

Bible Reading Notes

the good way

33. 'Serving the King'

Romans 15.14-21

Monday 23rd September – Sunday 29th September

In this section of his letter to the church at Rome Paul is addressing the theme of ministry: and although much of it is in the first person and relates specifically to him as an apostle, nonetheless what he writes has relevance, and important lessons, for all believers – whatever our spheres of service may be.

A simple framework for looking at this particular passage is to see what Paul writes about his ministry here in terms of Rom.11.36 – “*For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever.*”

Speaking of the ministry which he himself exercises, in vv.14-15 Paul points to the fact that it is emphatically ‘*from Him*’: the same will be true, of course, for every believer, regardless of what the sphere of service we find ourselves involved in may be.

Then in vv.16-17 Paul effectively explains ministry as being ‘*for Him*’ by referring to his ministry as a ‘priestly duty’ issuing in the Gentiles becoming ‘an offering acceptable to God’: again, while this has reference to his apostolic ministry, it’s applicable to all believers.

The last verses (vv.18-21) highlight our dependence in all ministry on the power of the Spirit of God: we can only ever serve ‘*through Him*’.

Read the whole passage and if short of time concentrate on ‘**days**’ (1), (5) and (6).

1) Monday 23rd September – your calling

Read [Romans 15.14-15](#)

“.. because of the grace God gave me ..” (Rom.15.15)

Paul’s boldness in writing as he’d done to those already well-instructed stemmed from his apostolic credentials. This calling on his life was from the Lord – as will be yours. Be clear as to what your calling from God is; and be bold in the glad exercise of it!

If the believers at Rome were indeed ‘competent to instruct one another’ what need was there for Paul to write as he did – and what lessons does that have for ourselves?

How would you describe *your* calling in life from God?

Read [Rom.12.3](#): how can you discern what ‘grace’ for ministry God has given you?

Reflecting back on what Paul has written what are the ‘some points’ on which you think he has written ‘quite boldly’?

On what points do you think Paul might boldly write to Gilcomston Church today?

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, that You have called me not only into Your family, but into Your service. Help me to discern Your call upon my life, and to give my all to that.

2) Tuesday 24th September – your privilege

Read [Romans 15.16](#)

“.. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God ..” (Rom.15.16)

There’s a sense in which Paul here describes not simply the nature of the apostolic ministry entrusted to him, but more generally the essence of every believer’s calling in Christ. A priestly work. A privileged responsibility. A proclamation of the gospel.

In what sense(s) can it be said of every believer that we are fulfilling a ‘priestly duty’?

What does Paul mean when he speaks of the Gentiles becoming ‘an offering acceptable to God’ and how does that find expression in your life?

Prayer: O Thou who camest from above, the pure celestial fire to impart, kindle a flame of sacred love on the mean altar of my heart. I offer myself to You again, Lord, today.

3) Wednesday 25th September – your boast

Read [Romans 15.17](#)

".. I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God .." (Rom.15.17)

Paul's mind and heart – and thus his conversation and his message too – were full only of the Lord Jesus. Jesus, as the Christ, was all his boast – the anointed Prophet, Priest and King, bringing the Word of God, the grace of God and the rule of God to others.

Consider the conversations you have: what do you tend to talk about most?

How can you best ensure that your 'service to God' doesn't become tedious and wearisome?

Prayer: *I will not boast in anything, no gifts, no power, no wisdom: but I will boast in You, my Lord, Your death and resurrection. Your wounds have paid my ransom.*

4) Thursday 26th September – your labours

Read [Romans 15.18](#)

".. what Christ has accomplished through me .." (Rom.15.18)

The map of the ancient world was dramatically changed not least through the ministry of this one man, Paul. 'Yet not I', he would have been the first to say and sing, 'but through Christ in me'. Apart from Him we effect nothing: in Him we can do all things!

What have you seen Christ accomplishing through you?

What do you find are your biggest difficulties in 'leading (others) to obey God'?

Prayer: *To this I hold, my hope is only You, Lord, all the glory evermore to You. When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat, yet not I, but through You in me.*

5) Friday 27th September – your testimony

Read [Romans 15.19](#)

".. through the power of the Spirit of God .." (Rom.15.19)

Jesus meant what He said. 'You **will** receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.' That power of God's Spirit attended Paul's ministry; and integral to that was the way in which he lived his life, serving the Lord (see [1 Thess.1.5](#)). It'll be no different for you.

What place is there for 'testimony' in the life of a fellowship, and in what ways have you been helped by the testimonies of other believers?

What has been your experience of the power of the Spirit of God as you have sought to serve the Lord?

To what extent should we expect 'signs and wonders' today and how should we respond to stories today of such 'signs and wonders'?

What's meant by 'fully proclaiming the gospel' and is this something just for preachers?

Prayer: Lord, I need Your Holy Spirit's empowering every day! Give me strength so to live each day that my life becomes a canvas on which the good news is portrayed.

6) Saturday 28th September – your burden

Read [Romans 15.20](#)

“.. to preach the gospel where Christ was not known ..” (Rom.15.20)

Paul had not only a calling to the Gentiles, but a pioneering mandate and a burden for the lost. Unique as his calling was, some sort of pioneering instinct is instilled within the heart of each believer, along with a heart-felt wish to make Jesus known to others.

What approach do you have (if any) to ensure you are praying regularly for family, friends, colleagues and neighbours to come to know the Lord Jesus?

There are countless thousands of people in Aberdeen for whom Christ is not known: what might we be doing to ‘preach the gospel’ among such?

What best stirs in your heart such a longing that others should come to know Jesus?

Read [1 Cor.3.10-15](#): what is the point which Paul is concerned to underline in this passage, and what lessons does it have for ourselves?

Prayer: Once I was blind, Lord, and now, by Your grace, I see! Stir in my heart an ever-deepening longing that others may catch a glimpse of Your glory and know Your grace.

7) Sunday 29th September – your confidence

Read [Romans 15.21](#)

“.. those who were not told about Him will see ..” (Rom.15.21)

What God has promised, God will indeed bring to pass. That remains the confidence believers have in proclaiming Christ. God’s word will not return to Him empty ([Is.55.11](#)). Always abound in the work of the Lord – your labour in Christ is not in vain!

What Scriptures have been a regular source of real encouragement to you in your service of Christ?

In what ways may you be able to encourage those around you today to give themselves fully to the work of the Lord ([1 Cor.15.58](#))?

Prayer: As Your people join in worship today and as Your Word is proclaimed, may there be many whose eyes are finally opened, and for whom the gospel at last ‘clicks’.