

**“Our Pride & Joy”**  
**Romans 15:18-21**

**Introduction:**

1. Remember When:
  - You Would Look At Pictures:
    - Not On Your Phone:
      - But In An Album Or A Scrapbook?
        - I’m Sure Most Of You Probably Have:
          - Some Of Those Lying Around:
            - At Home Somewhere!
  - But - Especially For Grandparents:
    - Any Time A New Member:
      - Was Added To The Family:
        - So Was Their Picture:
          - In What Was Often Described As:
            - Their “Pride Book!”
  - Because - In That Book:
    - They Could Look At:
      - Any Time They Wanted To:
        - Their “Pride & Joy!”
          - Their Grandchildren!
  - And - Of Course:
    - There’s Nothing Wrong With That!
      - Because Your Children & Grandchildren:
        - **Are** A Gift From God - And:
          - **Ought** To Give You Some Pride & Joy!
2. But - What Brings You:
  - Your Greatest Pride & Joy?
    - For A Lot Of People:
      - The Answer To This Question:
        - Is Exclusively In:
          - People - Like Family! Or:
            - Places - Like Their Homes! Or:
              - Even Other Things:
                - That They Treasure!
  - And - We Certainly Can Rejoice In & Be Thankful:
    - For The Relationships & Material Things:
      - God Has Blessed Us With!
        - Because - He Truly Does:
          - “Give Us Richly All Things To Enjoy!” (1 Timothy 6:17)
  - But - What Should Be:
    - Our **Greatest** Pride & Joy:
      - As Christians?
  - Well - This Is The Question:
    - That We Will Consider:
      - As We Return To Our Study Through Romans:
        - And Romans 15 - So:
          - Please Turn There With Me In Your Bibles This Morning!
  - Where - In 15:17-21:
    - I Think The Apostle Paul:
      - Makes It Pretty Clear:
        - What The Terms Of:
          - Our Greatest Pride & Joy & Glory:
            - Should Be!
3. Because - Picking Up:
  - In The Last Verse We Considered Last Week:
    - 15:17 - Paul Writes:

- "I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God!"
  - So Here - Paul Says:
    - I Have Something To Glory In!
    - I Have Something:
      - That Is My Pride & Joy!
  - But His Pride & Joy:
    - Wasn't Primarily In:
      - Material Things - But:
        - "In Those Things Which Pertain To God!" - And Especially:
          - "In Jesus Christ!"
  - The Lord Jesus Christ:
    - Was Paul's Greatest Pride & Joy!
      - After All - It Was Jesus:
        - Who Saved Paul, Sent Paul, And Blessed Paul - All:
          - Because Of His Amazing Grace!
          - And Paul Never Got Over This!
    - And So - Jesus Christ:
      - Was All Of Paul's Glory!
        - And - This Should Be True:
          - For You & Me This Morning:
            - As Well! Is It?
    - Is Jesus Christ:
      - Your Greatest Pride & Joy?
        - Well - As We Look At The Next Four Verses - We Will See:
          - Why He Can Be & Should Be!
    - Because - In 15:18-21 - Paul Continues:
      - "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, / Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. / Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: / But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand!"

4. In These Verses:
- We Find The Terms Of Our Greatest Pride & Joy As Christians!
    - Our Greatest Pride & Joy & Glory:
      - Is To Remain In:
        - Jesus Christ & His Gospel!
    - And This Morning, We Will Look At:
      - Three Reasons Why:
        - We Can Glory In Him!

\* The First Reason Is:

**1. The Success Of The Gospel!**

- In 15:18 - Paul Writes:
  - "For I Will Not Dare To Speak Of Any Of Those Things Which Christ Hath Not Wrought!"
    - In English - The Use Of Double Negatives:
      - Often Makes It Hard For Us:
        - To Really Grasp What Paul Is Saying & Emphasizing Here!
    - But - Just Like In Math:
      - Where Two Negatives Make A Positive:
        - That Happens In This Verse As Well!
    - What Paul Is Saying Is This:
      - "I Will **Only** Speak Of Those Things That **Christ** Has Done!"
        - Why? Because Only What Christ Does Really Matters:
          - And Will Last!
      - Ecclesiastes 3:14 - "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever!"
  - And So - Paul's Greatest Pride & Joy:
    - Was Not **His** Work - But:

