

Paul's Marvelous Ministry – Part 1

Romans 15:14-22

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In Romans 15:13, by way of reminder, we came to the end of the doctrinal section of the book of Romans. I want to back up one verse, verse 13. It's a marvelous benediction, and I'm being slightly tempted to preach on this in a couple of weeks here at Revival on Sunday morning. I want you to look at verse 13. Paul said, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." What a beautiful closing benediction.

In this closing benediction, Paul comes to the end of the doctrinal section, the end of the teaching or the didactic section of the book of Romans. The remainder of the letter forms what might be called an epilogue—a capsulizing or a conclusion where he tells several things. He tells why he wrote the letter to them. He tells about his ministry among them, his heart, and his mission that God has given unto him.

There are four main sections of the book of Romans that we've covered. After the brief introduction in Romans 1:1-17, the first main division was: Condemnation-The Wrath of God Revealed (1:18-3:20). In that section, Paul is dealing with the question of how the world is lost and guilty before God. We saw: The Heathen Condemned; The Moral Man Condemned; The Jew, or the religious man, Condemned; and then he shows us the whole world is guilty and in need of the gospel before God.

The second main division is called: Salvation-The Righteousness of God Revealed (3:21-8:39), How does God save sinners? Here is the logical flow. First you have condemnation then salvation. The idea is to see your need of the gospel. Paul is presenting the gospel in the book of Romans, and before we are going to want to understand the gospel, we need to see that there is a need for the gospel, and the need for the gospel is that everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There is no one righteous, no not one. Don't you think the world needs the gospel today? I believe that's the number one thing the world needs today. It needs the gospel. It doesn't just need education, clothes, and food. It needs those things, but the primary thing the world needs is the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what this evening's text is about—Paul being called to preach the gospel. And, that's what our calling is. It's to get the good news out—first the bad news, condemnation, then the good news. Under that division, we saw that God saves sinners in Christ Jesus. We looked at justification, sanctification, and preservation.

The third main division is called: Vindication-The Wisdom of God Revealed (Ch. 9-11). Why has God set aside Israel? We learned that God has only set them aside partially and temporarily. We saw the wisdom of God in Romans 9-11. In Romans 9, we saw Israel's election. In Romans 10, we saw Israel's rejection; and in Romans 11, we saw Israel's future restoration. It's a parenthesis in the presentation of the gospel to ask the Jewish question: What about Israel? What about the Jews? What about the nation of Israel? That God still has

a plan and a purpose for them, and vindicating God's plan with them.

The fourth and last division that we're in, and we're going to come to the conclusion of next Wednesday night, is: Exhortation-The Will of God Revealed (Ch. 12-15). How should a saved man or woman live or walk? The answer is in Romans 12:2, by being transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is the good and perfect and acceptable will of God. We go from condemnation to salvation to exhortation—how we should live out this life as a new believer in Jesus Christ, and then chapter 16 is merely the conclusion.

Tonight, Paul is going to actually talk about his marvelous ministry and the Romans. An interesting shift, when you go from the doctrinal section to the practical, he goes from talking to them to talking about them. He's not talking to them about doctrinal issues anymore, he's talking to them as kind of a pastor's heart to heart. He wants them to understand that when he wrote to them he wasn't looking down on them, thinking that they needed him to educate them, but he wanted them to be reminded of the power of the gospel and that calling that we have to preach the gospel.

I think one of the great needs in the church today is for us to know the gospel and there is power in the gospel. In Romans 1 Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ," and he gave us the reason why. He said, "...because it's the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek or to the Gentile." Even though I've preached the gospel these many years, I'm still convinced that God uses the preaching of His Word to save souls. God uses the gospel, as it's preached, to bring men and women to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Let's look at the marks of Paul's ministry. I want you to write them down if you're taking notes. I'll try not to tarry too long on them, but the first is in verses 14-15, it was given to him by God's grace. Any ministry that we have or calling is given to us by God's grace. Any gifts that He gives us, any ministry that He gives us and entrusts to us, is all given by the grace of God. Go with me to verses 14-15 and let's read them. Paul says, "And I myself also am persuaded of you," Paul now is speaking personally to the Roman believers, "my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written..." as I said, this is his reason for writing this letter, "...the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of..." here it is, "...the grace that is given to me of God." I want you to know about the grace that is given to me of God.

