

Romans Part 37 (15:8-19)

Tuesday Night Bible Study, April 8, 2008

--15:14-19: "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. 17 Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. 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 — 19 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.

--"I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you..." (15:15)

--the book of Romans is filled with bold statements about spiritual truths... 10 times Paul presented a rhetorical statement followed by the strongest negative in Greek (*me genoito* which is translated "certainly not!")

--for example: "What shall we say then? [since we are saved by grace and not by works] Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!"

--all occurrences of me genoito in Romans... 3:4, 3:6, 3:31, 6:2, 6:15, 7:7, 7:13, 9:14, 11:1, 11:11

--"as reminding you..."

--it's not enough to just read a book of the Bible once and then file it away in our mind... the Bible is a living, supernatural book... it is literally spiritual food, and just like we need physical food on a daily basis so we need spiritual food!

--Matthew 4:4: "But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

--Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is living and powerful..."

--one key point Paul is making in this section is that his boldness in Romans and his ministry in general was led by the Spirit...

--Paul wasn't being bold in his own personal agenda (like many preachers today, especially televangelists)... but rather He was bold in the words that God called him to speak.

--in the first verse of Romans Paul introduced himself as a "bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle..."

--"mighty signs and wonders..." (15:19) was one evidence that Paul's preaching was led by the Spirit...

--Hebrews 2:4 states that God confirmed the gospel "with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will."

--one reason we don't see as many miracles today is because we have the New Testament Bible to confirm the gospel, and just like it was "according to His own will" to use signs and wonders for confirmation in the first century church now it is "according to His own will" to use the Bible for confirmation.

--2 Cor 12:12-13: "Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds."

--Acts 19:11: "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul..."

--the most important evidence that Paul's teaching was led by the Spirit was his reliance upon Scripture (the Old Testament)...

--the confirmation of signs and wonders without the confirmation of Scripture is meaningless!

--the Bible repeatedly warns about false teachers also performing signs and wonders, but they are "lying signs and wonders" because the teaching that accompanies them contradicts Scripture.

--2 Thess 2:8-12: "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

--Jesus warned, "For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect—if that were possible. So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time." (Mark 13:22-23, NIV)

--Paul constantly pointed to Scripture as evidence to support his teaching.

--for example... Acts 17:2-3: "As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. 'This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,' he said."

--in Romans 15:9-12 Paul presents 4 more Old Testament passages to support one of the central themes in Romans about how God's plan of salvation was never limited only to Jews but always included Gentiles. (see section on next page)

--Luke, who accompanied Paul on his mission trips, commended those who didn't just take his word for it but studied the Old Testament passages to verify that what Paul said was true...

--Acts 17:11: "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."

--another evidence that Paul's teaching was led by the Spirit was the humility in Paul's life...

--in Romans 15:15 Paul wrote that he was engaged in his present ministry activity of writing the book of Romans "because of the grace given to me by God..." In writing this he was expressing how his ministry was totally dependent on God - on "the grace given to me by God."

--2 Corinthians 1:8-10: "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

--only through the power of the Holy Spirit could Paul abandon the prestige and comfort of his Jewish heritage and enter a life of constant suffering in order to preach the gospel!

--Paul was so sensitive to his dependence on God that he would "not dare to speak of [*boast about*] any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me." (15:17-18)

--Galatians 6:14: "God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

--15:8-13: "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, 9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: " For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name." 10 And again he says: "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!" 11 And again: "Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!" 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." 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."

--in this section Paul addresses the conflict between Jewish and Gentile Christians one last time.

--it was natural for Jewish Christians in the first century to be prejudiced against Gentile Christians because many Jewish religious leaders taught that God's plan never included Gentiles or that salvation for Gentiles was an afterthought.

--in ch. 14 Paul touched on the conflict between Gentile and Jewish Christians about the role of the obsolete ceremonial law in the Christian life... many Gentile Christians had a poor attitude towards Jewish Christians because they had a hard time letting go of the ceremonial law.

--in verses 9-12 Paul addresses the Jewish misunderstanding about Gentiles by adding four more Old Testament passages to those already quoted throughout Romans to prove how Gentiles have always been a central part of God's plan of salvation.

--15:9: 'For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.'
--quote from Psalm 18:49

--15:10-11: "'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!' And again: 'Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!'"
--quote from Deuteronomy 32:43

--15:11: "And again: "Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!"
--quote from Psalm 117:1

--15:12: "And again, Isaiah says: 'There shall be a root of Jesse [*Christ who descended from Jesse, King David's father*]; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope."

--quote from Isaiah 11:1,10

--passage clearly states that the long awaited Messiah will reign over Gentiles and He will also be their hope, thus fulfilling the original promise to Abraham that through his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed. (Genesis 26:4)

--in verse 8 Paul points out that Christ Himself lived under the ceremonial law ("was a servant to the circumcision") in order to help the Gentile Christians better appreciate the strategic purpose of the ceremonial law...

--a better appreciation for the ceremonial law would help them better relate to the Jewish Christians who had a hard time letting go of the ceremonial law.

--Christ "become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers..." (15:8)

--Christ came to institute the New Covenant but He first lived under the Old Covenant and perfectly fulfilled the Old Covenant, thus confirming and completing what God had already revealed.

--Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..."

--Christ took on the role of the high priest (to act as an intermediary between people and the Father in heaven) and He also became the final sacrifice for our sins.

--Hebrews 9:11-12: "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

--two key aspects of the New Covenant:

--God's plan of salvation reaches the entire world, both Jew and Gentile.

--we can worship God anywhere "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24) because we're dependent on the sacrifice of Christ which transcends time and space rather than being dependent on the confines of the ceremonial law that were merely a symbolic foreshadow of Christ.

--rather than focusing on their differences and petty disagreements the Gentile and Jewish Christians should focus on the incredible reality of our salvation in Christ and together "abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (15:13)

--and the same is true for all Christians across all social and political barriers.

--"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." (Romans 15:13)