



Group Discussion Guide

Romans 15:14-33

For groups meeting July 19 evening through July 26 morning.

In this second half of Romans 15, Paul moved from instruction in the ways of God to points that were more personal to him. He wanted the believers in Rome to understand that he realized they knew and practiced the ways of God, and they also had the knowledge and ability to teach one another what it meant to follow Jesus (v. 14). His purpose in writing, then, was to boldly proclaim to them reminders of these things so they would not stray from the path (v. 15). Paul also reminded these believers of his calling as “a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles,” to whom he brought the gospel so that they would be saved and therefore “acceptable,” “sanctified by the Holy Spirit,” (v. 16). The apostle understood that the work he did was to be credited to the power of Christ (v. 17). In fact, he said he would only speak of his efforts in seeing the Gentiles converted to following Jesus. In addition, he wrote that their obedience to God seen through their words and actions were attributable to what Christ had done, to the power of God seen through signs and wonders, and to the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts (vs. 18-19). Paul’s desire was to preach the gospel in places where it had not yet been preached, and he quoted Isaiah 52:15 in support of this mindset (vs. 20-21):

The Hebrew text (rendered ‘for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand’) refers to the surprise of nations and their kings when they see the exaltation of the Suffering Servant whom formerly they had despised. The Greek version lends itself well to Paul’s statement of his pioneer policy in preaching the gospel.

F. F. Bruce, Romans: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 6, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 262.

The reason Paul stated for taking so long to get to the believers in Rome was this mission of reaching those who had not yet heard the Gospel (v. 22). As he neared the end of his letter to the Roman church, he declared it was now time for him to come and be with them and spend some time before going to Spain (vs. 23-24). He let them know about his plans to travel to Jerusalem first, so that he could bring a gift to believers there (v. 25). Paul shared that followers of Jesus located in Macedonia and Achaia had collected a monetary gift to be given to those believers in Jerusalem who were in need (v. 26). These Gentile believers felt indebted to the Jerusalem church because they had shared in the Jewish believers’ “spiritual blessings” as recipients of God’s grace through Jesus Christ, the Messiah who came by way of the nation of Israel (v. 27). Paul was very confident in his travel plans and believed he was following what God wanted him to do (v. 29).

Paul closed this section of his letter by asking his readers to specifically pray for him. He called for them to “strive together” in prayer, asking God to keep the apostle safe from those in Jerusalem who would seek to do him harm and to use him to be a blessing to the believers in that area (vs. 30-31). His desire was to come to Rome by the will of God, filled with joy so that he could truly enjoy the company of the believers there (v. 32). He closed this paragraph with a customary prayer, asking God to be with those who would receive his letter (v. 33).

Discussion Questions

1. If Paul was “satisfied about” the believers in Rome, why do you think he took the time to write a bold reminder to send to them? Having read through most of Romans now, what are some things you remember that Paul reminded them of?
2. What are some basic truths that he reminds them of in verses 15-16?
3. Notice how Paul refuses to take credit for his work for God (vs. 17-19). How can we cultivate that same spirit of humility in our own lives?
4. Paul writes that his ambition is to preach the Gospel where people had not yet heard the name of Jesus Christ (v. 20). Do you think this is the model we all should follow? Is there a case to be made for starting works in areas where groups of believers already exist? How do we come to the place of viewing all Gospel works of equal importance?
5. Paul certainly desired to go to Jerusalem, then on to Rome and to Spain. He hoped he would not run into trouble with the religious leaders in Jerusalem and that his visit to Rome would be joyous, and he asked the Roman believers to pray to that end. Do you remember from Acts how this played out? What happened? And how do you think that affected Paul?
6. What do you think it means to “strive together” with someone “in your prayers” (v. 30)? How can we grow in our prayer lives together?