

PAUL'S GOSPEL MINISTRY | ROMANS 15:13-21

- Verse 13 –
 - This verse speaks of the spiritual empowerment of those in the church (not Kingdom or Pentecostal) age. Those of the Kingdom age were endowed with (Lk 22:49), but those in the church age do not have the *wonder working power* of the Pentecostal era.
 - Note: The church age overlapped with the Pentecostal era. By the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, he was speaking of the passing away of the Pentecostal gifts, and said, **now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three.**
 - The spiritual empowerment of the church-age, as listed in these two verses, are:
 - **Joy and Peace in believing** -
 - The word for **joy** is *χαρά* [chara], from the same root as *charis*, which is *grace*. Grace brings joy!
 - The word for **peace** is *εἰρήνη* [eirene] from which we get *irenic* and (via Latin) *serene*.
 - This is given **that you may abound in hope**. The one who has **joy and peace in believing** is able to **abound in hope**. Yet, sadly, many sermons have been preached and books written that cause a person *concern and doubt* of their faith. Why do we teach *simple, childlike faith* and then cause people to question its validity?
 - The **hope** comes **through the Holy Ghost**, who indwells us and testifies that we are His (Rom. 8:15).
- Verse 14 –
 - Where verse 13 speaks of spiritual empowerment, verse 14 speaks of the byproducts of maturity within the previous empowerment. Spiritually mature believers in the age of grace experience:
 - **Goodness** - from *αγαθος* [agathos] from which we get the name *Agatha* and the rarely used noun, *agathist* (a person who holds the philosophy that all things tend to the good).
 - **filled with knowledge** - for those living in the modern age, **knowledge** is the result of the study of the Word. In previous generations, one was not considered able to have full knowledge without a solid understanding of the Word, thus all education was theological in nature.
 - Being **able to admonish one another** takes both **goodness** and **knowledge**. The word **admonish** is *νουθετέω* [noutheteo], which is a compound of *nous* (mind/thinking) and *tithemi* (to put in order), thus, to **admonish** someone is to *help them get their thinking in order*. The term *nouthetic counseling* is built on this concept.
- Verses 15-16 –
 - Here Paul again speaks of his unique role as the Apostle to the Gentiles (literally, *to the nations*).
 - In this role, he writes **more boldly**, knowing his position requires boldness and gives him authority to be bold (compare 1 Cor. 9:18, where Paul speaks of his **power in the gospel**, using the word *authority*, and not speaking of a general power of all believers but of the authority he has as an apostle).
 - Paul was given grace, **That I should be the minister**, the translation should be understood *for my being a minister* (as in YLT). God's grace was given to Paul of God for being a **minister...to the Gentiles**. Paul's apostolic work is that an **acceptable** and **sanctified** offering might be offered to the Lord.

- Verse 17 - Paul, uniquely among believers, is able to **glory through Jesus Christ** (literally, *boast*) as the Apostle to the nations. Only Paul was given the grace of being the Apostle to the nations.
- Verses 18-19 - The evidence of Paul's boasting was secondary to the grace given, so that he **dare not speak of any of those things** which included **mighty signs and wonders** which put upon him the evidence of apostleship.
- Verse 20 – Paul begins his concluding remarks about his Gospel ministry.
 - He states that he **strived**, which is φιλοτιμέομαι [philotimeomai], the combination of the words *love* and *honor*.
 - Young's says, *counting it honor to preach...*
 - Perhaps best understood as *loving the honorable thing*.
 - NASB uses the word *aspired*, and NKJV says *made it my aim*.
 - In 1611, the English word *aspired* had to do with breathing and would not have been an appropriate translation.
 - The 1599 Geneva Bible said, *so I enforced myself*.
- Paul's aspiration was to preach the Gospel *outside of Israel*.
 - This is the only grammatically correct interpretation of **not where Christ was named**.
 - The word **named** is a passive verb, so to interpret as "not where Christ was called upon" is incorrect, using the active rather than the passive.
 - Compare 2 Timothy 2:19 which is in the active.
 - The literal reading of this passage is that Paul did not want to preach the Gospel in Israel, where Christ was named by Joseph.
 - Paul, as he states many times, was the Apostle to the uncircumcision.
 - Compare Acts 8:1 and 11:19 where it is crystal clear that the Apostles were staying among the Jews (this was about 41AD, long after the day of Pentecost).
 - The verb is in the passive. Translations which fail to put the passive make a completely different meaning of the text. In the passive, the phrase means, "In Israel." In the active, the phrase means, "where people do not call on the name of Christ."
 - NASB: where Christ was *already* named (they had to insert a word to change the meaning totally).
 - ESV: where Christ has already been named (ESV does not alert the reader to editorial insertions). They kept the passive but the addition of *already* changes the meaning.
 - NIV: where Christ was not known. The translators completely dropped the *naming* issue. This is the fundamental problem with "dynamic equivalence" translations.
 - NLT: where the name of Christ has never been heard. Since Paul went first to the synagogues, they had certainly *heard* the name of Christ. Furthermore, the Greek contains no word in reference to hearing. (TEV is similar)
 - HCSB: where Christ has not been named. They kept the passive, but they made it a participle rather than an aorist. A participle is ongoing, an aorist is at a point in time.
 - *The Message*: only unto those places where Jesus was not yet known and worshiped. This paraphrase adds far more than the text says, a most dangerous practice.
- Verse 21 - Paul quotes from Isaiah 52:15 and Isaiah 65:1, both end-times prophecies.