

Romans 15:14-16

PREVIOUS

NEXT

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans — 3:21-5:21	Romans — 6:1-8:39	Romans — 9:1-11:36	Romans — 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	Gods Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith
Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work " Jensen's Survey of the NT "				

RELATED RESOURCES

Commentary Notes

Romans 15:4-6

Romans 15:7-10

Romans 15:11-14

Romans 15:15-18

[Romans 15:14-16](#)

Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Part 18

by Dr. Wayne A. Barber

We're finally entering into the epilogue of the book. "What does that mean?" you ask. It means that Paul is shutting it down. He's about to close out his letter to the Roman believers. Now don't get too excited. We've got a ways to go before he finishes. The Apostle Paul doesn't do anything quickly. There's a lot yet to be said. You may ask, "What can we find in the epilogue of a book that could possibly be meaningful to us? All he's doing is closing out the letter." Oh, be careful. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." So there are some gems here in the epilogue of the book of Romans that God will reveal to us, if we'll stay with it.

Well, we've been looking at our responsibility under grace since 12:1. The first eleven chapters are about God's grace and mercy. Then in chapters 12 through 16 we find our responsibilities under grace. Even in the epilogue of the book we're going to find much of how we're responsible because of that which God has freely given to us. So many people think that the exchanged life means

God does everything and we're not even responsible. Oh yes, we are responsible. We have Romans 12-16 to document that.

Paul's been talking about two relationships in Ro 12:1 to 15:14. In 12:1-2 he talks about our relationship to God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. This is moment by moment. This is day by day. Paul says to give yourself to Him as an offering. You used to give yourself to your own energy of your own flesh. You were helpless then. You're not helpless anymore. God's spirit lives in you. Now it doesn't make any sense to go back and live the way you used to live.

He says to present your body unto Him. That's in the aorist tense, once and for all, but is also punctiliar—do it! Every day, every moment, in every decision, give yourself to Him. How do you do that? Verse 2 told us—by the renewing of your mind. Why the mind? Because the mind is the facilitator of sin in the body of flesh. As a man thinks, so is he. Renovate your mind. Get the Word of God in your mind. If you're a brand new Christian, get the Word of God in you. Find out that the Word of God leads you and deepens you in your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. As you say yes to Him, you're saying no to your flesh. God is using His Word and His power within in you to transform your very behavior.

The Christian life, folks, is not a religion. Do you know that? It is a relationship with a holy God through His Son in the energy and power of His Spirit. I was doing a meeting at one time, and they extended the meeting. God just did an unusual work. I'm overwhelmed when He does that. I'm never worthy of it. But I saw God begin to help a church understand for the first time that church and Christianity is maybe not what they thought it was. They began to see the relationship. They began to see the importance of a relationship. One little lady, seventy-three years old, said, "I've learned the meaning of 'awesome' this week." I said, "What's that?" She said, "Just being here in the presence of God and His Word and hearing about Jesus living in us, the relationship I have with the Father."

Well, every night after the service we would go out to eat. We always went to the same place, and the same little waitress came to our table every night except one. The last night she came she was so kind and had such a precious innocent face. We were trying to be kind back to her. We hadn't had an opportunity to share anything with her. She came by the last night, and the pastor took the opportunity because she was talking to him. He said, "Can I tell you about the greatest thing that's ever happened in my life?" She said, "Sure!" He said, "You've been so nice to us this week and I just want to share something with you that just means everything to me." He shared about when he came to know Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. Then he asked her the question, "Have you ever had an opportunity in your life to receive Jesus Christ? Have you ever come to that place in your life?" She said, "Well, I'm living with my fiancé right now. He wants us to be of a particular religion and we're studying it right now because we want to give ourselves to be the best people we can possibly be for the rest of our lives."

I could tell she missed what he was trying to share. I said, "What we're talking about is not a religion. What you're studying is a religion. Perhaps it's important some day. I don't know. But, what we're talking about is a relationship. Do you understand what I'm saying? You can actually be related to God the Father through His son Jesus Christ." I just basically took what the pastor had said and went back over it in a different light. She was so gracious. She did not receive Christ. If you think about a little lady by the name of Aletha, remember her as you pray. Some sow, some water, but God gets the increase. I always want to see them come on and know Christ, but I know the timing of the Lord. It's His timing. It's not ours. She did not know the difference between a religion and a relationship.

