was this grace-gift of God? To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. The more I think of the words of Romans. The more I think of the apostle Paul. The more I love this man – and God’s work through this man. Paul views his apostleship as a grace-gift. And, I think we can all recognize it truly is a gift! He’s been saved by the Sovereign God. The man who supported the death of Christians had his eyes opened to the death of Jesus, trusting in Jesus’ death on his behalf so that he could be reconciled to God! And not only that, Paul then proclaimed Christ so that more people would trust Jesus as their Savior and Lord. This is a gift, right?

But think about the calling God gave to Paul. When God called Paul, he states that he is going to show Paul how much he must suffer for God’s name. I don’t know about you, but I don’t think of being called to suffer as a gift of God. And certainly, suffering for suffering’s sake is not a gift. But Paul knows that his suffering – whether it be false accusations from people or churches turning from him or being beaten or being thrown in prison – all has a purpose. His soul was so enveloped in the glory of God that he could rejoice in all he did because he knew his calling was a gift from God, and God doesn’t waste any of his gifts. And, so, while he spoke boldly, and he’s concerned that they hear him rightly, he explains why he speaks boldly. God gave him this privilege. Then, in verse 16, Paul uses a word picture to describe his actions and speech. He is a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. According to the book of Acts, Paul was the apostle for the Gentiles, in particular. But Paul goes on and says, “in the priestly service of the gospel of God.” Paul is *not* saying that the old covenant practices are to still be practiced in the new covenant era. Paul is picking up on the Old Testament illustration of the temple and tabernacle in order to explain a special truth.

Like priests, Paul is set apart for special, holy service. He’s called to the ministry of the gospel. And, you could say, “Well, what’s so special about that? We are, too.” And, while that’s true. Paul’s is a little more unique as an apostle. He equates the Gentiles with his sacrifice to God. The Gentiles are his offering to the Lord. Since God had called him to be an apostle to the Gentiles, Paul doesn’t simply see it as a call to tell them about Jesus and then leave and go to another town. Paul has a zeal for their continual growth in godliness.

Do you see that? He wants the Gentiles to be “acceptable” and “sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” The word “acceptable” is used in Romans 12, when Paul says that the Romans should be sacrifices that are acceptable to God. Not meaning that they should make themselves clean enough for God to accept them. No. That would go against what Paul has written all the way back in Romans 3. We are accepted by God not on the basis of our works, but on the basis of Jesus’ life and death. He lived the life we couldn’t live. And, he died the death we should have died – satisfying God’s justice towards us – so that

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 15:15–16.

we are accepted before God. If that's the case, what does "acceptable" mean here? Well, Paul is speaking in terms of sanctification. Sanctification is that process spoken of in Romans 6. It's a process of growth in obedience to God. So, acceptable is talking about living in ways that are consistent with our new identity in Christ. Think of it this way: **Since Jesus makes us righteous through faith, then live righteously by faith.**

What I love about Paul's wording here is that Paul doesn't simply want to "get people saved." He wants to see them grow in loving and following the Lord. He'll be bold in his words if needed. But you can't genuinely accuse Paul of not caring. He loves God's glory and he loves the people. And, Paul says this is God's grace towards him. Paul was not living this way before Jesus came to his life. And, without God's grace, Paul would turn from the Lord. But, Paul had been given grace.

By the way, "grace" is also defined by Paul is Jesus himself (in Titus 2). And so, I think even Paul's actions here are a representation of the heart of Jesus himself. Which causes me to think of Paul's words elsewhere when he says in 1 Corinthians 11:1 to follow him as he follows Christ. This is an example to us. And as Paul called us to loving sacrifice for believers, Paul is saying that's what he's doing by God's grace.

However, Paul's calling is greater than ours. He's an apostle. And, an apostle was a special role that doesn't exist anymore. Paul says he was an apostle out of due time (see 1 Cor. 15:8). He was the last apostle to see Jesus. What is an apostle? They were special messengers of Jesus in order to explain and expound on the truth of God so that we could see how Jesus fulfills God's plan of redemption. They show us how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament and causes us to have a future hope. And, Paul is the apostle to Gentiles so that Gentiles would grow in godliness and also live depending on the Spirit.

