

## Romans 15:14-33

### Gospel Plans

Would you say you are a 'planner' in general? What kinds of things do you make plans for?

#### Context

Paul has concluded the main body of his letter, where he outlines the gospel and its implications for them generally and particularly regarding any tensions between Jew and Gentile that may have existed in the church. But before saying goodbye he mentions his plans to see them on the way to Spain, after he goes to Jerusalem. This is not just a last-minute thought, however ("Oh, and I should see you next year on the way to Spain!"); what Paul says here is one of the primary purposes for writing the letter in the first place – he is preparing the way for a fruitful gospel partnership for the next phase of his ministry.

#### Read Verses 14-16

In verses 14 and 15, Paul acknowledges that some might see his letter to them as quite bold, perhaps even presumptuous, for someone who has never visited them and doesn't have much of a relationship with them. Paul didn't establish the church in Rome, whereas he did establish most of the churches he wrote to.

*What reason does he give in verses 15-16 for writing 'quite boldly' to them?*

*In what sense is Paul a 'priest'?*

*What does this say about Paul's relationship to the Roman Christians? (Consider also what it says about how Paul views the purpose of his letter to them)*

#### Reflect

*How is Paul's role in God's plans different & similar to our role?*

#### Read Verses 17-21

*What does Paul say in verses 17-21 about his service to God?*

*Consider...*

- *what he boasts or glories in?*
- *what has been accomplished?*
- *what has been Paul's ambition, and why?*

#### Reflect

*How would you describe Paul's purpose in life?*

*Have you ever adopted a clear purpose for your life? What do you think it should be?*

#### Dig Deeper:

What do you think it means for Paul to have 'fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ' from Jerusalem to Illyricum?

What does this tell us about his mission strategy?

Do you think it should shape how we engage in cross cultural mission today?

## Read verses 22-33

*Why has Paul been hindered from coming to Rome up till now?*

The Greek word translated as 'assist me on my journey' in verse 24 (*Propempe*) has the meaning 'to assist someone in making a journey, send on one's way with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc.'.

*What is Paul inviting the Christians in Rome to do?*

*Why does Paul think it's appropriate to presume they would assist him like this? (What does that tell us about what it means to be a Christian?)*

### **Dig Deeper:**

Some people say Paul's letter to the Romans is primarily an opportunity to outline his gospel in all its fullness to an important church, and that the details about visiting and going to Spain are trivial. Others say that the whole letter is really just about recruiting practical support for his future ministry.

*How would you describe the purpose of the letter?*

Paul discusses the contribution from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia to the Lord's people in Jerusalem primarily to explain why he can't come to Rome immediately.

*What else does he want to say about this gift?*

*In what sense is this gift a practical fruit of his ministry over the past 25 years? (cf. v16, also 15:5-9)*

*How does Paul invite the Roman Christians to partner with him in the immediate future? (v30-32)*

## **Reflect**

What does this passage say to you about what it looks like to prioritise the cause of the gospel in your life? What are the practical implications?

How could prioritising the gospel shape your short-term and long-term goals? Discuss some possibilities and pray about them together...