

PAUL'S PRIESTLY DUTY AND MINISTRY PLAN

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Romans 15:14-33 (Acts 28:16-31)

Opening Prayer: READ Romans 15:5-6

Paul has reminded us that Christ became a servant of the Jews (“the circumcision”), so that the promise of God to the Patriarchs might be confirmed and we, Gentiles, may glorify God for His loving mercy. God’s mercy is an important theme for Paul. **READ Romans 12:1; 15:7-9a.** God’s mercy toward us is the motivation of our mercy toward one another in Christ, and this mercy means we avoid being judgmental and contemptuous toward each other. We...**READ Romans 12:17-19.** Because we are different people now accepted in Christ as children of God and inheritors of the world, we bear with one another’s failings. We willingly restrict our liberties, and we avoid pleasing ourselves in order to please and build up our neighbors. This is our mutual service and submission that matures and unifies us for proclaiming the Gospel. This is our duty as sanctified servants of our King which advances His Kingdom. This is the Apostle’s desire for us, and this was...**Paul’s Priestly Duty and Ministry Plan.**

1. **Paul’s Priestly Duty (Verses 14-22)**

- a. Paul’s priestly duty is that ‘of proclaiming the Gospel of God’ (**READ verses 14-16**).
 - i. Paul proclaims the Gospel to those who are already Christians – to those who can instruct themselves (v 14)
 - ii. Paul proclaims the Gospel to Gentiles – to those who have not yet heard the Gospel (**READ verses 20-22**)
 1. Paul’s ‘priestly duty’ is a discharge ‘of the grace God gave Him to be a minister of Christ...’ (see *verses 15b-16*)
- b. And, although this is Paul’s Priestly Duty, it is Jesus, the King, Who gets the deserved glory (**READ verses 17-19**).

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- i. We must constantly be reminded of this; because, we are inherently “glory robbers” – we want the glory, praise and thanksgiving due to God. We want to be God. We want to be the center of the universe, so we want to receive the credit and to be acknowledged for our wonderful ministries. We also forget that it is God who has empowered us by His Spirit with such gifts to grow His Kingdom; not to advance our own selfish ambitions and personal accomplishments. We are not to boast in our strength, wisdom or riches but in knowing God and the exercise of His kindness, justice and righteousness in Christ (see *Jeremiah 9:23-24*).
- ii. Two books I have recently read, “Insurgence” by Viola and “Reading the Bible Supernaturally” by Piper have reminded me of this and brought me to repentance. My ambition gets in the way of God’s glory. I want to do my will, clothed with religious ministry language, rather than God’s will. But it is God’s good, perfect and pleasing will for His glory to be displayed in and through Jesus Who humbled Himself as a servant. Jesus, the King, made Himself nothing. However, I am often seduced by the false promises of the world and the sinful desires of the flesh into foolishly thinking my selfish ambition will fill me with joy and satisfaction. The truth is; however, our joy will only be fulfilled by God's glory, and God is most glorified when we enjoy His merciful love revealed fully in Jesus. Then all other earthly and temporal joys fall into their proper place and they can be truly enjoyed to God’s glory. Then...**READ Romans 14:6-8**. Like the Apostle, we belong to God and have a priestly duty.

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2. Paul's Ministry Plan (Verses 23-33)

a. Here is Paul's purpose for writing this letter to the Church at Rome, which we have discussed. Paul's plan for proclaiming the Gospel, for His priestly duty, includes:

i. Partners (**READ verses 23-24**)

ii. Unity (**READ verses 25-29**)

1. Jews and Gentiles are accepted in Christ the King and united by the Holy Spirit despite differences; therefore, we humbly submit to mercifully serve one another in love.

iii. Prayer (**READ verses 30-33**)

1. Paul's Ministry Plan is a template for our own Priestly Duty to Proclaim the Gospel as ministers/servants of King Jesus for the advancement of His Kingdom.

a. We must be unified in the Gospel as partners for the proclamation of the Gospel. We do this divine duty by praying, partnering (which includes, for Paul, financial giving), planning and, of course, our own personal proclamation of the Gospel. This is how we, Gentiles, received the Good News of our own reception in Christ according to God's mercy; therefore, we continue on with Paul's Ministry Plan, which is nothing other than God's Plan for His Kingdom on earth as in heaven.

b. We "struggle" together in the same "struggle" as the Apostle Paul. We encourage one another and use our God-given gifts to find ways to share the Good News of Christ's Kingdom and of God's loving acceptance that transfers us from the dominion of Adam as children of

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wickedness where death reigns in sin into the dominion of Jesus as children of God where grace reigns in righteousness.

- b. This is the Gospel we proclaim. The message of the Gospel is the Good News of God's righteousness revealed. **READ *Romans 3:21-26***. This Good News is both the message and means by which we, Jew and Gentile, are converted, born again, set-apart and sealed by the Holy Spirit as servants of King Jesus for the advancement of His Kingdom. We are graciously and purposefully 'devoted' entirely to the Lord, and to one another, for this most important ministry. The same Holy Spirit working in Paul and Who unified the Jews and Gentiles at Rome in Christ also empowers us to press on with Paul's ministry "to preach the Gospel where Christ is not known" (see *Romans 15:20*).
 - i. However, we must also preach the Gospel to ourselves and be reminded that, despite our differences, we are accepted and unified in Christ already. We need to boldly instruct one another in this truth regularly – never forgetting our humbling submission and self-denying service toward one another in love; because, it is this Gospel-love for one another that shows we are citizens of Christ's Kingdom. Our unity in the Spirit by the Gospel as Believers is what makes our Gospel message to un-Believers credible. So, if the means by which some may want to reach out to unbelievers with the Gospel creates disputes and divisions within the community of Believers, then it is likely someone is not instructing themselves in the Gospel and is confusing their own ambitions with God's will. Have we ever seen this among ourselves?

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1. Some evaluative questions to ask could include,
“Why do I want to approach evangelism in this particular way, and why do I want others to support it; especially if it entails doing more than simply telling others about Jesus? What am I hoping to get out of it? Who, or what, will be the object of people's boasting as a result of these efforts? Is it for God's glory or my glory?”
 - ii. Our priestly duty according to God's ministry plan, and implemented by the Apostle Paul Himself, is for God's glory in and through King Jesus. And, this strategy will produce results according to God's good, pleasing and perfect will. Look at us, a congregation of Gentiles, worshipping the God of Israel through His Anointed King, Jesus, just as it is written: **READ Romans 15:9b-13.**
- c. AMEN