

ALTARED STATE

"A COMMITMENT TO THE GOSPEL"

ROMANS 15:14-22

What do you do for ministry? Assuming you are a follower of Jesus, what do you do that you consider a service or ministry for him? Perhaps you volunteer in a church ministry every Sunday. Or you may regularly volunteer at a local mission for impoverished people. Perhaps you lead a Bible study or offer your home as a place for groups to meet. We can all serve God in a variety of ways. Maybe you serve God with a large part of your life. You could be serving as a professional minister or as a director of a charitable organization. Ministry comes in all shapes and sizes. What you do for God is often an indicator of what you believe about God.

Better than asking "what" you do for ministry, is to ask "how" you do ministry. Proper motivation, attitude, and persistence, even in a small task, may have more impact for the Kingdom than a large task done in a shoddy way. Imagine you are in the drive-through of your favorite fast food joint. You are in a hurry and need to get to your next appointment quickly. As you arrive at the window to pick up your bag of hot food, you hear pleasant music playing and see inspirational posters all through the interior of the restaurant. But the servers are nowhere to be found! When one does finally approach the window, he tells you your food is not ready and asks you to pull ahead. The

We are called not simply to communicate the gospel to non-believers; we must also intentionally celebrate the gospel before them.

– Timothy J. Keller

food from this place may be good, but you may never come back because the service is terrible. The Gospel will always be the best thing around. Unfortunately, the delivery of the Gospel can be less than desirable, and at times downright repulsive. People with a low value of the Gospel can greatly hinder its appeal to those who are lost. "Holy shoddy is still shoddy," a wise friend of mine often said. How you serve the Gospel to others may be an indicator of how highly you esteem God (Matthew 25:34-46).

Your ministry, large or small, is serious business. The greatness of our God demands the best from us. The needy world is watching how we give away our faith.

This Week's Core Competency

Giving Away My Faith – I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving, like ministry, comes in many shapes and sizes. Often we give a donation of money without much planning or forethought. At other times we may sacrifice a lot by giving of our time to support a worthy cause. On holidays or birthdays we may spend a lot of time and money to give the perfect present to someone we love. Occasionally we may have the opportunity to give in honor of someone who has done something great for us. Giving in honor of another is often a significant and meaningful compliment. Giving away our faith can have similar motivations.

Sharing the Gospel can often feel like a simple deposit of truth with a quick getaway. Or we may feel like we are taking a great risk when we speak to

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someone about faith. A better way to think about evangelism is to understand for whom we do evangelism. If we are only concerned about our effectiveness in evangelism, we are missing the bigger picture. Even if we are consumed with the great need of those to whom we are evangelizing, we still may be missing the most important component of Gospel proclamation. In our study this week in Romans 15:14-22, Paul provides the most important element of evangelism. In this passage, Paul outlines "why" we give away our faith. Paul connects proclamation of the Gospel with worship. Dig into the study to see how you measure up.

day **1** ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

Romans 15:14-22

14 I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another. 15 Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me 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.

17 Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. 18 I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and

done- 19 by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. 20 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. 21 Rather, as it is written:

"Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

22 This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

*Draw a line connecting all uses of the word "full" in this passage.

*Number the descriptions of the Roman believers in v. 14.

*Circle the word "priestly" in v. 16.

*Draw lines from "priestly" to all the other words that relate to this word.

*Draw a triangle over each member of the Trinity found in this passage.

*Draw a line connecting all expressions of the Gentles in this passage.

*Put a box around each use of the word "gospel" in this passage.

