

# ***“Five Key Elements of Ministry!”***

***Romans 15:14-24***

**Intro.** – A key word in the last 2 chapters of Romans is *ministry*. Paul, under God’s inspiration used several forms of this word (e.g. minister, serve, servant, deacon, serving, service and ministering) = related to *ministry*.

As already mentioned, the last two chapters of Romans deal with ministry. The first eight chapters deal with *grace* (everything God has done for us to save us). Thus, the main feature of *ministry* simply put is a proper response to God’s *grace*. Let me illustrate what I mean.

I read this past week of a strange sign that was on the desk of a Pentagon official. In bold lettering it said: **THE SECRECY OF MY JOB DOES NOT PERMIT ME TO KNOW WHAT I AM DOING.** That sign is very similar to another sign I read about that should be hung in all Christians’ homes: **THE SACREDNESS OF MY JOB DOES NOT PERMIT ME TO KNOW WHAT I AM DOING.** It’s kind of like the words of Sonny Jurgensen when he was quarterback of the Washington Redskins. He was being attacked by fans and sportswriters alike as the Redskins were in a slump. Somebody asked him if all that flack was getting to him. He flashed a big toothless grin and said, “Naw, not me. I’ve been in the game long enough to know that every week the quarterback is either in the penthouse or the outhouse.”

Brethren and friend, that certainly applies to ministry. All who claim Christ as Lord and Savior is in the ministry. You are a *minister* if you are a Christian. Our text gives five key elements of ministry. The review and study of these elements will help and encourage our more faithful participation when it comes to *ministry*:

*Purpose: to look at five key elements of ministry*

## **I MINISTRY BEGINS WITH GRACE (vv 14-15)**

### **A. Saul of Tarsus Received Grace**

1. As Saul, the crusading Pharisee/rabbi, he knew nothing of God’s grace...
2. Saul persecuted the Church and sought to destroy it...
3. Saul had the risen Lord appear to him on the road to Damascus... not forgiven sins there... Acts 9 and 22 say otherwise... 3 days of fasting and prayer (Acts 22:16) came moment grace received!
4. 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 = Popeye text of Bible *“For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.”*

### **B. We Can Receive Grace**

1. Grace is what *saves* = saved BY grace, THRU faith, AT baptism = not a creed but is a summary to Romans 1-8; Ephesians 2; Colossians 2...
2. Grace is what *moves* and *motivates* – Ephesians 2:10 *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*
3. This is why there’s urgency to preach and teach Jesus (Bible School, Bible Study, youth matters etc.)... that people be brought to realization they need a Savior, and that Savior (Jesus) can and must be served as Lord!
4. Show me a church family who understands grace, is saved by it and growing in it... I’ll show you a church family *motivated* unto ministry!
5. People growing in the “grace & knowledge of Christ” = ministry in its purest form!

Saved by grace, through faith, at baptism FOR MINISTRY!

## **II MINISTRY IS CENTERED IN THE GOSPEL (v 16)**

### **A. Paul Was a Minister of the Gospel**

1. Romans 1:16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”*
2. What a wonderful gift! Paul is saying he is personally *constrained* by Gospel – 1 Corinthians 9:16 *“Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel...”*

3. This is what moved and motivated Paul to be the Apostle of the Gentiles

B. We too Are Ministers of the Gospel

1. 2 Corinthians 5:14 “*For the love of Christ controls (constrains) us...*”
2. Understanding the Gospel (completeness, openness, and necessity of Gospel) causes you/me to seek and fulfill ministry. This as opposed to self-exaltation, satisfaction, comfort or notarization...
3. Ministry is always focused on the Gospel (i.e. death, burial & resurrection of Christ) & not on us!
4. As John the Baptizer said, John 3:30 “*He must increase and we must decrease.*”

The HEART of ministry is always centered in the Gospel!!