Paul commended the church in Rome for three important qualities. I think it's pretty cool that in verse 14 you see these qualities that someone called the checkoff points of a good church. Again, they are qualities that are there in a good, true church. First he says, "You are full of goodness." He's commending them. Notice it there in verse 14. He says, "I'm writing to you because I'm persuaded that you're full of goodness." What does that mean? Well, it doesn't mean that they were sinless or perfect. We know that no one is perfect, right? You say, "Well, I live with someone who thinks they're perfect." "I know a guy that thinks he's perfect." No, no not one. If we say that we've not sinned, then we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. So,

he says you're full of goodness. He didn't mean that they were perfectly righteous, we're righteous in our standing before God, but he's talking about their moral character. They were in love with God, they served, and were committed to God. This "full of goodness" conveys this idea—moral goodness or excellence in their motives and lifestyle.

When we serve the Lord, He's given us the ministry by grace, we want to be full of goodness. We want to do it with the right motives and right moral standards. They strove to do what's right. They were motivated by a sense of goodness and a desire to be righteous before God. I think that's commendable. I think, as Christians, we should want to live righteous lives. We should want to live good lives. We should want to live holy lives. If you're a child of God, you don't want to dishonor God. You don't want to stumble other people. You want to do what's right. They were Christians that were committed. Let's live holy lives. Let's live good lives. Let's live lives that are morally reflective of the holiness of God. It is evidence of true conversion. It was evidence of the fruit of the Spirit. Check your own heart and ask yourself, "Am I committed to moral excellence? Am I committed to moral excellence when no one is looking, only God? Am I concerned about what I watch on the computer, on television, or in movies that I go to, the thoughts that I allow in my mind, or things that I say? Am I committed to living a pure and holy life?" He commended them for that.

The second thing that he commended them for (verse 14) was that they were filled with knowledge. Again, it doesn't mean they knew everything, and you know people who think they know everything. They weren't omniscient—only God knows everything. It meant that they had a sound, practical understanding of the Christian faith that issued in wholesome conduct. I want you to think about these first two qualities of this church, (it's my prayer for Revival Christian Fellowship) that you be full of goodness and filled with knowledge. I believe that the goodness is the fruit of knowing God's Word, and it was speaking about their practical understanding and grasp of the things of the Christian faith. You can't live the Christian faith if you don't know the Christian faith. God cannot sanctify your ignorance. You can't neglect your Bible and expect to be a victorious Christian. It just doesn't work that way. You have to give God that ammunition—pour into your life the Word of God and the Spirit of God takes that and transforms us into the image of Jesus Christ. I think the great need in the church again today is not only a commitment to moral excellence but a commitment to a knowledge and study of the Word of God. Get involved in a FIT class or a Foundations class, a men's Bible study, couples' Bible study, or a women's Bible study. Go deeper. Get your Bible every day and study God's Word. Get some good commentaries and Bible study tools. Go on Revival.tv and listen to teaching, take notes, and write down things—study the Word of God.

Notice the third quality in this beautiful church. They were able to admonish one another (verse 14). Now that statement is pretty amazing. The Greek term translated "admonish" comes from two other words, one that means "the mind" and the other "to put something somewhere." When these words are combined they form the term "admonish." The word "admonish" means the mind and to put something somewhere, so the word came to mean to teach someone by putting it in their mind or placing it before them. He says, "You are able to actually admonish each other." The word "able" before the word "admonish" is where we get our word "dynamai"

or power from. They have the “dynamai” or the ability to place before one another in their minds the things of God. This is where Jay Adams got the title for his popular book *Competent to Counsel* because even in some modern translations that's how they render that phrase. He says, “I am sure that you are competent to counsel each other.” I like that. What he's saying is that as a church you exhorted each other and taught one another, challenged one another, spoke to one another, and shared God's Word with one another.