*Underline each word that describes the act of sharing the Gospel.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Paul thought highly of the recipients of his letter (Romans 15:14). What was so impressive about these believers in Christ?
2. How were Paul's readers made full and filled (Consider Romans 15:13)?
3. What "points" did Paul have in mind for the Romans that needed reminding?
4. What is the *gospel*?
5. How did Paul view his ministry (Romans 15:16)?
6. How does the acceptable offering of Romans 15:16 compare with the offering mentioned in Romans 12:1-2?
7. What is involved in a "fully proclaimed" Gospel of Christ (Romans 15:18-19)?
8. Why did Paul not want to build his ministry on someone else's foundation (Romans 15:20)?
9. Do you see Paul's words here (Romans 15:14-22) as only descriptive of Paul's unique calling or is this passage in any way prescriptive, indicating what all believers should be doing?
10. Name a group of people with whom God has called you to share the Gospel. How do you worship God as you share with them?

day **3** **EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The Gospel was important to the Apostle Paul. He began (Rom. 1:1) and ended the book of Romans (Rom. 16:25) referencing the "good news" he proclaimed. Paul revealed that the Gospel had a prophetic legacy (Rom. 1:2) and came directly from God (Rom. 1:9). The Gospel showcased the power (Rom. 1:16) and righteousness (Rom. 1:17) of God. As Paul unpacked the Gospel in Romans chapters 2-6, he frequently labeled the "good news" of God's salvation as a "gift" (Rom. 4:4; 5:15,16,17; 6:23) in contrast to "the Law." Paul spoke of a new identity for those who believed the Gospel, identifying them as the "children of God" (Rom. 8:14,16,17,19,21; 9:8,26). Paul preached (Rom. 10:14-15; 15:20) and proclaimed (Rom. 16:25) this Gospel, all to the glory of God (Rom. 15:17). Paul's description of his passion for the Gospel reached its zenith in Romans 15:16-21.

As Paul wrapped up his communication to the believers in Rome, he showed genuine concern and care for the people he addressed. Though Paul could be tough on his audience (1 Cor. 4:21), he was also often very pastoral. Even though Paul thought highly of the Roman believers (Rom. 1:8; 15:14), he still felt responsible to bring words of instruction to them. "Coming straight after the two long sections dealing in turn with God's salvation plans for both Jews and Gentiles (1:1 8- 11:36) and the issue of the 'weak' and the 'strong' (14:1 - 15:13), Paul's reference to speaking quite boldly 'on some points' probably relates to the rather straight words he had to say to them in these sections" (Colin G. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 537). Love and truth must go together. One without the other is often a miscarriage of ministry.

Paul saw his participation in the proclamation of the Gospel as the highest of privileges and responsibilities. He both encouraged (Rom. 15:14) and boldly instructed (Rom. 15:15) out of his deep understanding of the work God had called him to perform. Paul describes himself with priestly language when he identified himself as a "minister" of Christ Jesus (Rom. 15:16-17). Paul saw his work among the Gentiles as the work of a priest offering a sacrifice. Like the Temple High Priest, Paul was presenting the Gentiles to God as an offering, made acceptable and holy by the Holy Spirit. This priestly ministry was not accomplished in his own strength, but only through what Christ had

accomplished through him (Rom. 15:18). Paul glorified or "boasted" in God as he participated in the amazing ministry of proclamation and conversion of a people far from God who had not even heard of his mercy (Rom. 15:20-21). Paul saw evangelism, the spreading of the good news of Jesus Christ, as a high and holy form of worship of the God he loved.

By explaining the priestly work of offering up the Gentiles to God, Paul supplied support for his "more bold" words written to the Romans seeking their full transformation. Many would have seen first century Gentiles coming into the Kingdom of God as impossible. Gentiles were considered unclean and unacceptable to God by many. "Paul's Jewish opponents would have regarded all Gentiles as 'unclean', so his use of the term 'sanctified' is very significant. The point is that the Gentiles are accepted by God and are holy in the fullest sense" (Leon Morris, *The Epistle of Romans*, 511-12). Paul boasts or glories in the privilege of being able to present the Gospel to Gentiles to bring them into the Kingdom of God being fully accepted and sanctified. Romans 15:16 reads very much like Isaiah 66:18-23 where God is described as bringing his glory to the nations, making the people from all nations "an offering to the Lord." Paul saw the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles as a foretaste of this great glory (Rom. 15:17).