Listen, Paul didn't want the people to worship him or depend on him. He wants them to depend on the Spirit. Elsewhere, the Bible speaks of the Word as the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6), and we are also to pray in the Spirit (Jude). To depend on the Spirit seems to mean to be a praying, Word-filled person so that we would glorify God in all aspects of our lives. So, Paul's aim is to help Gentiles grow to become this type of person.

This is the gracious mission God gave Paul. So, if we ever get upset with Paul's boldness, we're getting upset with God! Instead, let's rejoice God has given Gentiles an apostle. We deserved for God to let us wallow in our sinfulness. We don't deserve a God who would come to us and love us and want us to know him for all eternity. Yet, we have such a God who raised up a man who wrote most of the New Testament. Paul's ministry continues to the Gentiles. Thank the Lord for Paul! Amen?! Now, Paul moves from this calling to his joy.

4. Paul's joy (vv. 17-19).

Look at verses 17-19 again: ¹⁷ In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. ¹⁸ For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ. . .⁷

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 15:17–19.

In Christ Jesus. What does that phrase mean? It refers to his relationship to Jesus. He is dependent entirely on Jesus. So, we could say it something like, “On the basis of Jesus himself, I have reason to be proud of my work for God.” How amazing is this! While Paul is concerned the people might misunderstand him and he wants them to know his concern for them, he doesn’t let that concern make him sink to the doldrums. No. God gave him a mission. Jesus is going to accomplish that mission through Paul. And Paul is proud of what’s being accomplished!

Keep this in mind, Ventura. Paul’s not simply proud in and of himself. This is something necessary for us always to remember. In Galatians 6:14, Paul writes, “¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”⁸ In our day and age, a lot of us might say to Paul, “Paul, you can simply be proud of your work! You did a good job! Why do you say that you can only boast in the cross and that your work is only something to be proud of if Jesus was in it?” Our secularized culture emphasizes self-attainment and a need for self-affirmation without the need of God. Since humanity, in a secularist mindset, is the supreme, then we must boast ultimately in us. Yet Paul shows us over and over again that there’s a greater joy. How much greater it is to be able to say “I’m proud of my work because God’s working through me?!” Seriously, Ventura. I’ve had some people speak to me saying things like, “You do such a great job!” And, when I say “Thank you. Praise the Lord,” they look at me as though I’m a little weird or maybe down on myself. It seems some want me to really know how good I am. But listen, my glory comes in glorying in God! And, I want that to be your glory, too. This is how Paul encourages us to think. And, this is how we should be encouraging each other. We can thank people for their work and encourage them all the more when we say, “I see God working through you and I’m so grateful for you!” Boast in the Lord. Paul boasts in the Lord here and says the only reason why Gentiles have been brought to obedience is by God’s gracious work.

I remember hearing a story once where someone went up to D.L. Moody, the Chicago evangelist in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. This person said to him something like, “You saved me.” Moody responded, “If I saved you, then you certainly are not saved.” Don’t worship Paul or any other person. Worship God! If God is doing the work through them, we should honor and praise the Lord and together rejoice in God. Like Paul, our greatest joy is God and we rejoice when God is glorified supremely! In verse 18, Paul writes, “¹⁸ For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience. . . .”⁹ What a powerful commitment. Paul always wants them to see that his Lord Jesus saves and sanctifies. Jesus truly is his life! The phrase “to bring the Gentiles to obedience,” should call us back to Romans 1 when Paul talks about bringing people to the obedience of faith. The obedience is actually the call to people that they would stop looking to themselves and the things around them to give them identity and hope and meaning, but to turn from these sins and turn to Jesus for forgiveness.

We Gentiles (like the Jews) turned away from the Lord and have abused God’s gifts by turning them on ourselves. Only Jesus can rescue us from our enslavement to our love for this world more than love for God. And Paul glories that God did that through him. As an apostle, Paul says that through his words and actions, by signs and wonders (miracles) through him, God reached the Gentiles world. But Paul again says this was done by the Spirit of God – not himself. By the way, notice how Paul speaks of Jesus, the Spirit and God the Father in these verses. Our Triune God raised Paul up, reconciled Paul to himself and gave Paul an amazing mission to the Gentiles.

⁸ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ga 6:14.

⁹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 15:18.