Folks, I say it over and over and over again, there are people going to churches all over who will fight you over doctrine or they'll argue with you or whatever they'll do. They will smile while they do it. But many people still have not caught it. It's a relationship. And the way you nourish that relationship is by presenting your body a living sacrifice, getting into God's Word, letting Him renew your mind, and transform your character.

Once that happens, God produces something in you that you never knew could happen. He puts a love in you that the world can't come up with. It's distinctively different, as different as night and day from what the world comes up with. Not selfish, not self-centered, but selfless. It serves others. For the first time you're going to have a burden inside of you. Jesus who lives in you gives you that burden. It's His Spirit producing that in you. Jesus did not come to be ministered unto. He came to minister, and that same heart is in you. When you're walking that way, surrendered to Him, that's what begins to emanate from your life. It shows itself by a love that is so distinctively different.

Romans 12:9 says it's without hypocrisy. There's no pretense to it at all. It's pure and selfless and always sees the needs of other people. That's what Paul has been talking about since Romans 12:3 all the way to 15:14. He said some tough things.

Then he comes down to where we are now. I want you to see the things that he's been demanding of them. The things that have been so difficult for them, now he models himself; you see them in his own life. He didn't mean to do that, but you see it coming

right out of him. That's what I love about the Apostle Paul. He just doesn't tell the people, he shows them by the way he lives. He becomes the example for his own preaching.

In his epilogue he says three things. You'll discover, even in an epilogue of a book, even in the closing out of a book, there are wonderful truths to be gleaned to live from. First of all I want you to see Paul's sensitive manner, the sensitivity that's in Paul. He says in verse 14, "And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another."

Now don't think that the Apostle Paul, having said such hard things in chapters 13 through 14, is softening the blow now by saying flattering words. I want you to know, he is not flattering these people. You've got to remember two things that we've already studied in Romans. First of all, he had heard many good things about these believers. He had not been there. He does not know them. He's not the originator, the founder, of the church there. The Lord Jesus just wanted a church in Rome and put it there is the best we can discern. But Paul had heard about these people. So what he's saying to them is real. It's truthful. It's what he's heard from others.

Go back to Romans 1:8, and I'll show you. He is in no way flattering them. He's not trying to back off now since he's been so tough with them. He's not backing up and being soft to try and flatter them. But he is being very sensitive to who they are and to give them the respect that is due them in what they're doing in the Lord's work. Romans 1:8, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world." Paul is saying, "Hey, I have heard about you everywhere. Everywhere I go, I hear about the faith of the believers there in Rome." Evidently they were doing something right. Paul is not flattering them in chapter 15. He's just picking back up on what he has heard and he's persuaded of that.

In verse 9 of chapter 1 he even prays for them because of that. He says, "For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers making requests,..." So Paul has prayed for these people. He understands from others of their faith. He realizes these are not the people like the Church of Corinth. The Church of Corinth had nothing that Paul could say good about them at all. Somebody said Paul wrote Romans while he was mad at the church of Galatia. You know when you're mad you tend to shorten what you have to say. So in six chapters he does what he did in fifteen chapters to the Church of Rome. So it's not like other places. The Church of Rome evidently was doing some things right. So he's not flattering them at all in what he said.

Secondly, he longs to go there. He really longs to go there. In 1:10 he says, "always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you." He says, "Listen, I want to come to you. I feel like there's something of my coming to you. There's something about you that draws me to you. I want to come there." Verse 11 continue, "For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; that is that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine."

Now, the word "establish" is the word *sterizo*, which means to be firmly established. I remember one year we were putting up a basketball goal in the backyard. We put enough concrete in there that it would take a bomb, I think, to get it out. We dropped that pole in the hole there and sure enough it set in. Well, a few weeks later we had a wind storm. It blew two chairs off front porch out into the front yard. It blew a piece off of our fireplace. I mean it blew everything. But that basketball goal set out there and swayed over one way and then the other way. It was so firmly planted that it wasn't blown down.

