

Men to Men Ministry

Lesson 48 of 52 on Paul's letter to the Romans.

Living in Ministry

Teacher: Just Larry

Phone: 916-337-2648

Web address: <http://theoinsight.com>

Email: ljmonson@hotmail.com

Scripture – Romans 15: 22-29 NASB

22 For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;

23 but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you

24 whenever I go to Spain--for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—

25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

27 Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.

28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

Purpose:

To show us how we, like Paul, can be used of God, and enjoy the sense of significance which that brings.

Introduction

Students of human nature have suggested to us that one of our greatest human needs is for a sense of significance. We all want to have the assurance that we've contributed something important in life, with a meaningful role to fill--that we've made some valuable contribution, and our life counts for something worthwhile. I have that need, you have that need, we all have that need. I want to feel like I am needed and that I've accomplished something useful. Because without that sense of significance, life is hardly worth living.

That's one of the great blessings of knowing Jesus Christ. After your justification, (being in line with God), we now have a new significance. Our significance doesn't lie in how much money we make, or how many things we have, or how high of position we have attained, or how attractive we may be, or how talented we may be, or how many friends we have around us. None of those things. It lies in our position as children of God, who've been chosen of God and equipped to take our place and fulfill our purpose in God's great eternal plan. There's great joy, and blessing, and significance in doing the will of God.

This newly found significance in Jesus does not preclude our ability to have and hold things in life but now these things become subservient to the greater. To those who have natural talents this new significance is seen as a new avenue of use of those talents. To those who see themselves as insignificant or without worldly worth, Jesus says you can and are more than you know.

Now the apostle Paul was a man who enjoyed a fruitful ministry. And as a result, had a strong sense of significance. He knew he was being used of God and there's nothing more joyful and significant than that. And he had a confidence in God to know whatever situation that **All things work together for good**. We are going to learn a little bit more about this man in a brief personable personal addendum in his letter to the Romans.

His purpose for adding these verses seems to be to explain why he hasn't visited the Roman Christians before this. They are probably wondering why the apostle Paul hasn't

1. **Certainty:** assurance you can avoid pain and gain pleasure
2. **Uncertainty/Variety:** the need for the unknown, change, new stimuli.
3. **Connection/Love:** a strong feeling of closeness or union with someone or something.
4. **Growth:** an expansion of capacity, capability or understanding
5. **Contribution:** a sense of service and focus on helping, giving to and supporting others
6. **Significance:** feeling unique, important, special or needed

come to Rome. Our study will give us a roadmap of Paul's plans for significance in the Roman Church. Paul is also going to prepare them for an upcoming visit and tell them why he really wants to come.

Flexible Planning Is a Key to Fruitful Service and Significance.

Planning brings a greater possibility of success.

If you don't plan, plan to fail.

A question must be asked: If Paul left out God in his missionary journeys, would he have succeeded?

Observations from a PMP (Project Management Professional)

I was a professional Project Manager for 11 years. I worked mostly in the technology world. At Intel Corporation I started with small projects with a methodology set by what was called the P100 process. Left Intel had a succession of jobs which all involved project management. Along the way I received a PMI certification. Project Management professional. There was a lot to learn and it was supposed this method would almost guarantee success. It followed this basic matrix:

- i) Projects always started with an end point of the plan. A simple statement of what was to be accomplished. It may be an organizational goal, or a new product, or a change to the computing environment. Part of this statement answered the question, "What does success look like?"
- ii) Next came setting the requirements of the plan. Requirements included the availability of resources, allotment of expenditures, who were the decision makers, who would gauge success. It answered the question, "What do I have to do to accomplish the end point."
- iii) Design of the plan. The project manager would determine the steps or tasks it took to the smallest act or projected need.
- iv) Determination of dependencies of in the plan. What would have to be accomplished before each step was possible. There were three possible dependencies:
 - Finish-Start relationship. When one step finishes you can start the next
 - Finish-Finish relationship. When one step finishes the next will finish.
 - Start-Start relationship. Two steps can start at the same time.

Paul was not a project manager. He had only himself, an occasional helper, and God to plan for. But had set a plan in place for the What was Paul's plan?

