

Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
Wednesday Sermon

Date: December 15, 2021

Text: Romans 15:23-33

Scripture Reading: Romans 15:23-33

Subject: Paul's journey and prayer request

In verses 14 through 22 of this 15th chapter, we considered these things:

1. The ministry of the apostle Paul and of his writing to the saints in Rome in a rather bold manner since he was the apostle to the gentiles.
2. How that Paul spoke of the ministry that the LORD has allowed him to fulfil and would not speak of the work of others.
3. How that he endeavored to go where the gospel had not yet been preached.
4. That he had fully preached the gospel in the entire known world about the Mediterranean from Jerusalem to Illyricum including Asia Minor and Achaia – and that done when most travel was done by walking from place to place.

Now, we come to chapter 15, verses 22 through 33 which relate Paul's plans for his journeys and also request that others pray for him.

Romans 15:22 (KJV) *For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.*

It is clear that Paul had a great desire to see the saints in Rome so that he could impart to them some spiritual gift and preach the gospel to them. His work in the great circle around the Mediterranean Sea beginning in Jerusalem westward had taken him to the borders of Illyricum and all points east, north, and south. He had been too occupied with fully preaching the gospel in this area

to even make an effort to go to Rome.

Romans 15:23 (KJV) *But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;*

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But now having no more place in these parts, -- This means that he considered his work completed in that area. Paul evidently wrote this letter to the saints in Rome from Corinth where he was hosted by Gaius. (Romans 16:23)

Romans 16:23 (KJV) *Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.*

And having a great desire these many years to come unto you; -- We read of Paul's great desire to come to Rome to see the saints and impart to them some spiritual gift in the 1st chapter of this letter to the Romans:

Romans 1:8-13 (KJV) *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; 10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. 13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.*

Romans 1:15-16 (KJV) So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. **16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Romans 15:24 (KJV) *Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.*

Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: -- We see from this that it was in Paul's mind to go to Spain. We are told by historians that, at this time, both Spain and Portugal were one entity and were under control of the Roman Empire. We have no biblical evidence that Paul actually took his journey to Spain, though we all understand that every journey of Paul is most certainly not included in scripture.

For I trust to see you in my journey, -- His purpose was to go to Spain, but by way of Rome. He would see the Romans saints, according to his plan, which probably didn't materialize.

And to be brought on my way thitherward by you, -- Again, this was his thinking. He would be helped on his way to Spain by the saints at Rome. The help of the churches must have been a great blessing to Paul and others, in that they provided the material needs and probably provided some measure of safety for them. Brothers and sisters, it was dangerous in that part of the world at this time:

2 Corinthians 11:26-27 (KJV) *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.

If first I be somewhat filled with your company. – He was thinking that before he continued on his journey to Spain, he would be “somewhat filled with” the company of the saints in Rome. The company of the saints would help him, encourage him, and strengthen him spiritually while he heard them, talked with them, and saw their order and worship. It was not what we would call a total filling with their company but somewhat; in other words, he would profit and could enjoy the time with them.

Romans 15:25 (KJV) *But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.*

But now... That is, he was going to leave Corinth and being accompanied with others would take the offering of the churches to the poor saints in Judaea.

1 Corinthians 16:1-4 (KJV) *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 3 And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. 4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.*

Romans 15:26-27 (KJV) *For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. 27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.*

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 8 & 9

Romans 15:28 (KJV) *When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.*

We understand this to be Paul's plan – that after he had taken the offering to the poor saints in Jerusalem, he would come by the saints in Rome on his way to Spain.

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Romans 15:29 (KJV) *And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*

The apostle Paul wasn't mistaken in this confidence, though his visit to Rome was in very different circumstances from what he expected. The fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ is good news indeed both for the quickened sinner and for the saint. Hallelujah!

Acts 28:16-31 (KJV) *And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. **17** And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. **18** Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. **19** But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. **20** For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. **21** And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came*

*shewed or spake any harm of thee. **22** But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against. **23** And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. **24** And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. **25** And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, **26** Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: **27** For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. **28** Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. **29** And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. **30** And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, **31** Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.*

Romans 15:30 (KJV) *Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;*

Paul asks for the prayers of the Roman Saints that His purpose and plan be fulfilled. He was definitely going to Rome, but the

circumstances are not as he had hoped. Upon Paul's going to Jerusalem, he was ill-treated unto death by the unbelieving Jews as he arrived to bring alms and offerings to his brethren, the poor saints of Judaea as he told Felix later when he was brought before him in Caesarea:

Acts 24:16-18 (KJV) *[Paul to the governor, Felix] And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. 17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. 18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.*

As we all remember, Paul appeared before Felix; then before the governor Festus; then before king Agrippa, who hearing Paul with Festus present said this:

Acts 26:31-32 (KJV) *And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.*

Therefore, having appeared to "stand at Caesar's seat" as Paul said, he was sent to Rome to stand before the emperor.

Romans 15:31 (KJV) *That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;*

Here are the specifics of his need for which he asks prayer. He is going to Jerusalem to minister to the poor saints and to seal this offering to them. He knows there are many in Jerusalem who will oppose him with violent measures and he prays to be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea. Moreover, he prays the saints will readily accept the offering of the churches.

Romans 15:32 (KJV) *That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.*

More of his prayer request – that He may come unto the saints in Rome with joy by the will of God and that the saints may be refreshed by Paul's visit with them. He wants to be a mutual blessing.

Romans 15:33 (KJV) *Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

It is amazing in this chapter that we have read of the God of patience and consolation (comfort, encouragement) (15:5); the God of hope (15:13); and the God of peace in Rom. 15:33. He prays that the God of peace be with all the saints in Rome.

As we can see from our study of this section of scripture, Paul's heart had devised his way, but the Lord directed his steps – as the LORD always does for his children. Paul had purposed to go to Spain by way of Rome. He did go to Rome, but not in the manner he had envisioned in his thinking.

Proverbs 16:9 (KJV) *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*

Proverbs 16:1 (KJV) *The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.*

Proverbs 20:24 (KJV) *Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?*

Jeremiah 10:23 (KJV) *O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*