Even when you come on Wednesday night, it's not all about just listening to me teach one monologue up here, but after church is over maybe something you heard stirred your heart. You know somebody needs to be encouraged and you share it with them. Or, maybe God gave you a verse earlier today and you find somebody that God wants you to share with and you put it in their mind or you put it before them—you admonish them. I believe that you're also able to counsel each other. I believe that if you've got the Holy Spirit and you know your Bible, you are competent to counsel. You say, “Well, don't I need a doctorate in theology or a PhD or something like that?” Not really. You need the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of God's Word. You need to surrender to God's Spirit, and God can give you that gift, that ability, to admonish, to counsel, to teach other people. Every one of us needs to be doing that. We need to be committed to moral excellence, to a knowledge of God's Word, and to admonishing one another.

The problem in the church today is a lot of times people avoid confrontation altogether. No one likes confrontation. No one likes to admonish another person or tell them something from the Word or exhort them from the Word. Sometimes, we not only avoid it, but we maybe go overboard and face head-on an issue with somebody, but we talk to them or admonish them in a prideful attitude. The Bible says if you admonish someone, or you correct or help someone, you should do it in a spirit of meekness considering yourself—you should go humbly not pridefully. You shouldn't condemn them but, in admonition, setting God's Word lovingly before them. We need to be willing to confront, challenge, and admonish one another. If you have a Christian friend that maybe is slacking off in their commitment to God and to His Word, maybe He wants you to admonish them—not to gossip or backbite about them—but to admonish them. To actually go to them and say, “Look, I want to encourage you. Man, I miss you on Wednesday night or Sunday,” or “Why aren't you in the home Bible study anymore?” “Hey, you still praying? You reading your Bible? Don't forget God's Word.” You're sharing Scripture with them. That's what it means. You're admonishing one another, you're sharing. Remember Proverbs 27:6, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” This term is used as a comprehensive term for counseling, teaching, or instructing someone else. We need to be encouraged to admonish one another.

There are two reasons (verse 15) Paul wrote to them. He wrote to them to remind them of some important truths, “putting you in mind” and secondly because of God's grace calling him to minister to the Gentiles. Notice it, “Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind,” again, the idea of admonishing or placing it in your mind “...because of the grace that is given to me of God.” Because God's grace called him, he wanted to minister to them. Do you know that God saves us by His grace, God sanctifies us by His grace, and that we serve God by His grace? Romans 12:6 says, “Having

then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us." He saves us, sanctifies us, and we serve God all based (verse 15) on the grace of God.

Let me give you the second main point in Paul's ministry, and we won't go as slow through the rest of these verses. Some of you are looking at this saying, "If he goes this slow the rest of the night, he either will not get done or we'll be here until midnight!" This is the second point (verse 16). It was centered in the gospel. It was given by God's grace, and it centers in the gospel. He says, "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles," this very Jewish rabbi, Saul of Tarsus, converted on the road to Damascus, called by God to be the apostle to the Gentiles, "ministering the gospel of God," there it is, "that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Paul tells us that the focus in his ministry was the gospel of Jesus Christ. The word Paul used for minister, we get our word "liturgy" from. It was used exclusively in the New Testament for religious and ritualistic service. Paul is picturing his ministry as a priestly ministry, not that it was sacramental—Jesus already died on the cross—but that those who he won to Christ through the preaching of the gospel were offered to Christ as a sacrifice. What a cool thought!

Did you know everything we do in our ministry is to be an act of worship? Everything we do. All of the ministry God has entrusted to us is to be an act of worship to God. So, his preaching of the gospel was like a priestly ministry, and the Gentiles conversion and ministry to them was like offering up a sacrifice unto God. Paul was preaching the gospel. Ministers, I believe, are called to preach, to proclaim, and to herald the gospel. When Paul told Timothy to preach the Word, he used the word *kerysso* for the word "preach." Do you know what that word *kerysso* means? It means to herald. It means to proclaim. He didn't say, "Just get up and give a little rap, talk, or a little speech." He said, "Proclaim something!" The gospel is good news. It's not good views. (You should write that down. That's a pretty profound little statement.) You're looking at me like...puzzled stare. Write it down. Don't just stare at me. It's not original, by the way. Nothing is original that I say. You say, "Wow! Pastor John, where'd you get that?" Commentaries, other preachers. I've quoted other guys for so long now I think it's all mine, so I've just forgotten everything. But, the gospel is not good views, it's good news!