And, it truly is an amazing calling because Paul goes on in verse 19 to say, “so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ. . . .”¹⁰

Paul was sent by apostles from Jerusalem. He’s traveled to many places preaching the gospel. This statement isn’t Paul saying he’s been to every town, but that he’s been around all those areas. He’s gone to cities, preached the gospel, planted churches, and then called them to go out and plant more churches in other areas. And, with this understanding, Paul says that he has fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ. There could be a couple (or more) meanings to that phrase “fulfilled the ministry.” It could simply mean that Paul has done what is intended with the gospel. The word “gospel” means good news. As we’ve learned already in our study of Romans, this word was used to refer to someone coming into a town and declaring the victory of the King. It would make no sense for the good news to not be spoken. The greatest news to ever declare is that Jesus came as a servant to humanity in order to take the guilt and punishment of sin, and he conquered sin in his death. And, in rising from the dead, he has conquered our greatest enemy: death itself! And, in ascending to Heaven, he guarantees to every sinner that if they would turn to him for mercy and forgiveness, they *will* be made right with God in that instant!

So, Paul could simply be saying that he has fulfilled this task. But I think there’s more here. Paul’s explaining his special role as an apostle. So, while all of us who are followers of Jesus ought to declare the gospel and in that sense “fulfill it,” I think Paul is saying that he had a special fulfilling given to him by God. Isaiah 66:20 says, “²⁰ **And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the Lord, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord.**”¹¹ This is a prophetic statement that also picks up the idea of offering like Paul uses in this text. But it’s a prophetic statement saying that people will go out to all nations and bring the nations to the Lord. And, who was essentially the first person called to go to the nations? Paul.

Wow. Paul says here that he has fulfilled his ministry. He has fulfilled this calling. And, by the way, even to this day, in people going to various nations of the world to declare the gospel, aren’t Paul’s teachings still used today? Paul still speaks. But, Paul wants it to be known – we don’t value the words simply because they’re his words, but because they are God’s words through him by the power of the Holy Spirit and based in the commission of Jesus Christ! Praise God for his work through Paul. Therefore, we should listen to Paul’s words, right? And we should rejoice in a God who works through people like Paul. We are all humans, like Paul. And yet, God does miraculous works through us in saving us and then enabling us to follow him and be disciple-making disciples. With this, Paul moves on in verse 20 to state his mission.

5. Paul’s mission (vv. 20-21).

Verses 20-21 say, “²⁰ and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else’s foundation, ²¹ but as it is written, “Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.” ¹²

¹⁰ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 15:19.

¹¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Is 66:20.

¹² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 15:20–21.

There's an interesting logic here. Paul doesn't say, "I've fulfilled my ministry, therefore I'm done!" No. He's God's fulfillment of getting the gospel to the Gentiles; therefore, Paul is zealous to keep doing this. Do you see how he doesn't weary in doing well? Knowing your mission from God – knowing the beauty of the gospel and savoring Jesus Christ daily – can compel us in all of our work to be zealous for God's glory! But Paul's mission is not to preach the gospel to people who already know. Others have that calling. So, here, Paul explains to the Romans that he intends to continue to reach people who don't know Jesus. Paul himself believes he's a fulfillment of God's prophecy that "those who have never been told of [Jesus] will see and understand."

Ventura, I have a confession. Before studying this text, there had been times (many times actually) where I felt like if I knew Paul personally, I probably wouldn't have gotten along with him. I felt like I was like John Mark and we'd have to be separated. But I think over the years, God's grace rounded rough edges on Paul. And in studying this text, I hear a man who's humbled and trusting in God and the Lord's sovereign work of grace. We hear from a man who loves people truly and wants them to have eternal joy in God. He's willing to be bold, but not simply for boldness' sake. For the Lord's glory. He glories in God's glory. And he confesses we should not listen to him because he's Paul, but because God's grace at work in him.

Do you hear Jesus' words through Paul? Do you take them seriously or do you treat the words of Romans like anyone else's words? Oh Ventura, Paul wants the Romans to know the love of God and to grow in it all the more. His mission is that we be holy and acceptable sacrifices to the Lord. And, by the way, this is his mission because this is the mission of Jesus. And, good news, we are promised that someday we will be without spot or wrinkle when we see Jesus face to face someday! **The gospel truly has come to us Gentiles! So, in light of our glorious Savior's death, resurrection, ascension and return, let's continue to study his Word, grow in his Word and live dependent on the Spirit. Read and re-read Romans. Apply the truths written here, and rejoice in the God who loves you eternally in Christ Jesus.**

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