

## What Blesses God, Part 5 - Romans 15:14-16 – August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part five of a series I've titled; "What Blesses God."

- If you'll bear with me for just a moment, I'd like to set the stage with a very quick review of the first four ways to bless God in verses 1-13.

### 1. Bearing with others (Verses 1-3)

- Paul says we who are strong should bear with the failings of the weak to build them up, then quoting Psalm 69:9 he uses Christ's example.

### 2. Unity among others (Verses 4-6)

- Paul prays that the God who gives endurance and encouragement would also give us a spirit of unity among ourselves as we follow Jesus.

### 3. Accepting of others (Verses 7-9)

- Here Paul exhorts us to be accepting one of another, just as Jesus Christ accepted us, because in so doing, we in turn bring praise to God.

### 4. Peace with others (Verses 10-13)

- Paul then quotes Deuteronomy and Isaiah both of which speak to Jews and Gentiles at peace with each other in and through Jesus Christ.

### 5. Encouraging to others (Verses 14-16)

(14) I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another. (15) I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me (16) to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with 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.

-v14 Paul tells them he's convinced that they are full of goodness, and complete in their knowledge and competence to instruct one another.

-v15 He acknowledges that he's been quite bold and blunt with them on some points, but he reminds them it was the grace God gave him.

-v16 He then says it's God's grace to be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles with 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.

- Before we start working our way through the text we have before us this morning, I think it's incumbent upon me to talk first about the why.

- Let me explain, it's important we know why it is that the Apostle Paul is writing this letter to the Jews and Gentiles in Rome, to begin with.

- Actually, he tells them why, saying, it's because of God's grace to minister the gospel of God, so they'll be an offering acceptable to God.

- I'll take it a step further and suggest that Paul's ultimate aim for this letter was to, by the Holy Spirit, have them both glorify and bless God.

- The reason I say that is because it's evidenced by Paul's reminder to them, of what he boldly wrote at the beginning of his letter to them.

- More specifically, Paul, here at the end of the letter in chapter 15:14-33 reminds them of what he said at the beginning in chapter 1:1-15.

- It's for this reason that knowing why is so important, such that the ends justifies the means, as it were, to get into the end zone, if you will.

- Perhaps this would explain Paul's apology of sorts in verse fifteen where he explains why he had to be so bold and blunt with them prior.

- However, it seems it wasn't so much how blunt Paul was in what he said, as much as it was in the delicate bluntness in which he said it.

Adam Clarke - "This is supposed to be an address to the Gentiles; and it is managed with great delicacy: he seems to apologize for the freedom he had used in writing to them; which he gives them to understand proceeded from the authority he had received by his apostolical office, the exercise of which office respected them particularly. So they could not be offended when they found themselves so particularly distinguished."

- I'm of the belief that Paul is practicing what he preaches by ever so delicately, but lovingly encouraging them to be encouraging to others.

- So much so, that in so doing, God would be both glorified and blessed by the mutual love one for another, and encouragement of another.

- I know Paul isn't seen as a great example of an encourager, in the way that Barnabas was, but I think he was, in his intense personality.

Charles Spurgeon - "As Paul was peculiarly the apostle of the Gentiles, he was the more anxious that in the Gentiles the gospel should produce the acceptable fruit of mutual love. Every man should give most attention to that part of the work with which the Lord has entrusted him, with the one pure motive that God may be glorified thereby. Paul was insatiable for the glory of God and the prosperity of the church; let us be filled with the same zeal."

- All of this does beg the question of why Paul was so driven by his zealous boldness for the church to be edified, and God to be glorified.

- In other words, why was Paul so insatiable, as Spurgeon says to do everything and stop at nothing for the church to glorify and bless God?

- I believe it's because Paul knew that this is just what friends do, when they love someone enough to speak the truth knowing it may hurt.

Proverbs 27:6 NIV Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

- One of the most valuable lessons I've been learning over the years is that initially people may resent it, but eventually they will respect it.

- Conversely, if I'm dishonest with people telling them what they want to hear, initially they may appreciate it, but eventually they'll resent it.

- Nowhere is this more evident than when it comes to the preaching of the gospel as blunt and offensive as it is in how it wounds ones pride.

- As one so aptly said, "The gospel of 100% grace is so humbling to human pride that it will always take a measure of boldness to preach it."

- I'll bring it to a close with the take away for today, simply put, one of the best ways we can bless the heart of God is by encouraging others.

- And, when that encouragement comes vis-à-vis bluntness and boldness, do not err greatly by dismissing it because you're wounded by it.

- Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, we never err, when we err on the side of grace and encourage someone who may be discouraged.