



God's Call and Gospel Ministry

Romans 15:14-21

Main Idea: Whatever is accomplished through ministry is only by the grace and power of God!

Gospel ministry is about God working to sanctify his church by his grace (14-16).

- *A healthy church is full of the Spirit, filled with knowledge, and able to teach one another God's Word (14).*
- *A faithful minister of the gospel serves by grace, speaks truth with boldness, and trusts the Lord to sanctify his church (15-16).*

When Paul considered all that he knew and had heard about the church in Rome, he summarized the church in this incredibly encouraging way in verse 14: "...you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another." What a great description of a healthy church! First, a healthy church is one that is full of the Spirit. How do we know that this is the intent of verse 14? We know it because of Romans 1-3: There's no-one who is good (Romans 3:10-12)! In fact, when Jesus was called good, he responded in Mark 10:18 with a rhetorical question that revealed the truth of his identity, saying "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." For a sinner to be filled with goodness, they must be filled with the very presence of the Lord! Second, a healthy church is one that is filled with knowledge. This knowledge is connected to God's Word because its purpose is connected to the church being able to teach one another. In other words, a healthy church is built up and grounded in God's Word so that it can continue to do the work of the church in making disciples. Paul was grateful for the condition of the Roman church, but he was also faithful to his call to be a minister of the gospel to the church. The church in Rome may have been filled with knowledge, but they still needed to be reminded of the gospel. Paul wrote with boldness because of his confidence in the truth of God's Word. He reminded the church in Roman of things they needed to know and to do by faith because Paul trusted the Lord to sanctify his church. Paul knew that if he fulfilled God's call, God would work through his gospel ministry to build his church because gospel ministry is about God working to sanctify his church by his grace.

1. Discuss each characteristic of the Roman church that Paul provides in verse 14. Why are these important characteristics for a healthy church? How do you see these characteristics in your church?
2. Discuss each characteristic of a faithful ministry that Paul connects to his ministry in verses 15-16. Where does Paul's boldness come from? What is Paul's desire for the Roman church through the reminder that he gave in this letter?
3. Use the BlueLetterBible app to do a word study of "sanctified" in verse 16. What does this word mean? Discuss what it means to be sanctified *by the Holy Spirit*.
4. How do these verses help you think about the work of your elders in the church? How can you pray for them in their work in gospel ministry?
5. How do these verses help you think about God's desire for your church? How can you pray for the church to grow in these characteristics of a healthy church?



A faithful gospel ministry is one that fulfills God's call and gives God all the glory (17-19).

- *In a faithful gospel ministry, there's a reason to be proud of the work of the gospel that's been done (17).*
- *In a faithful gospel ministry, give God all the glory for anything that's accomplished (18-19).*

As Paul thought about the ministry that the Lord gave him, he had a reason to be proud of his work for God. A faithful gospel ministry is one that fulfills God's call, and Paul had done that. He had been faithful to God's call. He had gone where the Lord sent him. He had preached the gospel to those the Lord put in his path. He had labored and taught to build up the church and to raise up elders to shepherd the flock of God, so there was much to be proud of in the work of the gospel that Paul had done. Yet, at the same time, Paul understood that the results of his work were only by the grace of God given to him and by the power of God at work through him. Paul was proud of his work, but he had no room to boast except in Christ alone. In faithful gospel ministry, this is always the case. One can have a reason to be proud of the work of the gospel that's been done, but all the glory for what's accomplished belongs to God and God alone. What a wonderful and important reminder! Faithful gospel ministry is a ministry that fulfills God's call and gives God all the glory.

1. Read verse 17. To have a reason to be proud of your work for the Lord, you have to know what that work is! What is God's call – his work – for your life right now?
2. When you consider your work for the Lord, what gives you reason to be proud of that work?
3. Rather than pride in yourself, how should you give God all the glory for whatever has been accomplished through your work? Take time to do this right now with your group.

Gospel ministry includes God's call to send some to those who have never heard (20-21).

While Paul had fulfilled his ministry "from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum," his heart was still set on reaching the Gentiles who had never heard the gospel. This was his call. It was the unique grace of God given to him in his gospel ministry, and although Paul could have been satisfied with the work that had been done from Jerusalem to Illyricum, he desired to press on and continue in the work of the gospel among the Gentiles. His hope was that the Lord would use him to continue to take the gospel to those who had never heard. He longed to continue to be used by the Lord, and his heart was given to God's call in his life!

1. Do you have the desire to do what God's called you to do? What are things that sometimes impact that desire in a negative way? How does the church – and letting others know what God's call in your life is – help you protect and cultivate your heart for God's call in your life?
2. Is God calling you to reach those who have never heard? If "yes," how are you pursuing this call? If you aren't sure, share this with your group and your pastors, and allow others to join you in prayer over this possible call in your life.