### III MINISTRY IS FOR GOD’S GLORY (v 17)

A. Paul Gloried Only in the Cross

1. Talk about a man who had reason to “boast” in the flesh – Philippians 3:4ff “*...if anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more...*”
2. Galatians 6:14 “*But may it never be that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
3. 1 Corinthians 10:31-22 “*Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God... not seeking my own profit, but, the profit of the many, that they may be saved.*”
4. Note: Paul not bragging about his ministry, but is boasting about what the Lord has done for him and through him...
5. Paul didn’t serve/suffer make a name for himself... had a much higher purpose = bring glory to God!

B. We Must Glory Only in the Cross

- Illus. – know a preacher preaching today, why? Because of \$... or make name for himself... One reason = glory in the Cross of Christ!
- 1. Ministry (which includes worship & service) is **always** for Him first. Fellowship and help for ourselves and each other is secondary at best...
- 2. Word of caution – “No one ministry is more important than another...” The temptation to do so is always there and you know who is behind that!

Say it again, ministry is always for God’s glory, and not for our own!

### IV MINISTRY IS BY GOD’S POWER (vv 18-19)

A. Paul Was Empowered by God

1. Empowered by God’s Spirit, Paul was able to share God’s Word resulting in the *obedience* of Gentiles... something greater than a miracle...
2. Numerous occasions, Paul makes clear it was not his wisdom, ingenuity, strength, speech etc.; instead, it was always God empowering Paul and others!
3. 2 Corinthians 12:10 “*Therefore, I am well content with weaknesses, insults, distresses, persecutions, difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*”

B. We Can be Empowered by God

1. Note: *can* = left up to us – at our disposal is the Creator of All. He will empower, provide, supply... He will do all that we cannot to accomplish His will!
2. Illus. – church undertook enormous task of ministry: “We’re about to embark upon this ministry knowing that without the Lord’s blessing and power, we will miserably fail.”
  - a. isn’t that what ministry is all about?
  - b. I ask, what enormous task of ministry are we preparing and whose power will we rely upon?
3. I pray that we ever keep this principle before us – ministry is always by God’s power and never about us!

### V MINISTRY IS IN HARMONY WITH GOD (vv 20-24)

A. Paul Did What He Was Told to Do

1. One reason Paul didn’t get to Rome any sooner than he did – he was finishing task God gave him!

2. Opportunities in the region God sent his direction kept Paul busy!

B. We Have a Mission Given to Us

1. God's greatest desire? = that none would perish...
2. What a definition for *ministry* = "Ministry is fulfilling the Great Commission – anything more or less is NOT ministry."
3. Our field is right here... Do you see a need that will add to the winning and building of souls not presently in place?... I urge you to pursue it!

**Conclusion:** Preacher tells of the time his wife used to work for an accounting firm in Cincinnati. She often would bring home box seat tickets for Reds' games. One night she came home waving 2 tickets, asking if he had any responsibilities that night. "No ma'am, let's go!" he said. It was then the bombshell was dropped. The tickets were not to a Reds game; instead, they were to the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. There was no way out. He gripped, mumbled... couldn't think of anything more boring... but he went. Said he was a real with which to be at this event.

After getting seated, preacher said the orchestra members filed out to warm up. "It sounded awful," he said. Kept wondering why anyone would waste an evening for an event like this. Suddenly a little white-haired gentleman came out. The crowd stood to applaud. This little guy acknowledged it and audience sat down. Melodramatically this little guy raised his baton, and then, "The sweetest sound I ever heard flooded the building." Preacher went on to say, "I know little about music, but, I was impressed..." Two hours later, as the preacher and his wife were walking to their car he said to his wife, "If you ever get another opportunity to come here again, let's do it!"

Point: God has given each of us distinctive talents. If we insist on playing our own tune or doing our own thing the world will remain unimpressed. Matter of fact, world will continue to ridicule and think we are nothing but phonies! BUT, stand ready right now to harmonize with each other for the cause of Christ and watch what will take place!

Let's bring Christ front and center to this area. Let's focus every eye on Him. Let's do this understanding and enacting these five key elements of ministry!