

"Closing Remarks"

Part 4

Romans 15:14-16:27

Introduction: Last week in our study of Romans we were looking at Paul's desire to get to visit with the Roman believers and then travel on to Spain.

➤ **Paul's Plans**

Notice Romans 15:23-28

Before he would travel to Roma however, he would first go to Jerusalem. The saints in Jerusalem were in need of help. They were experiencing deep poverty for several reasons and several other churches had gathered together a contribution for them. Paul's heart was burdened to do all he could to make sure the gift was delivered into their hands. In verse 28 he tells his readers that he was going to "seal to them this fruit". This meant that He would not rest until he successfully and safely delivered the offering to those at Jerusalem.

But to get the gift delivered Paul needed help. In the closing verses of this chapter, he will ask for help from the Romans for this very situation.

➤ **Paul's Plea**

Notice Romans 15:29

Paul had served long enough to know that when a man or a woman walks in the will of God that his or her steps are going to be blessed.

Psalm 37:23-24

²³ *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

²⁴ *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.*

Now in our nation when we think of blessings we think of "material blessings", or we think of "easy/comfortable living". But neither of these are what Paul was speaking about. He was speaking of spiritual blessings. He was speaking of the Lord working through him to advance the spiritual Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

We must understand that a believer can walk in the will of God and experience very difficult living conditions.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28

²³ Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

²⁴ Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

²⁵ Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

²⁶ In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

²⁷ In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

²⁸ Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Paul lived in the will of God and his life was anything but comfortable. We must know and understand that circumstances do not determine the will of God and we can be in the will of God and be covered in spiritual blessings while we are suffering physically.

Let me also remind you that you can be outside the will of God and be flooded with material wealth.

Genesis 12:10-16

¹⁰ And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.

¹¹ And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

¹² Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

¹³ Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

¹⁴ And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

¹⁵ The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

¹⁶ And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.

Notice Romans 15:30

The word "beseech" here means "to call to one's side". So, Paul is calling these believers to come along side of him and to "**STRIVE**" together with him and pray for him.

We need to be sure and consider the word STRIVE here in this verse. Let us notice the words of Warren Wiersbe:

"The words "strive together" ... suggest an athlete giving his best in the contest. Perhaps the words "wrestling together" better express the idea. This same term is used of the praying of Epaphras in Colossians.

Colossians 4:12

¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

This verse in Romans 15 does not mean that we must fight with God to get what we need. Rather, it means our praying must not be a casual experience that has no heart or earnestness. We should put as much fervor into our praying as a wrestler does into his wrestling!"

Too many times believer's prayers are casual and often rushed. We must take the time to STRIVE/WRESTLE in prayer for fellow believers. There are times when a fellow believer is in the heat of the battle and there is so much on the line, it is in these times that we must STRIVE TOGETHER to pray for that person.

Let us notice the words of Morris on STRIVING TOGETHER IN PRAYER.

"There is a very real struggle going on between the forces of good and evil, and a most significant part of that struggle is prayer. Thus E. Stauffer can say, "the form of the battle is prayer. In prayer there is achieved unity between the will of God and that of man, between human struggling and action and effective divine operation. In prayer, too, there is fulfilled the fellowship of conflict and destiny between man and man. In prayer one man becomes the representative of the other, so that there is here opened up the possibility of one standing in the breach for all and all for one". It is this kind of powerful praying for which the apostle looks."

Now as we move on to the next verses, we see what Paul requested prayer for.

Notice Romans 15:31-32

There are three prayer requests in these two verses.

1. He prayed that he would be delivered from the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was a very dangerous place for Paul. The unbelieving Jews hated him for the message which he preached. Let us notice a few verses to see just how dangerous it was for Paul in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:10-15

¹⁰ *And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.*

¹¹ *And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.*

¹² *And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.*

¹³ *Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.*

¹⁴ *And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.*

¹⁵ *And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.*

Be sure to read Acts 21-23 to see just how much danger Paul faced in Jerusalem. Only by the grace of God did he escape with his life.

Acts 22:22

²² *And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.*

Paul mentioned the unbelieving Jews when he wrote to the believers at Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

¹⁴ *For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:*

¹⁵ Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

¹⁶ Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Application:

There are several lessons for us in all of this. One lesson we need to see is that danger should never keep us from walking in the will of God. There are times it is going to be dangerous to walk in obedience to the will of God. It is in those times when we must determine if we are going to be controlled by faith or by fear.

2 Timothy 1:7

⁷ For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Let me remind you of how important it is to walk by faith.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2. He prayed that his delivery of the gift would be delivered and accepted.

Notice Romans 15:31

Paul had a concern that the gift would possibly be rejected by the leadership because it had come from the Gentiles. But when he arrived at Jerusalem the gift and Paul were both accepted by the saints.

Acts 21:17-19

¹⁷ And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

¹⁸ And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

¹⁹ And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

3. He prayed that he would arrive in Rome by the will of God.

Notice Romans 15:31

Each of Paul's prayers were answered. This third prayer was answered in a way that Paul was not expecting. He ended up going to Rome as a prisoner and he was fine with that because he saw it as the will of God.

Philippians 1:12-16, 20

¹² But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

¹³ So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

¹⁴ And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

¹⁶ The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

²⁰ According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

Conclusion:

I have learned in my life that God often answers our prayers in ways that we do not understand or expect. In these times it is my responsibility to strive in prayer and call on you to strive with me and then trust the Lord with what happens. There may be much pain and even danger involved but in the back of my mind I know that His ways are far better than my ways. I have come to know by experience that my God is the God of comfort and hope. I have learned by experience:

Philippians 4:13

¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.