**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*Romans Series - Chapter 15:19-33*

***God Also Chose to Speak Through Us***

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS text is quoted)

15:19 in the power of signs and wonders,

 in the power of the Spirit;

so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum

[land northeast of Italy across the Adriatic Sea. In Paul’s time called the “Mare Adriaticum.”]

I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Scholars believe that Paul wrote the letter to the Believers in Rome ~~in~~ somewhere between 56 and 58 A.D. from the Greek city of Corinth. By the time Paul writes the letter, he had been a missionary for the Lord since about 34 A.D. So, the statement he makes from Jerusalem and as far as Illyricum that he has fully preached the gospel of Christ is highly conceivable. Paul had traveled thousands of miles on foot and by sea. It is about 1800 miles to Corinth from Jerusalem. It is over 2,500 miles to Rome from Jerusalem. (Hundreds of miles.) The point being that from 34 A. D. to 56 A.D. (22 years) Paul conceivably traveled to all the places in the New Testament that are ascribed to his visit. And, in these visits, Paul “FULLY” preached the GOSPEL OF CHRIST. What does ‘fully’ preached mean?

 We can get a view to what Paul is saying when he says “fully preached” when we consider that he was in the power of signs and wonders and in the power of the Holy Spirit. From this, we can receive that fully preaching the Gospel of God/Christ encompasses signs and wonders of the Holy Spirit.

7 Bible Verses about the Miracles of Paul

Acts 13:11 "Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand.

Acts 14:10 said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he leaped up and began to walk.

Acts 16:18 She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment.

Acts 19:11-12 God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.

Acts 20:10-12 But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him." When he had gone back up and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left. They took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.

Acts 28:5 However he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm.

Acts 28:8 And it happened that the father of Publius was lying in bed afflicted with recurrent fever and dysentery; and Paul went in to see him and after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him.

 It is not that we will all have the gift of healing, but to reach a point to where the Gospel is preached fully, there will most likely be miracles involved. By the time Paul wrote Romans, the accounts of the miracles that accompanied his apostleship ministry had no doubt reached Rome.

 God did not have Paul rest on the ministry accomplishments. God’s Spirit pushed Paul to plant more churches and be that witness in the midst of a broken oppressive world. We know the verse where Paul proclaims, he has run the good race.

**Spend it all in life.**

 When I was in high school, the coach had us run wind-sprints at the end of practice. We were tired from all the drills and scrimmaging. You could always see who had practiced, because their uniforms were embedded with dirt, sweat and, at times, blood. These were the ones who participated in scrimmages. Basically, those that played in the game. After about ten 40-yard wind-sprints, the coach would call-out, “Who has something left?” One player responded, “I got something left; I can run more wind-sprints.” The coach then went ballistic running over to the player who responded, yelling at him why he held something back in practice. “Why do you have anything left? You should have given me your ‘all’ running the plays and drills.” We all had to run more wind-sprints to make sure we did not leave anything on the field. No one ever boasted again that they had anything left.

 17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. (Philippians 2:17)

As Paul solemnly charges Timothy, he tells him. . . .

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;

 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Paul is leaving nothing behind. He has spent all his gifts and talents with which God had empowered him. He invested His talents (Matthew 25) in people, and there was a miraculous and historical return through the centuries. As Paul writes to the Roman Believers, he is concerned for his own safety, fearful that those that are disobedient in Judea will harm him (verse 31). This does not deter Paul; he simply asks for prayer.

**Continue in Romans 15:20**

And thus, I aspired to preach the gospel,

not where Christ was already named,

so that I would not build on another man's foundation;

 21 but as it is written,

"THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE,

AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND."

Isaiah 52:15

 22 For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;

 Paul is saying that he has been busy preaching the Gospel in places that have not heard of Christ. Rome had heard of Christ, so he had **not** previously made Rome a destination point. We should observe that Paul frames those who had not been exposed to the Gospel as those who shall see and hearing they will understand. It is of the upmost importance that we see that God chose Saul of Tarsus to become Paul the Apostle to witness His Gospel. God also chose/commissioned others like John, Peter, Steven, James, Phoebe, Junias, Euodia and Syntyche and many more to carry-out the same mission. These are common people. God did not go to the Harvard or West Points of the first century to recruit His missionaries. Yes, well . . . he did pick Paul who was a Pharisee of Pharisees. So, that is one. But the others were ordinary-everyday-people.

 God has been broad in His evangelism approach. God talked directly to people like Adam, Moses, Samuel, Jacob, David and others, in addition to revealing Himself through the creation itself. So, no one has any reason to say that they have not heard of God (Romans 12:18ff, 10:18-21, Psalm 19:4). In revealing Himself through what He had made is not as challenging compared to revealing himself through people. People talk back and want to use their own reasoning. The creation of itself God simply directs to appear and be visible to affect the minds and souls of people.