- 1) He had been prevented going to Rome V22
 - a) He could not start
 - b) another task needed to be completed,
 - c) his trip to Jerusalem.
- 2) He was done with this present assignment V23.
 - a) He had accomplished his ministry

- i) Greece
 - ii) And Asia Minor
- 3) He had a desire go to Rome V23
- 4) He had a desire go to Spain V24
- 5) On planned trip to stop over in Rome V24
 - a) He needed support on his way to Spain V24
 - b) To enjoy their company V24
- 6) Had to go to Jerusalem. V25
 - a) To minister to the Jewish converts V25
- 7) To deliver an Macedonia and Achaia had a contribution for Jerusalem V26
 - a) The contribution was for the poor in Jerusalem V26
 - b) The Gentiles were in debt to Jerusalem V27
 - i) Spiritual debt Jesus started there V27
 - ii) They could demonstrate their obligation in the material V27
 - iii) To give the church in Jerusalem some special fruit V28
- 8) I will continue my journeys V28
 - a) Will stop by on my way to Spain V28
- 9) When I get to Rome there will be a blessing V29 (Significance)

Competing tasks and desires in Paul's plan:

- He had to complete his missionary journeys throughout Asia Minor.
- He desired to go to Rome,
 - To introduce himself in person
 - To enjoy their company
 - To receive an offering for his next trip.
 - Not to be a missions trip.
 - His talents would be unnecessary.
- He desired to go to Spain to bring the Gospel.
- He wanted to join the new churches offering to help the poor in Jerusalem.

Significance never happens without a plan

Fulfilled Promises are a key to Fruitful Service

God's plan is always to go and make disciples

- 1) Paul's plan was to reach the unreached.

After the encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul was struck blind and was ministered to by Ananias Acts 9:15 and was told that Paul would be, "***He is the chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the Sons of Israel***"

- 2) Paul's plan was to honor his commitments.

In this day of feelings being more important than facts, it is inspiring to know that when Paul made a promise, he kept that promise. His word was his bond. He took an offering from the Gentile Churches for the Jewish Church. The offering was in his possession when writing this letter. His desire was to go west. He could have just used this Godly money to do God's work by going to Spain. But that was not his commitment.

It is remarkable that following through and doing what they say they will do is not that important to some Christians. For example, they join a church and with that act of joining they make a promise to pray for its ministry, attend its services regularly, and support it financially, but they fail to follow through on some of those commitments. They don't keep the promise they made. Maybe they accept a job in the church, and then fail to show up to do it. Failure to keep their word is one reason they accomplish so little for the glory of God and, consequently, feel so useless and insignificant, as so many Christians do. They need to learn to follow through.

3) Paul's plan was to minister wherever he was.

As we talked about last week Paul knew that even if called to a specific ministry, a specific calling, he also came to serve anyone at any time and wherever he went. V24 Minister to the saints in Jerusalem, to enjoy the fellowship in Rome.

4) Paul's plan was to be content with whatever happened to him.

Contentment is an inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace despite outward circumstances. In the New Testament, the word contentment has the idea of being self-contained. While in the Philippian jail, Paul said: "***I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content***" (Philippians 4:11).

5) Paul's plan was to be a carrier of blessings both spiritual and material.

Enjoyment in fellowship in Rome, Missions throughout Asia Minor and Greece, support of the church in trouble, and to bring the blessing of the Gospel wherever he went.

6) Paul's plan was to enjoy fellowship with whomever he worked.

Paul could call the Jewish converts in Jerusalem brothers even though the majority of the Hebrew people wanted to kill him. Paul could call the brothers of faith in Greece and Asia minor as brothers. All because of the need for doing the will of God.

7) Paul's plan was always never go alone.

Reading through Acts we discover that Paul almost never went to a place alone. Among the disciples in learning were: Barnabas, John Mark, Timothy, Erastus, Luke.

8) Paul's plan was always flexible.

As long as you work with people and their free will all plans need to be flexible. Constrained in ministry until finished was planned and accomplished. But there were rumors and reports of famine in Judea, offerings were received and they had to be delivered. So Jerusalem first. Arrested in Jerusalem, and then the Boss shows up in Acts 23:11, Jesus tells Paul he will bear witness of God in Rome. Off to Jerusalem to deliver

the offering and there is a plot to kill Paul. Arrested before Felix, and then Festus, and finally before Agrippa, then sent to Rome.

