

What Blesses God, Part 6 - Romans 15:17-19 – September 1st, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part six 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 five 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)

- Paul sort of apologizes for his bold bluntness encouraging them to encourage and instruct others to become an offering acceptable to God.

6. Leading of others (Verses 17-19)

(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 miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.

-v17 Paul says that he glories in Christ Jesus in his service to God.

-v18 He then says that he won't speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through him in leading the Gentiles to obey God.

-v19 He says it's the power of signs and miracles through the power of the Spirit that he's proclaimed the gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that Paul turns a corner of sorts and goes from apologizing to boasting.

- Paul is not boasting about what he's accomplished in his service for Christ, rather, he's boasting only in what he's accomplished in Christ.

- In other words, all that he's done in his service to Christ, was only done in Christ, vis-à-vis what Christ accomplished in and through him.

Henry Morris - "Paul will glory only in what Christ has done through him. He is sure that Christ has done great things through him, and he is glad that he can draw attention to those things. But he is not trying to attract adulation. It is what Christ has done that is his theme."

- It's important to understand that while Paul has not yet been to Rome he's seen as a leader of those whom he presumably knows in Rome.

- This is why he says that he won't venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through him in leading the Gentiles.

- Notice he in no way suggests he's leading them, so they'll follow him, rather, he's leading them to obey God by what he's said and done.

- Paul is emphasizing this because he's leading them, and pointing them, to the Lord, by way of his example in both his words and deeds.

- Furthermore, his leading them by example, is evidenced, and even authenticated, by the power of signs and miracles through the Spirit.

- Even more validation it's through the power of the Holy Spirit is how many lives have been changed from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum.

- Now, I am keenly aware that some of you, right about now, may be thinking to yourselves, what in the world does this have to do with me?

- I am so very glad that you asked, here's why, we as believers in, and followers of Jesus Christ have access to the same power as Paul did.

- So much so by our example in both word and deed we too can lead others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit.

- The problem is that often times we don't realize how that people are watching our lives, even reading how we live our lives as a living letter.

2 Corinthians 3:1-3 NIV (1) Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? (2) You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. (3) You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

- Here's the bottom line, we do err greatly when we underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit, even the signs and miracles in our lives.

- Let me explain, when people watch how we live our lives, they're looking for outward signs that it's real, and Jesus can change their lives.

- Sometimes, God may deem it necessary to perform a miracle in our lives, in order that He may use it to bring others to Him for their lives.

- I'm going to bring it to a close with what the Apostle Paul said in 2nd Thessalonians 3:7-9, concerning the example of a life above reproach.

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 NIV (7) For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, (8) nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. (9) We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.

1 Corinthians 11:1 NIV Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

1 Corinthians 4:16 NIV Therefore I urge you to imitate me.