

SERMON STUDY SUMMARY

June 10 / 11, 2023

ROMANS SERIES Part 32: Glorifying God Through Your One and Only Life

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What are you doing with your one and only life? In Romans 15, Paul answers this question by sharing his passions, plans and needs, thereby giving us instructive lessons from *his* life. Paul's overarching pursuit in life was firstly, to **know** Jesus and to make Him **known**. Secondly, Paul knew he could not accomplish this pursuit *on his own*. In verse 17 Paul says that he serves God by glorifying Christ and only speaks of what **Christ** has done through him in bringing the Gentiles to God. In verse 20 he says that he always wanted to preach the gospel where Christ was unknown. Paul's focus was to *live for Christ* and he said very specifically in Philippians 3:8, "*I consider EVERYTHING a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish.*" He states that Christ is the only way for us to be saved, and challenges us to do likewise.

Paul pleads that we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God, without wasting time doing temporary lesser things, and conforming to and embracing things which are '*of this world.*' He urges us to: *Glorify God by giving your lives to Jesus and keeping your eyes focused on Him. Dedicate yourself totally to Him.* Many of us devote ourselves to a myriad of godly things but, unfortunately, we also want to worship the gods of this world, which is a recipe for disaster. Christ said that it was IMPOSSIBLE to serve more than one master because the resultant chaos would destroy us.

What is **our** pursuit in life? We **need God**! Only God's Grace and Spirit can provide us with strength as we lean on Him and surround ourselves with other believers. God wants us to be *one in Christ*, and we are called to encourage, support and challenge each other, not attempting to do the impossible on our own! Like-minded, committed and mature Christians usually have these main characteristics, extending to others: God's gift of grace/forgiveness to them; will be your refuge, have your back, bear each other's failures/weaknesses; serve and refresh you, assist with emotional loads; welcome and accept you despite variations in disputable matters; take prayer seriously; are generous with everything God has given them; and challenge one another in love.

What's most important **to us** when we stand before God? Paul gave up *worldly* opportunities after meeting the Risen Jesus – and said, "**For me to live is Christ.**" That choice changed the trajectory of his life and eternity. Despite the fact that he spent his last days in prison and was executed, God used him to change the eternal trajectory of thousands of lives.

Let us pray that each of us will settle this issue once and for all; that we will not only declare, with Paul, "*For me to live is Christ,*" but that, with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we live each day as devout Christ Followers. When we number our days, we receive clarity about what **really** matters; we have ONE chance at life, so let's *seek GOD'S kingdom FIRST*, and live our lives for and through Him. As the *Church of Christ*, let this be our goal in life, to the Glory of God, and for the sake of a deeply hurting world that needs the Jesus we know and love!

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What is your pursuit in life? What do you want to become?
2. Who would you point to today as somebody who lives/lived an exemplary life? What made their life exemplary?

UP – PURSUE GOD

Read Romans 15.

3. From verses 15:1-7, 13-14, 30-33, what are we called to do in these verses, and to what outcomes? What are the characteristics of a healthy Christian community?
4. From verses 15:14-21, what were Paul's vision and his accomplishments? Why and how did he do it? What inspired him?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. Paul saw service as an act of worship to God (Rom 12:1). How can your attitude improve your service knowing that it is not just work but worship?
6. Paul's ambition was to preach the gospel where Christ was unknown (Rom 15:20). Pray that God would reveal to you where Christ is not known. How can you or your group be a witness there?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Imagine you are at a table with chairs around it which represent your closest relationships. Name them. Are they people you pray with, mutually support, and are committed to the singular pursuit of living for Christ? If not, or if they are few, ask God to show you who to invite to your table because, like Paul, you cannot do God's work alone.

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 15:1-7, 13-21, 30-33

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. ³ For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." ⁴ For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

⁵ May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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. ¹⁵ Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, 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.

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. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, 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."

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.

This week's writers: Asha Phillips, Gene and Karen Gibbs, Elsa Henderson, Mark Eckstein, and Jorel Quemuel