

Ministering to Non-Believers

Romans 15:14-20

PW Emerson – 10/13/2019 – Ten:27 Ministries

Stop for a minute and think

If God gave you a wonderful ministry, where you were seeing results like Billy Graham or Mother Teresa, what would that ministry be?

What would the ministry you would be a part of be doing?

Seriously ... picture you active in a vibrant ministry!

Romans 15:14-20

¹⁴I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another. ¹⁵Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me ¹⁶to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. ¹⁸I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— ¹⁹by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. ²⁰It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.

This letter was written by Paul to believers in Rome

- Paul did not plant the church or the seed in Rome

- Nor had Paul been to Rome at the writing of this piece

But he was a leader in the body of believers and as such, wanted to build up believers everywhere.

In the piece we are looking at today, Paul is talking to the believers about ministering to non-believers, Gentiles.

We rarely call non-believers today Gentiles, but it's the same idea.

It's important to keep in mind that "ministering" is not just for ministers ...

- During biblical times, there was nothing like the concept of a modern minister
- There was nothing like the concept of a modern missionary

They believed that all believers should be ministering

The same is true for us today.

Understand that if you are a Christian, then you are a minister. You don't have to be a pastor or be ordained or be a seminary graduate to be a minister.

Mark 9:38-41

³⁸"Teacher," said John, "we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us."

³⁹"Do not stop him," Jesus said. "For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, ⁴⁰for whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹Truly I tell you, anyone who gives

you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

All believers are ministering.

All believers are ministers. Still today.

I PAUL IS PASSIONATE ABOUT MINISTERING TO THE NON-BELIEVERS

Verses 14-15

¹⁴I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that **you yourselves are full of goodness**, filled with knowledge and **competent to instruct** one another. ¹⁵Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me

Paul is passionate about ministering to non-believers AND

He wants ALL followers to be passionate about ministering to non-believers.

That includes YOU and ME!

John 15:16 Jesus speaking ...

¹⁶You did not choose me, but **I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last**—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

Ministry is a matter of believing in others' potential

God reached out to you

- God knows what you are capable of
- God knows your strengths
- God knows your passions
- God knows your abilities
- God knows your gifts

AND ...

- God knows the capabilities of the person not yet reached
- God knows the strengths of the person not yet reached
- God knows the passions of the person not yet reached
- God knows the abilities of the person not yet reached
- God knows the gifts of the person not yet reached

So God calls YOU and ME to believe in the other person's potential and reach out to them!

I Timothy 4:13

Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

Illustration ...

A group of ministers and a salesman's organization were holding conventions in the same hotel, and the catering department had to work at top speed serving dinners to both. The salesmen were having spiked watermelon for dessert. But the chef discovered that it was being served to the ministers by mistake. "Quick!" he commanded a waiter. "Bring it back!" The waiter returned, reporting that it was too late. The ministers were already eating the liquor-spiced treat. "Do they like it?" asked the chef. "Don't know," replied the waiter, "but they're putting the seeds in their pockets."

Quote Magazine

We should be excited about planting seeds with non-believers.

II PAUL TAKES PRIDE IN GOD USING HIM

It's way too easy for us to take pride in what we've done.

When we do that, it takes away from what God has done.

Verses 17-18

¹⁷Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. ¹⁸I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done

Paul is making it clear that it's all about God

That is too easily forgotten today.

Do you have a ministry? Yes ... you're supposed to.

When people say to me, "I'm going to your church," they don't mean that I own or possess or control the church.

Rather they are referring to a church where I am an active part.

Your ministry is a ministry you are active in, not a ministry you possess.

Your ministry is built on grace.

You aren't ministering because you are so awesome, you are ministering because of God's grace.

- God chose you
- God has a plan for you

God gave you the ministry that you are in because He made you for it.

Paul is thrilled to reach out to non-believers because it will bring more into God's kingdom.

I am thrilled for the ministry God has called me to because I get to see and help and guide so many people in living out their faith ... in putting their faith in action in their everyday lives!

When we see great things happening in the ministry we are an active part of, we should thank God for making that happen!

That's part of the passion Paul has for ministry

That's part of the passion we should have for ministry.

Your ministry is not about you, or your pride, or your reputation. Your ministry is about giving glory to God.

III YOUR MINISTRY IS POWERED BY GOD

Verses 18-19

¹⁸I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— ¹⁹**by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God**. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.

Paul wanted it to be clear where the ministry comes from

Paul wants people to know where his energy comes from

J. I. Pracker (British-born Canadian Christian theologian) wrote: "You cannot at the same time give the impression that you are a great preacher" -- or theologian or debater or whatever -- "and that Jesus Christ is a great Savior." He said, "If you call attention to yourself and your own competence, you cannot effectively call attention to Jesus and his glorious sufficiency."

Amen to that!

I was recently talking with a friend about church focus and church growth.

- Some churches/congregations put the emphasis on how you, the individual, serves the church.
- I put the emphasis on how you, the individual, serve God.

I'm not focused on church growth. I'm focused on people growth!

Is that why this congregation is no bigger than it is? Probably.

But when I see how people live out their beliefs in their everyday lives, I have no regrets.

Just this past week

- One person called me from the road, having just passed a homeless woman sitting in a bundle, a huddled mass on the ground, with a shopping cart of her belongings. The person who called me said that he was going to stop to help. He asked me to pray for them both. And asked if I could give some direction on places he could take her for help.
- “I met a woman struggling with addiction and an older woman struggling with life. Please keep them in your prayers.”
- I just tried to talk to an 80-year-old atheist back into the word of Jesus. It was daunting and exciting.

The ministry that I am a part of is powered by God and I am thrilled!

When Dr. Mark Guy Pearce of England was in this country he related an experience that presents a good lesson for the soul-winner. He said he was out fishing for trout; he had toiled wearily and caught none. His equipment was excellent but he was unable to catch any fish. Finally he came upon an old fisherman whose sack was full of trout. He asked him how he was so successful. The old fisherman answered: "There are three rules to follow in trout fishing: first, keep yourself out of sight; second, keep yourself further out of sight; third, keep yourself still further out of sight."

The preacher walked away musing upon this thought: "That is the best advice I have ever heard for becoming a successful fisher of men. I must keep myself out of sight and put Jesus Christ in full view."

The ministry that you and I do, the ministry that we are a part of, is all about God.

I Corinthians 10:31

³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

A friend of mine, a minister at another congregation was getting discouraged. After the service, shaking his hand at the door were saying all kinds of things ...

- You always manage to find something to fill up the time
- I don't care what they say, I like your sermons.
- If I'd known you were going to be good today, I'd have brought a neighbor.
- Did you know there are 243 panes of glass in the windows?
- We shouldn't make you preach so often.

My advice ...

Next time someone says, “We shouldn’t make you preach so often,” look at that person and say, “Good idea.” “Since we’re all ministers, next Sunday is your turn.”

How about you?

What are you waiting for?