Paul was concerned not only with the proclamation of the truth, but also with the obedience of discipleship. For Paul, the preaching of the Gospel included life change and transformation of the recipients of the Gospel. Paul's pastoral concern (Rom. 15:14-15) is evidence of his commitment to discipleship as well as conversion. The Gentiles obedient to Christ is the fulfillment of the Gospel. This life change was accomplished through the power of the Spirit of God (Rom. 15:19).

Paul's calling to proclaim the Gospel did come with an assignment unique to him. Paul felt called to share the Gospel with those who were not familiar with the Old Testament or the covenants of Yahweh. He did preach to the Jewish people ("Jerusalem"), but was compelled to share the Gospel into far and unfamiliar territories ("Illyricum"). Paul saw this ministry to those far from Jerusalem as predicted and accomplished by God (Rom. 15:21).

Also implicit in the description of Paul's priestly mission of evangelism and discipleship is an inclusion of all three members of the Trinity. God is mentioned repeatedly in Romans 15:14-22. Christ Jesus is the focus of priestly ministry, expressions of glory, and life-changing accomplishments in the lives of Gentiles. The Holy Spirit is mentioned as sanctifying Gentiles and empowering all that Paul said and did. The

fullness of God as Father, Son and Spirit in the work of the Gospel allowed Paul to say that he "fully" proclaimed the Gospel of Christ. The fullness of God and Paul's reliance upon all of him made Paul's ministry of the Gospel full and complete.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

The Message of the Passage

Sharing the Gospel is a high form of worship to God. Helping others grow in their obedience to God is one of life's greatest ambitions. Prioritizing ministry with those unfamiliar with Christ is highly recommended.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on the message of Romans 8:28-39 and your response to it.

What motivates you to share your faith in Christ?

What makes sharing your faith difficult?

What does it look like to "celebrate the Gospel" (see Keller quote on Page 1)?

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 14 **convinced** A strong belief based upon conviction or evidence. "There is no reason to think that Paul is insincere in what he says of them here. Through trusted co-workers (e.g., Priscilla and Aquila), Paul had access to good information about the Roman Christian community - information about both its problems and its strengths. Thus he can say, emphatically, "I myself am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness..." (Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Kindle ed., 15:14).

v. 14 **instruct** "Means more than 'teach'; it has rather the idea of 'admonish' with the thought of correcting what is amiss. Here it points to the reciprocal brotherly ministry of members exercising pastoral oversight" (Morris, 509).

v. 15 **boldly** A comparative word - "more boldly." "Paul's elaborate expression of confidence in the Roman Christians is designed to prevent any misunderstanding of his manner of writing to them ('more boldly in parts' or 'more boldly on some points'). Certain sections of this letter could be considered presumptuous since he had not founded or ever visited their gatherings. What right did he have to warn and advise them as he did? In fact, he claims to have written this way to 'remind' them suggesting that much of his content would be familiar to them. Unusually, a double compound verb is used for emphasis here. Reminding Christians of gospel truths and their implications is always helpful (cf. 1 Cor 4:17; 2 Tim 1:6; 2 Pet 1:12)" (David Peterson, *Commentary on Romans*, Kindle ed., 15:15).

v. 16 **minister** Literally, "a worker among men" or "a public servant who administers at his own expense" as in a priest in a temple. "The term [minister] denotes priestly ministry here. The piling up of cultic [religious] terms in context demonstrates that a cultic [religious] sense is intended. In his ministry Paul fulfills the call to Israel to be a 'royal priesthood' by whom the knowledge of God is conveyed to Gentiles" (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary, 766).

v. 16 **offering, acceptable, sanctified** "Grace was bestowed on him [Paul] (Rom. 15:15) so that he would serve as God's priestly minister in serving up the Gentiles as an offering. Since he had this calling, his offering of the Gentiles is 'acceptable' to God (cf. 1Pet. 2:5). Another cultic [religious] term, 'sanctified' describes the suitability of the offering that consists of the Gentiles. Such an offering is specially set apart for God, pleasing to him because it has been set apart "by the Holy Spirit" (Schreiner, 767).