I pray that, as long as God enables me to preach, I never tire, never vary, and never veer from preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's all I want to preach. I want to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ—God gave His Son to die for our sins according to the Scriptures, He rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that faith in Jesus Christ saves us. We're saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone! Amen? It's on Christ the solid rock we stand, all other ground is sinking sand. You know, when somebody's drowning they need to be saved, and the world is drowning in their sin. We need to throw them the lifesaver of the gospel of Jesus Christ. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." He didn't come just to reform man, to patch up man, to educate man, or to make man religious. He came to redeem us—to save us from our sins. It means that we need to preach the gospel. I think you need to preach the gospel. You need to know and to preach the gospel—the gospel, the whole gospel, and nothing but the gospel. It's the whole church's job to preach the whole gospel to the whole world. It's the greatest need in the world today.

I thank God for the ministry of Billy Graham. One of the keynotes of his ministry was always the preaching of the gospel. He never wavered. He never veered, and we see through that man the power of the gospel to change lives. We need to take as many people to heaven with us as we can. We all need to be gospel preachers.

Not only was Paul's preaching centered on the gospel, but it was an offering up of the Gentiles to God—an acceptable sacrifice to God. The Jews rejected the Gentiles. They said they couldn't be saved, but God accepted the Gentiles.

Notice the third characteristic of Paul's ministry (and should be of ours as well), it was all done for the glory of God. It was given by the grace of God, it centered in the gospel of God, and it was all done for the glory of God, verses 17-18. He said, "I have therefore whereof I may glory..." there's a basis in my ministry for glory but it's "...through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God." Paul's not going to glory in his intellect or his programs or in his achievements. He is going to glory in God, in the gospel, and in Jesus Christ. He says, "I have a basis to glory but not in myself—in those things that pertain to God. Notice verse 18. "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed," I love this man, Paul the apostle. I can't wait to meet him in heaven. May his tribe increase. May God give us more Paul the apostles. Paul said, "All I did was for the glory of God. It was given by God's grace, it centered in the gospel, and it was for God's glory. Paul's glory or boasting was not in his own person (verse 17) but in Jesus Christ. In verse 18, he knew that it was Christ who was working through him.

Did you know that Paul was a great intellect? The story is told that Gamaliel, the great Jewish rabbi, couldn't keep Paul in books—he was so hungry for books. He sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the greatest teacher of that time. Gamaliel said, "I couldn't keep him in books, he just devoured them all." Paul had a great intellect. He was highly educated. He could speak with the Athenians, the Stoics, and all the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill. He could talk to any of the Jewish leaders and contend with them, but Paul was a humble man. I do believe that one of, if not the most important quality in being used by God is a genuine, authentic humility. Paul understood the idea of John the Baptist when he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John the Baptist said, "I'm just a voice of one crying in the wilderness." I believe that Paul the apostle was completely humbled by God's grace, and that's the response.

When you realize that you're the recipient of God's grace, that there is absolutely no reason why God should save you, let alone why God should use you, and yet you give yourself without reservation, one-hundred percent to God and say, "God, here am I, use me." God will use you in a marvelous and wonderful way. I believe that with all my heart. Now, He may not use you the way you desire to be used, but that's the whole idea. You come to Him without any goals, plans, or ambitions and humbly say, "Lord, here am I, send me. I'll go where You want me to go. I'll be what You want me to be. I'll do whatever it is You want me to do. Have Your way in me." God uses the foolish things, the weak things, the base things, the despised things—the things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. I believe with all my heart, men and women that God has most mightily used are men and women who walk humbly with their God.

The minute you begin to think you're hot stuff or you've got something to offer, "God, aren't You glad to have me on Your team?" Like God gets all excited when you dedicate your life to Him. "Woohoo! We're really gonna rock and roll now!" Like God got a real wing-ding deal when you joined His club. No. That God would use us should humble us, and we should be at His disposal. Paul was humble, and he realized that it was all for God's glory. All ministry is to be to the praise and the honor and the glory of God. Grace leads to glory.