- The Work Of His Savior!
  - The Work *Of Christ!*
- Because - Paul Understood That:
  - Even Though God May Have Used Him:
    - To Accomplish Many Things:
      - Yet - Paul Would Say In 1 Corinthians 15:10 - "Yet Not I!"
- Anything He Accomplished *For* Christ:
  - Was The Accomplishment:
    - *Of* Christ!
      - It Was *His* Work! And:
        - He Deserved All The Credit & All The Glory!
- So - Any Success Of The Gospel:
  - Was & Still Is The Work Of Christ:
    - And Ought To Be:
      - Our Pride & Joy!
  - But - What Does:
    - The Work Of Christ Entail?
      - In The Rest Of This Verse Paul Describes:
- His Chosen Instruments!
  - 15:18 - "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed!"
    - Once Again Paul Expresses:
      - The Great Privilege He Had:
        - To Be Included In:
          - The Work Of Christ!
    - "By Me" - He Says!
      - Paul Never Got Over The Fact That:
        - God Chose Him:
          - To Work Both *In & Through!*
    - And That Is Why:
      - He Wanted All Of The Glory & All Of The Credit:
        - To Go To The Lord!
  - But Then - How Did The Lord Use Paul?
    - The Phrase - "By Word And Deed" Is Best Connected To Paul - And Shows:
      - That Christ's Work Started:
        - With Him!
    - Before - His Words & Deeds:
      - Were Opposed To The Lord - But Now:
        - They Were Transformed By The Lord - And:
          - Could Be Used By The Lord:
            - To Accomplish His Work!
  - What A Privilege!
    - And What Is True About Paul:
      - Is Also True About You:
        - And Every Other Christian!
    - God Has Chosen You & Transformed You:
      - So That Your Words & Your Deeds:
        - May Be His Tools In Service To:
          - The Greatest Work In All Of The World!
  - And This:
    - Ought To Be:
      - Our Greatest Pride & Joy!
        - But We Also See In 15:18:
- His Chosen Intent!
  - What Is The Work That Christ "Wrought?"
    - "To Make The Gentiles Obedient!"
      - Obedient & Submissive:
        - To The Faith Of The Gospel!

- Back In 1:5 - Paul Described His Calling:
  - In A Similar Way:
    - “By whom [Christ] we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name!”
- The Great Work Of Jesus Christ:
  - Is & Has Always Been:
    - To Bring Sinners:
      - To Salvation & Sanctification:
        - Through The Gospel!
  - Even Jesus Said In:
    - Luke 5:32 - “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance!”
  - His Intent Was - As Peter Once Put It:
    - To Make Those Who:
      - “In Time Past Were Not A People” To Become “The People Of God!” And:
    - To Bring Mercy To Those:
      - “Which Had Not Obtained Mercy!” (1 Peter 2:10)
- What A Goal! What An Intent!
  - And This Too:
    - Ought To Be:
      - Our Greatest Pride & Joy!
        - That Christ’s Greatest Work Is A Saving Work!
  - And - He Even Includes Us:
    - In That Work!
      - But Then - We See In 15:19:
- His Chosen Impulse!
  - The Power He Used:
    - To Accomplish His Work!
      - “Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God!”
        - During The Period Of The Apostles - Christ Used In Unique Ways:
  - The Power Of Signs!
    - The Power Of Miracles - Which Were:
      - Not Primarily The Work Of Paul - But:
        - The Work Of Christ:
          - In & Through Paul!
    - These “Signs & Wonders” Were Used:
      - For The Attention:
        - Of Those Who Saw Them!
          - To Produce “Wonder” In Them About The “Wonderful Works Of God!” (Acts 2:11)
        - But They Were Also Used:
      - For The Authenticity:
        - Of The Messenger & Message:
          - Of God!
    - Paul Is Not Boasting:
      - About **His** Ability - But About:
        - **God’s** Ability To Do These Mighty Works!
          - And So - It Was To The Lord He Gave All The Glory!
      - But The Lord Also Chose To Work Through:
    - The Power Of The Spirit!
      - “By The Power Of The Spirit Of God!” (5:19)
        - The Work Of Christ & The Success Of The Gospel Is:
          - A Fully Divine Endeavor!
    - God The Father, God The Son, And God The Holy Spirit:
      - Are “All In” To Bring Success:
        - To The Gospel - And:
          - To Prove That The Very Source Of The Gospel Message:
            - Is In Heaven Itself!
  - And This Is Why:

- Any & All Success Of The Gospel:
  - Ought To Be:
    - Our Greatest Pride & Joy!
      - Even As The Psalmist Says:
        - Psalm 118:23 - "This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes!"
- So - As God's Chosen Instruments:
  - In The Greatest Work Of All Time:
    - We Have Something & Someone:
      - To Celebrate & Glory In!
        - The Lord & Him Alone!
  - And - If There Is Any Success:
    - In The Gospel:
      - It Is Not Our Accomplishment:
        - But Christ's! "To Him Be Glory Both Now And Forever! Amen!" (2 Peter 3:18)
- So - The First Reason:
  - We Can & Ought To Have Christ:
    - As Our Greatest Pride & Joy Is:
      - The Success Of The Gospel:
        - And How He Has Chosen To Accomplish His Work!

\* The Second Reason Is:

## 2. ***The Spread Of The Gospel!***

- Which Is What We Find Next In:
  - 5:19b - "So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ!"
    - Here - Paul Admits That:
      - Not Only Is Jesus The Source:
        - Of The Success Of The Gospel!
      - He Is Also The Source:
        - For The Spread Of The Gospel!
    - Even Though Paul Traveled Many Miles:
      - On Many Missionary Journeys:
        - For The Lord - Just Look At Your Maps!
          - It Wasn't His Work:
            - It Was Christ's Work!
              - Need To See This In Our Own "Travels!"
      - But We Can See That:
    - The Breadth Of Its Spread:
      - Was The Work Of Christ!
        - When Paul Writes - "From Jerusalem, And Round About Unto Illyricum" - He Encompasses:
          - His Entire Itinerary:
            - Since He Was Commissioned By Christ Through The Church:
              - To Minister The Gospel Of God!
        - Jerusalem Was:
          - Likely The Furthest South-East:
            - His Ministry Took Him - Whereas:
              - Illyricum Was:
                - Likely The Furthest North-West!
            - Illyricum - Roman Province:
              - Included Modern Day Albania & Former Yugoslavia!
          - And "Round About" Is His Way Of Describing:
            - All The Rest Of His Journeys:
              - In The Book Of Acts!
          - And - Remember What Paul Faced:
            - As He Traveled "Round About?"
              - In A Word - "Perils!"

- 2 Corinthians 11:26 - "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!"
- But - For Paul - It Was "Worth It All":
  - Because He Knew That Jesus Christ:
    - Was Still At Work:
      - In The Spreading Of The Gospel:
        - To All Of The World!
- But We Can Also See That:
  - The Depth Of Its Spread:
    - Was The Work Of Christ!
      - In 5:19b - Paul Adds:
        - "I Have Fully Preached The Gospel Of Christ!"
    - This First Means That:
      - Wherever The Lord Sent Him:
        - He Held Nothing Back!
          - To The Ephesian Elders He Said In Acts 20:20-21 - "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, / Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ!"
      - Can You Say This?
    - But - This Also Meant That:
      - When Paul Left A Certain Area:
        - He Left Content That:
          - He Did All He Was Called To Do!
      - Because - He Knew That:
        - Even When He Left:
          - The Power Of The Gospel:
            - Would Continue To Do Its Work!
        - Can You Do This?
      - Because - It Wasn't Primarily:
        - Paul's Work & It Isn't Primarily:
          - Your Work - But:
            - Christ's Work!
  - And This Is Why:
    - The Spread Of The Gospel:
      - In Any Place & To Any Degree:
        - Can & Ought To Be:
          - Our Greatest Pride & Joy!
      - Even As The Psalmist Says:
        - Psalm 118:23 - "This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes!"
    - So - As God's Chosen Instruments / Tools:
      - In The Greatest Work Of All Time:
        - We Have Something & Someone:
          - To Celebrate & Glory In!
            - The Lord & Him Alone!
      - And - If There Is Any Spread:
        - Of The Gospel:
          - It Is Not Our Accomplishment:
            - But Christ's! "To Him Be Glory Both Now And Forever!" (2 Peter 3:18)
      - So - We Can & Ought To Have Christ:
        - As Our Greatest Pride & Joy Because Of:
          - First - The Success Of The Gospel!
          - Second - The Spread Of The Gospel!

