

“Paul’s Excuses” Romans 15:14-16:24 Rev. LARGENT

- We’ve spent 37 weeks in Romans. Today is 38. We started Aug. 20th
 - One of my favorite excuses in the Bible is when Aaron tells Moses that he threw the Israelites golden jewelry into the fire and “Out came this calf!”
 - Ever here excuses from people why they aren’t at church?
 - May not know: Paul’s never been to the church in Rome?
 - Paul is going to give them his excuse for why he hasn’t come. Better be good
- ¹⁴ I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another.*
- Roman church appears to be a pretty health church.
 - Full of Goodness, Filled with Knowledge. Competent to instruct one another. Seem pretty self sufficient.

Why did Paul write this letter to them if they already had the knowledge and were doing good and could even instruct each other? *¹⁵ Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again,*

- He is reminding them. We don’t just come to church to learn new things, but to be reminded of truth. Some say, “I don’t go to church because I already know all that!” *Why is Paul the one doing the reminding?*

because of the grace God gave me ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

- Paul wrote because he’s the Apostle to the Gentiles and these are gentiles
- It says, “Priestly duty”. The priestly job of the Jews was to share the gospel of God with that nations. Paul is doing it not only as an Apostle, but a Jew.

I believe Paul’s calling to be a minister to the Gentiles is established in his strong understanding of the true calling of a Jew. Bless the nations (Gentiles)

¹⁷ Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. ¹⁸ I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God.

Here we see Paul’s calling, His purpose in life. It directs all that He does. It’s where Paul finds His joy so much so that if something doesn’t fall into his life purpose being accomplished by God through him. . . to Paul it ain’t worth talking about.

So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum (modern Albania) MAP, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. ²⁰ It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation. ²¹ Rather, as it is written: “Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.” ²² This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

- Here is Paul’s excuse and it’s a pretty good one.
- He’s been obeying God’s call on him. Preach to gospel to Gentiles.
 - You’ve already received the gospel and are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct others. (Vs 14)
- He’s been preaching where Christ was not known. (vs 20)
 - From Illyricum all the way to Jerusalem. That’s a lot of ground to cover. He says in that area, he has “fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ”
- He’s not building on someone else’s foundation. (vs. 20)
 - Paul didn’t plant the church in Rome. That is someone else’s foundation.

So why hasn’t Paul been to Rome? His God given calling and ministry have kept him away. But his work there is done. Vs 23. *²³ But now that there is no more*

place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you, ²⁴ I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. ²⁵ Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord’s people there.

What? You’re going to Jerusalem? But you’re in Corinth and so close and you just said your work in that area is done. Why not pop over to see us in Rome?

²⁶ For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord’s people in Jerusalem. ²⁷ They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. ²⁸ So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. ²⁹ I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

- There are Jews in Jerusalem that are poor and have physical needs and some Gentile Christians have taken a collection for their Jewish brothers. It’s beautiful.
- The unity & complimentary nature of the body Paul’s been talkin’ bout.
- Paul says, “they owe it to them”. The Gentiles have been blessed spiritually by what belonged to the Jews (Salvation). So, its right for the Jews to be blessed physically by what belongs to the Gentiles (money). Would the Jews receive them? Sharing in the united body.

This sign of unity between the Jews and Gentiles is something Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles needs to be present for.

³⁰ I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. ³¹ Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord’s people there, ³² so that I may

come to you with joy, by God's will, and in your company be refreshed. ³³ The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

- Paul asks for prayer because Jerusalem is a dangerous place for a guy like Paul, a prominent ex-Jew preaching Jesus to Gentiles.

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon (word deacon just means servant) of the church in Cenchreae. ² I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.

- It appears that Phoebe is the one delivering this letter from Corinth.
- Recommendations like this were important because there were legitimate needs for this kind of help like Phoebe might need, but there were also scammers who wanted to take advantage of the generosity of Christians.

³ Greet Priscilla^[d] and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. ⁴ They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

⁵ Greet also the church that meets at their house. So here we see that churches are meeting in houses. Now he greets a bunch of people and look how even though many of them he's probably never met, he knows all kinds of things about them. *Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. ⁶ Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. ⁷ Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among^[d] the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.*

⁸ Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. ⁹ Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. ¹⁰ Greet Apelles, whose fidelity to Christ has stood the test. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. ¹¹ Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. ¹² Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord. ¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too. ¹⁴ Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the other brothers and sisters with them. ¹⁵ Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the Lord's people who are with them. ¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings. **He gives one last warning. Must be important.** ¹⁷ I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. ¹⁸ For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. **Beware and keep away from people that divide Christians and create barriers from living your life according to the truth of God's word.** *Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. ²⁰ The God of peace will soon*

crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²¹ Timothy, my co-worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my fellow Jews. ²² I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord. So Tertius took dictation and wrote this letter out for Paul.

²³ Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings. Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings. If the Bible is made up, then why do we get a greeting from the town's director of public works. Come On!

Some final Thought:

Paul prayed in verses 31-32. ³¹ Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord's people there, ³² so that I may come to you with joy, by God's will, and in your company be refreshed

Did God answer this Prayer? Yes.

- **Paul arrived in Rome** as a prisoner who has appealed his court case to Caesar.
- Did he arrive safe? Yep. Even after being in a horrible shipwreck during transport to Rome.
- When he gets there he is under house arrest where He continues to share the Gospel in Rome.
- If you want to read it Go to Acts 18:18- the end of the book.