Paul says, "Listen, I want to come to you. You are worth my while. I want to come to you and to firmly establish you so that any winds of bad doctrine that come your way will not blow you over, so that you may stand steadfast until the Lord Jesus comes again." So there is something about the Church of Rome that had really caught Paul's attention. He is not flattering them with the words that he speaks in his epilogue there beginning in verse 14.

Let's look at the verse: "And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced." The word "convinced" is *peitho*. We've mentioned that word before. That's the root word for believe and for faith. The word means I am persuaded, and it's the kind of persuasion that moves me to do something. Paul says, "That's why I wrote the letter. That's why I want to come to you. There's something about you that's persuaded me. I'm convinced of some things about you."

Now what were the three things that Paul was persuaded about concerning these people? Well, first of all, "that you yourself are full of goodness." The word for "full" is *mestos*. It means to be stuffed, filled to overflowing. Paul says they are stuffed with goodness. The word for "goodness" there is *agathosune*. It's the deeds of righteousness, the deeds of goodness, that are benevolent and beneficial to others.

Now, you can't do this on your own. Paul said in Romans 7, "There's nothing good in my flesh." This is something God, the Holy

Spirit, has got to enable. He says, "I'm persuaded that you have many, many, good works amongst you." That's saying something here. That's a tremendous compliment. He has been persuaded by the report that he's gotten from others that have been to Rome.

Not only that, but they were also "filled with all knowledge." The word "filled" is pleroo. That means not only are you abundantly full, but to the place that it shows. Others see it in you. Now, what are they filled with? They're filled with all knowledge. The word for "knowledge" helps us to clarify what he's speaking of. It's the word gnosis, which is different from epignosis. Epignosis means clear and exact knowledge, full knowledge. But this word means present and fragmentary knowledge. It's contrasted with the other word. In other words you don't know everything. But the Apostle Paul seems to be saying, "You've got enough right now with what you know to last you until Jesus comes back. You've got enough to live the Christian walk. You don't need me. You don't need anybody else. You have enough knowledge right now. You're filled to the brim with knowledge. You have enough understanding of how to live the Christian life. You may not have it all but you've got enough there. You're filled with all knowledge concerning your walk with God."

Thirdly, it is because of this knowledge they were able to admonish one another. He says in the last part of verse 14, "and able also to admonish one another." The word "admonish," noutheteo, is the word that means to warn, to exhort, to admonish. The antonym of that means to lead astray. In other words, you've got people among you and all of you have enough knowledge to where you can exhort each other. You can warn each other. You can keep each other on the track and not lead each other astray. You're filled with good works. You're not bad at all.

In Hebrews 5:12 there is a contrasting situation. This is not what Paul is saying to the Romans. Listen to what the author of Hebrews said to them. It says, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food." Paul is not saying something like that to the Romans. He's saying, "You have the knowledge. You have the ability to exhort and admonish one another. You're filled with all good works."

So, what he's doing here, in my personal estimation, is showing the divine sensitivity we've been talking about since chapter 14. God the Holy Spirit in him moves him to give proper respect where respect is due. He says, "Your testimony is solid. What I'm hearing from you is good. It's right. You have the knowledge to live the Christian life." But I want to tell you where he's going with all of this. That sensitivity, first of all, helps them to realize he does know some good things about them in the midst of the difficult things he's said. But, I want to tell you something, folks, we are not possessors of truth. Truth must be possessors of us. What he's going to show you in a moment is he's writing to remind them of things they already know. They need desperately to be reminded.

You know, I think one of the biggest problems I face in the meetings I do is that there are a lot of Christians who think they already know it all. "Tell me something new, Preacher. I already know that." The moment you open your mouth they say, "Oh, good grief. I've heard that before. I know that." Do you know that?

Let's go back to what we started off with in the introduction. "Oh no! Not another introduction! He's talking about relationships again." Let me ask you a question. Where did you fail this past week? "Well, I did fall a little bit in my relationship." I thought you knew that. You see, knowing it and living it are two different things. The Apostle Paul said, "I'm not coming alongside you to tell you all these great and marvelous things that you don't know. You have all knowledge but oh, how you need to hear it again. Oh, how you need to be reminded."