The purpose of ministry is the glory of God. In Galatians 6:14 Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." I love that! I'm dead to the world, and the world is dead to me. I just want to live for God and be used by God. In 1 Timothy 3:6, when Paul was instructing Timothy about men who should be in the ministry of the church, one of the qualifications is, "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil," who was condemned because of his pride. The words "not a novice" in the Greek means not newly planted, not a new convert. Give him time to grow, get strong, and then begin to bear fruit lest because if a new convert begins to be in the ministry as the pastor, they can be lifted up with pride and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Ask yourself, "Do you understand that God is giving you a grace gift? Do you understand that your calling as a minister of Jesus Christ is to just get the gospel out, pray for it, give for it, serve for it, work alongside others, team with others, get the gospel out, share the gospel? Do you understand that all ministry is for the glory of God not for the glory of man?"

Let me give you number 4, verse 19. It is to be done through God's power. All ministry is to be done in the power of God not our own resources or strength, notice verse 19. He says, "Through mighty signs..." he's talking about how God had used him to make the Gentiles obedient in deed and word, and part of that was not only preaching the gospel, but God was working through Paul's preaching and confirming the Word preached with signs and wonders. Now, it always came in this order—the Word was preached and then confirmed with miracles. The miracles don't come first. The Word comes and the miracles follow to confirm. Believers should never follow miracles—miracles should follow believers. That's another good thing to write down. It's not original, but it's important. Believers shouldn't be following after miracles, miracles should naturally follow believers. Notice he says (verse 19), "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum," which is actually west Macedonia, the northwestern area of Greece. He says, "I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." There's the repetition again. You might say it's the theme of the book of Romans—the gospel, the good news of Christ.

Paul's ministry, and Christ's ministry through Paul, was by the power of signs and wonders. Now, those two terms, (I want you to understand them) both comprise what we would call miracles, but actually a miracle would do two things. It would be a sign pointing, giving us the significance, and the wonder was the effect that the miracle had on those who saw the sign or the miracle. You know, when you see a sign, it's there to tell you something, right? It's there to tell you, "turn right," "turn left," "dead end," "speed limit," "stop," "bridge out," or whatever. Signs are there to communicate something. This term was used for miracles because the miracles

pointed to something. What did they point to? They pointed that Jesus Christ was Lord. They pointed that the gospel the apostles preached was true. I don't believe that anyone's faith was or should be built on a miracle. It needs to be built on hearing the Word of God and faith in Jesus Christ.

If you come to believe in Jesus Christ because someone you know was healed, what are you going to do when they get sick again? What are you going to do if the healing doesn't last and they die? "Well, I thought God was going to heal them. I thought God was real." Can God do miracles? Yes! That's not the number one thing He's doing today. If miracles follow believers, great. I'm all for that. If believers are following after miracles, that's a very dangerous thing. What so often happens, because we so crave for the experiential, we so crave for the power, we so crave for a visible manifestation of God, that we want to see someone healed or cancer healed, or someone with a missing limb get an arm—which is funny. In a lot of these miracle meetings, very rarely does someone come in with no arms and go out with two arms! I mean, really clearly confirm that God raised them, or all this idea that God raised people from the dead...can God raise someone from the dead? Yeah. He can raise somebody from the dead, but I don't think that's mainly what He's doing today. I would never say God can't do it and God doesn't do it, but the propensity, the tendency, is for us to gravitate toward that and we forget the gospel, and we forget the Word.

You say, "Well, can't you do a miracle and then people come running and then preach the gospel?" Yeah, that's true, but you'd better make sure you preach the gospel and point them to Jesus Christ, and they come under a sense of their sinfulness and need to repent and believe in Jesus. Paul and Silas performed a miracle, and the people came running out of the city thinking they were pagan gods. They didn't immediately respond to the gospel. Paul had these signs and wonders. By the way, that was one of the indications of a true apostle. A true apostle first had to be with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry, seen Jesus resurrected, and have miracles (signs and wonders) as evidence that he was an apostle. In 2 Corinthians 12:12, it says that very clearly that this was the sign of a true apostle. So, the power, the dynamai of God, every conversion is a power encounter which His Spirit brings about regeneration in the life of a lost soul.