Conclusion

Paul’s failure to visit Rome previously was not due to a lack of interest (1:9-13). In the ancient world Spain included all of the Iberian peninsula. Parts of Spain had been occupied by Rome since about 200 BC.

Did Paul ever reach Spain?

If he did, it would have to be after his house arrest in Rome ended in A.D. 62. We have the evidence of Clement of Rome (1 Clement 5.7), writing at the end of the first century, that Paul reached “the limit of the west,” but we cannot be certain this refers to Spain. It is possible that Paul envisioned finishing church planting in the northern half of the Mediterranean crescent before turning to the southern half, which would include Roman Africa and of course Egypt. But this is mere speculation. What we can be assured of is that v. 24 makes evident that Paul did not intend to stay in Rome long, much less to become apostle in residence there and take over whatever leadership structure they already had. Rather Paul keeps stressing that he will only be passing through and that he will enlist the Romans’ aid so that he can go further afield in his missionary work.

APPENDIX

Paul’s life

Year	The Life of Paul	Books Written	Historical Events
AD 4			Augustus 27BC-AD14
c. 5	Born—an Israelite—in Tarsus of Cilicia (Acts 22:3; Phil 3:5) A Roman citizen by birthright (Acts 22:28)		
7		Judea becomes a Roman province	
14			Tiberius 14-37
c.15-20	At the school of Gamaliel, Jerusalem (Acts 22:3)		
26		Pilate procurator of Judea	
28		John the Baptist executed by Herod	
30		Crucifixion of Christ	
31(?)	A Pharisee (Phil 3:5)		
c. 32	Present at Stephen's stoning (Acts 7:58; 8:1)		

c.33-34	Persecutor of the church (Acts 8:1-3; Phil 3:6)		
34	Conversion on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9) Goes to Damascus (Acts 9:10-19)		
35			
36			Imprisonment of Herod Agrippa
37	Travels to Arabia and remains there (Gal 1:17) Returns to Damascus then exits the city for safety (Gal 1:17; Acts 9:20-25; 2 Cor 11:32-33) Goes up to Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-29; Gal 1:18)		
38			
41			Caligula murdered
42			Cladius declared emperor
43			Famine in Rome
44			Roman campaigns against Britain
45			Death of Herod Agrippa I
46			
	Barnabas travels to Tarsus in order to seek Saul (Acts 11:25)		
47	Goes to Antioch with Barnabas teaching and many people (Acts 11:26) Agabus prophesies a famine (Acts 11:27, 28) Aid sent to Jerusalem through Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:29, 30) Barnabas and Saul return with John Mark (Acts 12:25) Barnabas and Saul "separated" and sent out (Acts 13:2, 3)		
48	They travel from Antioch to Seleucia, then to Cyprus (Acts 13:4) While on Cyprus they go to Salamis and Paphos (Acts 13:5-12) From Paphos they go to Perga of Pamphylia where John Mark departs for home (Acts 13:13)		

	<p>Ministry in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:14-50)</p> <p>At Iconium (Acts 13:51 - 14:6)</p> <p>Flees to Lystra and Derbe, preaching the gospel (Acts 14:6-7)</p> <p>In Lystra Paul and Barnabas are mistaken for gods (Acts 14:8-18)</p> <p>Stoned at Lystra, supposed to be dead, but re-enters the city (Acts 14:19-20)</p> <p>Departs with Barnabas to Derbe, preaching the gospel (Acts 14:20-21)</p> <p>They return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch to strengthen disciples and appoint elders (Acts 14:21-24)</p> <p>From Pisidia they returned to Antioch of Syria and reported their journey to the church (Acts 14:24-28)</p>		
49	<p>Goes up to the Jerusalem Council with Barnabas (Acts 15:1-29; Galatians 2:1)</p> <p>Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch of Syria, teaching and preaching (Acts 15:30-35; Galatians 2:11-14)</p> <p>Contention over John Mark; Barnabas and John Mark sail to Cyprus (Acts 15:36-39)</p> <p>Paul and Silas depart, going through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches (Acts 15:40-41)</p>	Galatians (?)	Claudius expels Jews from Rome
50	<p>Goes to Derbe and Lystra and picks up Timothy, strengthening the churches (Acts 16:1-5)</p> <p>They go to Troas and Paul sees a vision of a Macedonian man (Acts 16:6-10)</p>		The rise of the Zealots
51	<p>They sail from Troas to Neapolis (Acts 16:11)</p> <p>To Philippi where Paul meets Lydia (Acts 16:12-15)</p> <p>Paul and Silas imprisoned after casting out a demon from a slave girl (Acts 16:16-25)</p> <p>Prison doors opened miraculously and the jailer saved (Acts 16:25-34)</p> <p>Departs from Philippi (Acts 16:35-40)</p>		