We never arrive when it comes to truth. I'm still hung up in chapter 14 of spiritual pride because it just stung me. It shows me, clearly. It's not what you understand that makes you spiritual. It's how you live in light of that understanding, and then it's going to express itself in the righteous deeds that you'll do to other people in your relationships.

The biggest problems that I'm having are in the arena of the truths I thought I already knew. But the Apostle Paul, getting to that, shows he's sensitive. I love this. He gives us the integrity of the man. I'm like some others. When I get to heaven, after about a million years of being with Jesus, I just want to sit down with the Apostle Paul because the man is full of integrity. He's just scolded them. I mean he really exposed their shortcomings for three chapters and then he backs off and says, "But, I'm convinced that you're full of good works [that's a relationship word too], and I know that you have all knowledge. And I know that you can admonish and teach one another." He makes sure they understand he respects where they are. But he moves from that divine, sensitive manner there to his serious ministry that he has with them.

Now, folks, this is very serious. When the Apostle Paul writes the Church of Rome, it's not because he woke up one night and couldn't sleep and according to a whim said, "You know, I think I'll write the church over in Rome." That's not the way this letter was

written. All scripture is inspired by God. God the Holy Spirit moved upon the Apostle Paul to write the Church of Rome. He has a serious ministry that God has assigned him. And that's the ministry to the Gentiles. He is an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words what he's saying to them is, "Listen, guys, I know where you are. And I respect where you are. But I want you to know who I am and respect who I am. I'm the mouthpiece God is using to speak to you." They didn't have the book of Romans. He's writing it. We have it. They only had a few of the gospels in the Old Testament. So, therefore, he becomes the mouthpiece God is using to deliver a message to people who had all knowledge, to people who had many acts of goodness, to people who were even able to exhort one another. They needed the remainder. And if they needed it, we certainly need it today.

Look in verses 15 and 16. "But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, to be minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles." Now Paul has addressed some serious things to the Gentile believers, but he's done them in light of the ministry God has given him for those Gentiles. Rome is a Gentile city, and his ministry is to the Gentiles of this world. He said, "That I may remind you again." As we said earlier, he's not telling them things that they did not know. He's reminding them of things they should know. They have all knowledge.

The word "remind" or "reminder" is epanamimnesko. It is found ten different times in the New Testament, always written to churches, knowing that churches need reminding. Churches need a reminder constantly. Peter, as a matter of fact, had to remind some of the greatest Christians you can find in the New Testament. Rome was under the dictatorship of Nero. Nero burned the city and blamed the Christians for it. Persecution spread out in Rome and all of its provinces. Rome controlled Asia Minor. So it went right up into Asia Minor. Peter writes these people. These are people who are dying for their faith. They're being martyred for the cause. You can't find any better Christians anywhere. But Peter has to write and remind them of some things. In 2 Peter 1:12 he gives you the spirit of a person who's an apostle reminding somebody of something. He says in verse 12, "Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them [that's the exact spirit Paul had], and have been established in the truth which is present with you."

Then in 2 Peter 3:1 Peter says, "This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder." We're supposed to know. So the ministry I guess the Lord has given to me and others is to come alongside and to remind people, not so much to tell them what they don't know, but to remind them of what they're supposed to know. That's exactly what Paul was doing.

Paul told the Philippians in 3:1, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you." Why? They already know, Paul. "I know," he says, "but they need to be reminded." You know, I don't know how many times this has convicted me. I always want to be in the pulpit fresh and have something new to say. "Peter they already know." He said, "I know. But they're like me. They need to be reminded."

Well, look at verse 15, and we'll take it apart. He says, "But I have written very boldly to you on some points." The word "boldly" is *tolmeroteron*. The word means with more freedom than normal. I have written to you with a freedom that is not normal. I have literally been set free in writing the bold things that I've written to you. You know, only the Holy Spirit of God can effect that. There was a reason why Paul wrote so boldly. He had never been there. I would imagine some of them could have stopped in the middle of the letter and said, "Wait a minute! We know who Paul is, but he hasn't even been over here. We don't even know him. Who's this guy telling us to live this way?" The Apostle Paul is explaining why he's written so boldly and so freely and so openly. He says, "so as to remind you again." There's the word "remind" again.