Today, we call the fine-tuning of the creation a miracle. No other power could have made the smallest cells and particles function the way they do unless God structured them. The bottom line is that it takes information sequenced in a certain way to create and maintain life. Today, scientists report that in our genetic code it would take 1077 power (by chance) to change the code. This means that there cannot be one mutation in the sequence for life to pass on the way it is or at all. In addition, how much time would it take for a natural, blind, random, undirected process to get it right. Scientists tell us we need more time than the earth has been in existence. Therefore, life with its genetic code must be designed and directed.

Cassette mutagenesis experiments performed during the early 1990s suggest that the probability of attaining (at random) the correct sequencing for a short protein 100 amino acids long is about 1 in 1065 (Reidhaar-Olson & Sauer 1990, Behe 1992:65-69). This result agreed closely with earlier calculations that Yockey (1978) had performed based upon the known sequence variability of cytochrome c in different species and other theoretical considerations. More recent mutagenesis research has provided additional support for the conclusion that functional proteins are exceedingly rare among possible amino acid sequences (Dr. Axe 2000, 2004). Dr. Axe (2004) has performed site directed mutagenesis experiments on a 150-residue protein-folding domain within a B-lactamase enzyme. His experimental method improves upon earlier mutagenesis techniques and corrects for several sources of possible estimation error inherent in them. On the basis of these experiments, Dr. Axe has estimated the ratio of (a) proteins of typical size (150 residues) that perform a specified function via any folded structure to (b) the whole set of possible amino acids sequences of that size. Based on his experiments, Dr. Axe has estimated his ratio to be 1 to 1077. Thus, the probability of finding a functional protein among the possible amino acid sequences corresponding to a 150-residue protein is similarly 1 in 1077. <https://intelligentdesign.org/philosophy-of-science/not-a-chance/>

For additional reading, see Stephen Meyer, “Signature in The Cell” and “Darwin’s Doubt.”

Is it not a miracle that our earth is in the exact distance from the sun with its orbiting moon to create the slimmest of margins to originate and sustain life?

Again, it is by God’s love and grace that He has chosen people, like you and me, through which to work in spreading His Good News. It is a lot easier to work directly through the creation. If you have ever managed people and machines, you know the difference. Machines do not talk back, call-in sick or quarrel among themselves. They may break and wear-out, but you simply replace them without going through interviews.

**Continue Romans 15**

 23 but now, with no further place for me in these regions,

and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you

 24 whenever I go to Spain-- for I hope to see you in passing,

and to be helped on my way there by you,

when I have first enjoyed your company for a while--

25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

 There has historically been great speculation concerning the extent of Paul’s missionary travels. We simply do not know all the places he traveled. Verse 24 lends to the possibility that Paul planned to go to Spain, but, from this passage, we cannot determine he actually went. Paul’s fellow worker, Clement, who is named in Philippians 4:3, is believed to be the Clement who became a Bishop of the city of Rome’s congregations. Clement writes that Paul went to the farthest limits of the West. This phrase, in its time, encompassed Spain.

*I Clement 5:5-7* (in the 70’s A.D. – about 40 years after the Resurrection and *about* 20 years after Paul wrote Romans).

Other writers after Clement also commented that Paul traveled to Spain.

**Continuing Romans 15**

 26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

 27 Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them.

For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things,

they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.

 28 Therefore, when I have finished this,

and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs,

I will go on by way of you to Spain.

 29 I know that when I come to you,

I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

 30 Now I urge you, brethren,

by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit,

to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea,

and that my service for Jerusalem

may prove acceptable to the saints;

 32 so that I may come to you in joy

by the will of God

and find refreshing rest in your company.

 33 Now the God of peace be with you all.

Amen.

 In reading these verses, we see that Paul’s understanding of God encompassed all three manifestations of the Trinity.

Gospel of Christ ~ Power of the Spirit ~ Lord Jesus Christ

Love of the Spirit ~ God ~ Christ ~ will of God ~ God of peace.

 No, the word “trinity” is not in the Bible. What we do see is Paul and the other writers constantly using words that define the Triune God. It is inescapable to see God in any other way.

 Paul desperately desires to travel to Rome and visit with the Believers there. He just does not want to have a short visit; he wants to share life under God with them. This is the way we should understand our relationships. We are not just visiting with people; we are engaging God with them. God’s Spirit in us transcends into other’s hearts, and we are united in the miracle of God’s love and grace that has indwelled all Believers.

 Two passages of Scripture come to mind:

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. 21 "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

Romans 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

**AMEN**