In verse 19, we see the scope of Paul's ministry, the power of Paul's ministry, and the nature of Paul's ministry—preaching the gospel and signs and wonders following. I believe God heals, and I believe God has and does heal, but I believe the greatest miracle that we could ever witness is the transformation of a person's life—that God can take someone who was hardened in sin and change them into a child of God.

Let me give you the fourth and last character of Paul's ministry, which should be ours as well. It was according to God's plan. He was doing the work of God the way God wanted to in the purpose and plan of God (verses 20-21). He says, "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel," Paul can't get away from preaching the gospel, the good news, "not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: 21 But as it is written," whenever you find that "as it is written," of course he's quoting from the Old Testament. In this situation, he's

quoting from Isaiah 52:15. "To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand." In the context of Isaiah, he's talking about the suffering Messiah and that the Gentiles, who sit in darkness, would see a great light. Then, he goes into Isaiah 53, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" Paul is actually saying that his calling as an apostle to the Gentiles was in the purpose, plan, and design of God.

Let me tell you about what you want in your ministry. What you want in your ministry is to be doing the will of God. You want to be doing what God wants you to do, where God wants you to do it, and how God wants you to do it. You say, "Well, how do I know that I'm doing it in the will of God?" Present your body as a living sacrifice. Don't give God any stipulations. Don't give God any terms. Don't say, "God, I'll live for You if it's in Hawaii. You want to call me to be a missionary, God? Okay, Calvary Chapel Lahaina, Maui. I sense the Spirit calling right now," and the Lord says, "Go ye northward to Barstow." You say, "Never mind, God. I'm just going to go back and work in the office." God might call you to a place that you may not want to go, but let me tell you something. He never makes you go against your will, but He'll make you willing to go. Amen? He'll make you willing to go. The Bible says, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He'll give you the desires of your heart." See, if you're truly delighting yourself in the Lord, then your desires are going to be, "I'll go where You want me to go. I'll do what You want me to do. I'll be what You want me to be, and I'll say whatever it is You want me to say. Lord, You want me to go to Barstow? I'll go with You to Barstow—I hope it's Maui, but I'll go to Barstow. Wherever You want me to go." Because the Lord is your delight, you know you're going to be with Him, in His will, doing His work, and that's where the joy lies. The joy lies when you're in the will of God, doing the work of God, for the glory of God.

Paul says, "I strove to preach the gospel where Christ was not named." This wasn't because he wanted to avoid rivalry with other ministers, it was because Paul had a passion for the lost. Everybody wants to start a church where churches flourish. Why don't you go where there's no church, where people need to hear about Jesus. I remember the first time I went to China. We were passing out Chinese Cantonese New Testaments in the city of Canton, and we found college students that could speak English. These kids were 20-25 years old, and they never heard about Jesus Christ. They never even heard about Christianity, and they were just soaking up the gospel as we preached with them. Why not go to China with the gospel? Why not go to places where the Word is not heard? Why not go where the church is not planted? Why not reach out? If you really have a burden for the lost, go where there's lost people. Ask God to send you there. Ask God to give you a burden for people that are lost. I've had Christians say, "Man, I'm really so bummed out. I'm the only Christian at my job. I work in this office full of heathens. Can I have a job at Revival? I want to work with saints." That's where they need the gospel. That's where the light shines brightest—in the darkest places. Amen? Your office is your mission field. Your job is your mission field. Paul says, "Look, I've striven to preach the gospel where Christ is not named. Just as he was called (verse 21) to preach the gospel to those who have not seen and those who have not heard, they shall understand.

Let me just review this real quick—these five aspects of ministry.

1.It's given to us by the grace of God.

2.It's centered in the gospel of God.

3.It's done for the glory of God.

4.It's done in God's power, relying upon the Holy Spirit.

5.It's done according to God's plan.

May God use us as His ministers. Amen? Let's pray.