What authority did Paul have? What's the main point here? The serious ministry that God has given to him was that he's an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, "But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God." What grace is he talking about? The grace of being an Apostle. Back in chapter 1 he says, "I'm a bond-servant and apostle according to the will of Christ Jesus." He says in 1:5, "through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake."

In Galatians 2:7 he says, "But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised," in other words, Gentiles.

Back in Romans 12:3 he says, "For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you." Paul was an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think there's something we need to understand about an apostle. I'm hearing a lot today of people who have been appointed New Testament Apostles of this day. It's a big deal. I think you need to understand some things about what we're talking about here. An apostle is different. We don't have apostles today like they had back then. The Lord chose the term "apostle" to indicate the distinct relation of the twelve Apostles whom He chose to be His witnesses. It's never used in classical Greek. The Lord Jesus chose to use this word to denote His men which He appointed and commissioned to take the Gospel to the ends of the

earth. Now, of course, one of them defected. That was Judas.

I've always thought that the Apostle Paul was the other Apostle. Now I don't know if I can prove that or not. He says, "I'm an apostle born out of due season." I know they cast lots and Matthias came up as the twelfth one, but you never hear about him again. Paul comes along. You see, they had to be witnesses of the resurrected Christ. Paul was a witness of the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus when Jesus stopped him in his tracks. He witnessed to him right there on that road. He commissioned him right there and gave him the authority a little later on to do what He's commissioned Him to do.

So the word "apostle" designates the office as instituted by Christ. It designates the authority with which those who were called to this office possessed. It was the distinct name of the twelve. Paul justified his being counted as an apostle because he'd seen the resurrected Christ.

However, the word is also broader than that. Timothy is called an apostle. There were those who worked with the twelve, and the word seems to include them during that time. Ephesians tells us that our faith is based upon the apostles and the prophets. Paul is referring to New Testament prophets there since he put the apostles first. They had them back then. They're relegated to the first century. They're not today. They were directly used of God to get the Gospel out. They were the ones through whom the New Testament is given to us. But, when you say that you're a New Testament apostle, no way. They didn't have the New Testament back then. Therefore, they were God's mouthpiece as they wrote these letters to these people.

Again, it wasn't a whim that they wrote these letters. It was by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. You ask, "Why are you saying all that?" Because there a lot of preachers today who tend to put themselves in the light of the authority these apostles had. I violently disagree with that. The only authority an elder, as an officer of the church, has is according to the authority of the Word of God. If I do not live accordingly, you can forget any authority I have. If I'm not preaching the Word, then there is no authority. It's very similar because God was speaking through them as they were writing the Word of God and we have it today. But the only authority we have is relative to the Word and to the Lord Jesus who's been given all authority. So it's to the measure of our surrender to Him and to His Word that we even have it. It's earned. It's never demanded. It's not something that's just natural. But many people put themselves in light of the Apostle Paul saying that since he had that kind of authority, they have that kind of authority. That's just flat out wrong. Unless it's a person yielded, surrendered to the Word, and a person who's given to teach only the Word of God there's no authority. It's earned. It's a different day that we're living in. There are no apostles like there were in the day of the Apostle Paul.

Now you can take the Word and make it generic and say we're all commissioned. That's right. We're all sent forth. In that way, that's fine. But don't go putting all the authority with it that they had. Ours is relative to our walk and to our surrender to the Word of God. Our authority is in the Word of God and in the power of the One who authored it, which is Christ Himself.

So, Paul had a serious ministry to him. He said, "I have been given a ministry to the Gentiles. You're over in Rome. You're a Gentile City. I respect where you are. You respect who I am. I'm an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and what I said to you is not a suggestion. It's God's word to you. Hear it. Respond to it. Obey it."

The third thing you see about the Apostle Paul here as he signs out is his sincere motive. The most difficult verse I think I wrestled with in my study is verse 16. He says, "to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Do you think that's an easy verse?