v. 18 **obey** Literally "to hear under" or "to fulfill God's claims or commands." A frequent theme in Paul's writings (Rom. 1:5; 2:13; 2:27; 5:19; 6:12; 6:16-17; 15:18; 16:19,26; 2 Cor. 9:13; 10:6; Gal. 5:3; 5:7; Eph. 6:1,5-6; Phil. 2:12; Col. 3:20, 22; 2 Thes. 1:8; 3:14; 1 Tim. 3:4; Philemon 1:21).

v. 19 **power** explosive power with miraculous or spectacular evidence. Power in action. A complement to and different from "authority" (exousia), which is the "right to exercise power." Paul's experience of miraculous power authenticated his claims to apostleship and supported his claims that the Gospel was for Gentiles as well as the Jewish nation.

v. 19 **Illyricum** A region lying between Germany and Macedonia, having the Adriatic Sea on one side and the Danube River on the other. This area would be modern day Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia. "Illyricum is not mentioned in Acts or in any of the Pauline letters up to this time. But the interval between the end of Paul's Ephesian ministry and his setting out on his last journey to Jerusalem. while compressed into brief space in Acts 20:1-6 probably covered the best part of two years" (F. F. Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, 247).

v. 21 **Those . . . not told** "Along with the other NT witnesses, Paul identifies the Isaiahic Suffering Servant with Christ. His interest here obviously rests on the message of Isaiah [52:15]. The nations that did not hear will enter into the salvation that the Servant brings. It is this announcement, in its depth and breadth that drives his apostolic mission. All those who have not heard must yet see and understand: the understanding of Yahweh as creator of the nations, prominent in the book of Isaiah, operates in the background. Paul echoes here the theme of the Servant Songs: the Servant is to be a 'light to the nations' (Isa. 42:6-9; 49:6-7; see Acts 13:47). The larger thematic complex of the promise of salvation for the nations that the Lord has made (e.g., Isa. 44:24; 45:12, 18), clearly informs Paul's thought. The pattern of salvation that appears in Isa. 52:15 is fulfilled in Christ" (Mark A Seifrid, "Romans," in *Commentary of the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament*, 68).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

In Romans 15:14, Paul encourages members of the church that they are "...full of goodness, complete in knowledge, and competent to instruct one another." Many times in our parenting we don't feel these things. In fact, we feel downright inadequate. I wasn't raised in a home that attended church. When I had my first child I realized I had no clue how to raise a godly child and moments of inadequacy would cripple me. You know the term "fake it 'till you make it?" That was me. Let me take a moment to pass on a piece of encouragement one of my mentors lovingly gave me. God picked you. Let that sink in a little. The creator of the universe picked you to parent His sweet child. The child that's precious and loving and kind, but sometimes difficult, sometimes headstrong, and sometimes emotionally challenging. God picked you to parent that child. He knows the struggles and challenges you will have in your relationship. He also knows the fun-times and parenting wins that will come your way. He knows what kind of spiritual muscle your child needs to develop, and He picked you to help in the process. If you're feeling inadequate today, tell God. Ask Him to help you see spiritual growth in your child. Ask Him to strengthen your relationship with Him so your relationship with your child will strengthen. I'm praying for you to be "full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct" your child this week.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Ro 15:14-22

1. What does Paul call his friends in the Roman church and how does he encourage them?
2. What was Paul's priestly duty? Why?
3. What does Paul proclaim?

What Do You Think

Why do you think Paul wanted to preach where no one else had preached before?

What R U Going To Do

Is there someone you think might not have heard about Jesus yet? Tell them this week!

Core Comp

Giving Away My Faith – I tell others about Jesus to help with God's work.

Memory Verse

Romans 12:10 – *For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

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30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you Belong, Become, and go Beyond as follower of Jesus Christ through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.