

What Blesses God, Part 7 - Romans 15:20-22 – September 15th, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part seven of a series titled; "What Blesses God," and as such, we'll be looking at a seventh way we to do just that.
- Here-to-fore, the Apostle Paul has sort of risen from the pages of this chapter, to show us the first six ways in which we can bless the Lord.

1. Bearing with others (Verses 1-3)

2. Unity among others (Verses 4-6)

3. Accepting of others (Verses 7-9)

4. Peace with others (Verses 10-13)

5. Encouraging to others (Verses 14-16)

6. Leading of others (Verses 17-19)

7. Sacrificing for others (Verses 20-22)

(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." (22) This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

-v20 Paul says it's his ambition to preach the gospel where Christ wasn't known, so he wouldn't be building on someone else's foundation.

-v21 He quotes, Isaiah 52:15, which says, "Those who were not told about Christ will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

-v22 He says it's because of his ambition to sacrifice, and go where no man has gone before, that has hindered him from coming to Rome.

- Before we start walking through this, I think it would be good for us to first take note of what it is that the Apostle Paul is not saying here.
- Namely, he is not saying that there's anything wrong with building on someone else's foundation, rather, that he is not going to do it here.
- In other words, instead of taking the path of least resistance if you will, he's going to take the risk and make the sacrifice to step out in faith.

Of this one commentator wrote; "There is nothing in principle wrong with building on someone else's foundation. Paul is very happy for Apollos to do this in Corinth after he has laid the foundation, for Apollos to water where Paul has planted (1 Corinthians 3:1-10). So we must not take his example as compulsory. Someone needs to consolidate and continue existing gospel ministries. But there is something deeply challenging about the spirit of barrier-breaking gospel ambition that drives him out."

- It's for this reason that Paul quotes Isaiah concerning Christ's sacrifice in order that the blind would see and the deaf would hear as it were.

Henry Morris - "Isaiah 52:15 introduces Isaiah's great 53rd chapter, containing the most complete and poignant exposition in the bible of the sacrificial death of Christ. Paul, it must be remembered, was writing for the instruction of both the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians at Rome, understanding that both would be reading his letter."

- This is what drove the Apostle Paul to make the sacrifice and take the risk stepping out by faith into both uncharted and difficult territory.
- It's important to understand that for Paul to go into this uncharted territory, he would have to walk for one thousand four hundred miles.
- We know from his epistles, this fourteen-mile walk was no cakewalk, in that every step and every journey was met with obstacles and trials.

1 Corinthians 4:11-14 NIV (11) To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. (12) We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; (13) when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world. (14) I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28 NIV (24) Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. (25) Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, (26) I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. (27) I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. (28) Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

- The question now becomes, how is it that God is blessed when we sacrificially step out in faith and take risks in spite of all the difficulties.
- I'm of the belief there are a number of reasons God is blessed, one of which is because of how blessed we are when our children do this.
- Who among us as earthly fathers and mothers isn't pleased and blessed when our children dies to themself and sacrifices for their sibling?

- Another reason God is so blessed when we do this is because of what Hebrews chapter eleven says in both verse one and verse six.

Hebrews 11:1 NKJV Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:6 NKJV But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- I'll bring it to a close with a couple of thoughts, the first of which is a question, "what if Paul didn't step out in faith and make the sacrifice?"
- Would we be reading about someone else who did? I think you know the question is rhetorical such that God would have called another.
- I think of what Mordecai said to Esther, if she didn't take the risk for such a time as this, deliverance would come from another who would.

- The second and final thought is more of a personal testimony, I wonder what would have happened if I didn't take the risk and come here.