First of all the word for "minister," leitourgos, is the word we've seen earlier in Romans. It has to do with a person who is a public servant, one who serves the people. Paul always said he would be that kind of minister, one who had the heart for the people.

Then the word for "ministering" is the word that comes from the word "priest" and the word for "work," the priestly work. It appears to me that he's putting himself as an example, metaphorically, of the Lord Jesus Himself, our High Priest. Now, he's not saying to them, "I'm a high priest over you." Because we're all priests. We're all the priesthood of believers. He's not saying, "I'm in any way the high priest because the Lord Jesus is our High Priest." By the way, do you know that? You are a priest before God. Do you understand that? That's why you do not need to go through an earthly priest. You are a priest. You go immediately to your high priest, who is Christ, when you pray. You do not go through a man down here on this earth. We are a royal priesthood, it says in scripture. We are all priests. The priesthood of a believer is very precious.

Paul's not denying that in any way. However, he's using a picture here of the high priest and how he went about his work to describe his motive in what he's doing with the Roman believers. Hebrews 10 says, "But this man, Christ, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever sat down at the right hand of God. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." So Paul would in no way be

going against that. That's not what he's doing. The use of the word here must be taken figuratively. Paul, therefore, applies the term to himself as a minister of Christ to the Gentiles.

It's the same thing he said over in Philippians 2:17. He says, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." Paul is saying, "I'm willing to pay the supreme price." The high priest of the Old Testament had to be called, and he certainly has designated that. They had to be pure. Paul says, "I beat my body daily." "I buffet my body," he says in another epistle. He said, "I die daily," in another epistle. He says, "I reckon myself to be dead." He says in 2 Timothy 4:6-8, "I fought the good fight." The fight that he has fought has not been the fight against the world. It's been the fight against himself. He's saying, "I've won the battle over me. I've let God use me to do what He wanted to do in my life. As the high priest in the Old Testament I've lived a pure life before God. I've allowed God to empower me."

But not only that, the high priest had to have sympathy for the people. The Apostle Paul is saying, "I do care. I'm willing to put myself on the altar. I'm willing to die daily for the sake of the ministry God has given me for the Gentiles and the conversion of the Gentiles." All the converted Gentiles would be the offering that one day he could present back unto God. That's what he's saying.

What a beautiful treatise of the sincere motive of this man. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every one of us could have that? To go about our lives saying, "God, I want to make sure today that I'm on the altar, that I'm dying to the flesh. God, I understand the grace that you've given me and the calling that you've given me and the gifts that you've given me. And, God, I just want to be about your purpose. And, God, I want to live a pure life so that your Holy Spirit can manifest through me only what you can do. And, God, produce in me the love for your people. Give me a heart to serve. And, oh Father, one day when I see the result of all of this, I want to present it back to you as a gift because you are the One who's done it all." That's really what Paul is saying. Paul is simply saying, "I'm a man who's sold out to what God has called me to be and called me to do."

We're seeing these days a lot of people who are not sold out. It's all of us. Perhaps some of us are more recognizable than others. But we're all ministers in that sense. What can we glean from the life of Paul? None of us can say we're an apostle. That's something God put upon him. However, in the same breath when he says, "By the grace given to me, I say unto you," in the very next sentence he says, "we are also gifted and we are also called and assigned." So, therefore, in that light, we can take that principle and say as we live dead to self day by day, then whatever God's able to do through us will be our offering back to God one day.

When I stand before God one day and the people who were effected through my preaching are there, then I can just point right to Him because that's just an offering we can hand right back over to God. That's what Paul's saying. He's saying, "I'm willing to go through whatever it takes for God to accomplish through me what He's assigned me to do." Are you willing to do that? Is that your life? Has church become something you've tacked on to what you do daily or is it a relationship to where you say, "God, I'm living for you for all of eternity and I want you to live through me"?

Well, we see the integrity of Paul, how he was so quick to be sensitive to them. You know, he knew where they were. How quick he was to affirm the seriousness of his message. Then to point back to his sincere motive. He's not coming to them with insincerity of any kind.

We can learn a lot from the Apostle Paul. We've going to learn more from this epilogue as we continue to finish the book. Where are you? What's God speaking to you heart about?