\* And Third - Because Of:

### 3. *The Strivings For The Gospel!*

- Which We Find In 15:20-21:
  - “Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation: / But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand!”
    - Paul Had A Great Burden:
      - For Bringing The Gospel Of Christ:
        - To The People & Places:
          - “Not Where Christ Was Named!”
  - And So - That Is Why:
    - To **Those** People & In **Those** Places:
      - He “Strived To Preach The Gospel!”
        - To “Strive” Here Means:
          - That He Had A:
- Strong Spiritual Ambition:
  - To Do This Work For Christ!
    - The Word Translated “Strive” In This Verse:
      - Is Also Translated “Labor” In Another!
        - 2 Corinthians 5:9 - “Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him!”
  - So - Just Because The Gospel:
    - Is Christ’s Work - Doesn’t Mean:
      - That It Can’t Also Be:
        - Our Work!
    - Because - This Kind Of Spiritual Ambition:
      - Is A Good Kind & A Godly Kind!
        - And So - Like Paul:
          - In Christ’s Work We Ought To “Strive!”
  - Strive With A Passion:
    - From Christ - And:
      - Strive With Persistence:
        - For Christ!
          - But - Again - Not For Our Credit Or Glory:
            - But For His!
  - This Spiritual Ambition Caused Paul To Say:
    - In 1 Corinthians 9:16 - “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”
      - And This Strong Spiritual Ambition:
        - Gave Paul Also A:
- Strong Spiritual Aspiration!
  - Which Was:
    - 15:20 - “To preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation!”
      - Paul Had A Great Desire:
        - To Be A Gospel Pioneer!
          - **IE:** Genealogy!
  - And - This Was According To:
    - His Own Calling:
      - To Be An Apostle To All Of The Gentiles:
        - And Not Just A Pastor / Shepherd:
          - Over Just A Single Congregation!
  - There Was & Still Is:
    - Nothing Wrong With Building “Upon Another Man’s Foundation!”
      - In A Sense - That’s What We Are All Called To Do!
        - Because - While Some Plant The Seed, Others Come Along To Water The Seed, While It Is God Who Gives The Increase! (1 Corinthians 3:6)
  - So - This Was A Unique Desire & Aspiration:
    - For Paul - But It Was:

- A Desire With A:
- Strong Scriptural Application!
  - Which Is Why Paul Goes On:
    - In 15:21 - To Quote From:
      - Isaiah 52:15 - "But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand!"
  - You See - Since The Work We Do:
    - As Christians & As A Church:
      - Is Not Primarily **Our** Work:
        - But **Christ's** - We Are Not To Go About That Work:
          - In Just Any Way That We Please!
  - **IE**: Some Have Attempted To Do God's Work Their Own Way - Which Is Really An Expression Of Pride On Their Part - Even If Done With What Seems To Be The Right Motives!
    - Paul Reveals Here That:
      - God's Own Book Reveals God's Own Burdens!
        - And If Our Vision For Ministry Do Not Align God's Vision:
          - Then It Becomes Our Work & Not Christ's!
  - So - Paul's Pioneer Spirit:
    - Was Based On God's Pioneering Plan:
      - To Bring Christ To:
        - Those Who Never Heard About Him - Until:
          - He Was Brought To Them!
  - This Is Why - In Our Own Service:
    - We Desire & Aspire To Share The Gospel:
      - To Children:
        - In Sunday School & Junior Church & Good News Clubs!
    - Because This Is Christ's Own Burden:
      - As Recorded For Us In Luke 18:16 - "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God!"
- And When Our Burdens Align With God's Burdens:
  - We Can Be Confident That:
    - Our Own Strivings For & Labor In The Gospel:
      - Is Of & From The Lord!
        - Its His Work In Us - And Thus:
          - Can & Ought To Be:
            - Our Greatest Pride & Joy!

### **Conclusion:**

1. So - As God's Chosen Instruments / Tools:
  - In The Greatest Work Of All Time:
    - We Have Something & Someone:
      - To Celebrate & Glory In!
        - The Lord & Him Alone!
2. And - If There Is:
  - Any Success:
    - In The Gospel Work!
      - Any Spread Of It:
        - Or Even - Any:
          - Striving For It!
  - It Is Not Because:
    - Of Anything We Have Done:
      - But Because Of:
        - What Christ Has Done!
    - It His Work!
      - It Is His Doing!
        - And - Again - As The Psalmist Says:
          - "It is marvellous in our eyes!"
3. What Is Your Greatest Pride & Joy This Morning?



- May It Be:
  - The Work Of Christ:
    - Through His Gospel - And:
      - For His Glory:
        - Alone!

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