	They passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia (Acts 17:1)		
	At Thessalonica and preached Christ, but had to flee (Acts 17:1-10)		
	At Berea where he leaves Silas and Timothy (Acts 17:10-14)		
		Galatians (?)	
	At Corinth and rejoined with Silas and Timothy (Acts 18:1-17)	1 Thessalonians	
52		2 Thessalonians	
53	Paul returns to Antioch after stopping at Ephesus, Caesarea, and Jerusalem (Acts 18:18-22)		
	Travels through Galatia and Phrygia strengthening the disciples (Acts 18:23)		
	Passes through the upper regions on his way to Ephesus (Acts 19:1)		
54			Claudius poisoned by his wife
		1 Corinthians	Nero becomes Emperor
55	Ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-41)		
56	Goes to Macedonia (Acts 20:1)	2 Corinthians	
	Travels to Greece (Acts 20:2)	Romans	
	Goes back to Macedonia (Acts 20:3)		
	At Troas (Acts 20:4-12)		
	Assos. Mitylene. Chios. Samos. Togyllium. (Acts 20:13-15)		
	Paul exhorts the Ephesian elders at Miletus (Acts 20:15-38)		
	Cos. Rhodes. Patara. Phoenicia. (Acts 21:1, 2)		
	At Tyre (Acts 21:3-6)		
	At Ptolemais (Acts 21:7)		
	At Caesarea (Acts 21:8-14)		
57	At Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-25)		
	Paul gets arrested in the temple and causes a mob (Acts 21:26-36)		
	Addresses the mob (Acts 21:37 - 22:21)		
	Paul's citizenship saves him from scourging (Acts 22:22-29)		
	Before the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:30 - 23:10)		

	Jesus tells Paul that he will bear witness of him in Rome (Acts 23:11)		
	The plot against Paul's life (Acts 23:12-22)		
	Sent safely to Felix the governor (Acts 23:23-35)		
	Paul before Felix (Acts 24:1-27)		
59	Paul before Festus (Acts 25:1-12)		
	Paul's appeal honored - turning point towards Rome (Acts 25:12)		
	Paul before Agrippa (Acts 25:13 - 26:32)		
	Paul departs for Rome and sails to Myra (Acts 27:1-5)		
	They sail to Fair Havens on Crete (Acts 27:6-8)		
	In spite of Paul's warning, they set sail again (Acts 27:9-12)		
	In the midst of a terrible storm they get shipwrecked on the island of Malta (Acts 27:13 - 28:1)		
	At Malta (Acts 28:2-10)		
	Sails to Syracuse (Acts 28:11, 12)		
	Sails to Rhegium then Puteoli (Acts 28:13)		
60	Arrives in Rome (Acts 28:14-16)		
	Meets with the Jews (Acts 28:17-28)		
61	Preaches the gospel without hindrance for two whole years in his rented house (Acts 28:30-31).	Philemon	
		Colossians	
		Ephesians	
62	Released from Roman imprisonment	Philippians	
63	Further missionary work, Possibly a Western Trip to Spain	1 Timothy (c. 62-64)	
64		Titus (c. 62-64)	The Great Fire in Rome; Major persecution of Christianity begins
65			
66	Second imprisonment and martyrdom under Nero	2 Timothy (c. 64-66)	The beginning of the Jewish Revolt against Rome