

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Studies in Romans Series 6

No 25

Mission, Men, Maps, Movements, Methods and Meanings

Scripture Reading: Romans 15:15-33

We, in this study, pass to the last major section of Romans. It involves a practical application of living in the Spirit. Paul also wrote to the Church at Rome about the questions they faced and to greet the people he knew there, many of them old friends. You will be surprised how many of these matters were just like those in your church and mine. We will be blessed as we linger over them and glean their thoughts and insights. We begin by looking at Paul and the setting of his letter. You may be surprised how this passage is a also comment on missionary enterprise today.

Men: Who, When, Where and Why.

Luke in his 'History of the Early Church' tells us Paul was in Ephesus when he first spoke of his intended brief visit to Rome (Acts 19:21).

From there he first took a winter recess ministry in Corinth (Acts 20:3). He had sent ahead an advance party of two, his young friend Timothy and one Erastus, whose name means 'beloved' (Acts 19:22). It was there he wrote his famous letter to Rome.

I, Tertius (Third), who wrote down this letter (Paul's scribe), greet you in the Lord. Gaius (I am glad), host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus (Beloved), the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus (Fourth), the brother. Romans 16:22&23.

Note: Words in brackets show name meanings.

After this he began his proposed journey, setting out for Jerusalem. We read that Erastus remained in Corinth (2 Timothy 4:20) where he also worked as a city official (translated 'treasurer' NASB, 'director of public works' NIV and 'chamberlain' AV means more properly manager, administrator, director or trustee) and (Romans 16:23). Timothy was likewise

left at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3).

The information suggests a story. Why did Paul's friends use these names? May we reasonably speculate they were code names? There is also a Secundus or Second in his main party (Acts 20:4). Secundus, Tertius and Quartus are the key. Were they Two, Three and Four in authority, or the order of Paul's associates? Some expositors think that Tertius was Silas. Then, who was 'Beloved', the beloved physician of Colossians 4:4? The word 'beloved' in this verse is not from the same word as Erastus. Luke joined the party at Troas and may have been the man of Macedonia Paul saw in his vision (Acts 16:9). He was the author of The Acts and travelled with Paul on at least four occasions. Look up Luke's use of the first person plural in Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18 and 27:1-28.

Was Paul using code names when sending information into sensitive areas as missionaries do today? Christians were not at that time very concerned about Rome, but rather the Jews, who harassed them.

'The Field is the World.'

It was Jesus who uttered these words (Matthew 13:38). Paul took them to heart. He had preached the Gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum (Yugoslavia), but he had the desire to reach the whole world; which at that time was somewhat limited to the Roman world, which in turn explains the phrase in Romans 1:8.

Paul's ambition was to take the Gospel to yet unreached areas, leaving the established churches to local leaders. Many missionaries today are keen to hand the care of the work to the people themselves. The work of the church must always become part of every local culture if it is to prosper.

Where and How

Paul and his friends were self supporting. Luke, a physician, Paul a tent maker, employed others, but these occupations also gave them opportunities to reach others:

You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me. Acts 20:34.

Nevertheless, he also appealed to the Roman Christians for their support. He had three objectives in his visit: to enjoy the company of his friends, to establish their faith firmly in the Lord and to receive their support. This support consisted of prayer, interest sharing and finance. This program has not changed in 2000 years. Churches that are not enjoying this active

participation are missing out on a Spirit given blessing, the thrill of participating in the Lord's plan for the evangelisation of the world and the fulfilment of His kingdom.

Who and How

Paul felt that there was no need for him to linger. Rome had been evangelised by the movement of witnessing

Christians in the everyday course of business and government.

Because he did not intend to spend a long time there, he wrote the letter to encourage participation in all these activities. How we have been enriched in that the Holy Spirit has overruled so Paul's affairs in that we have this letter to the Romans with its rich instruction.

Paul's (and our) Plans and the Guidance of the Holy Spirit.

If we assume that Paul knew what it means to be led of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14), he also laid carefully prepared plans which called for the support and cooperation of others. But he also was quick to change those plans or put them on hold when the Holy Spirit indicated Acts 21:8-14 & 23:9-11.

We have amazing freedom in our discipleship, and are responsible to give answer to the Lord as to how we use it, and yet for the Spirit filled Christian, it is the Holy Spirit who is in charge. When He is in charge, we are in good hands.

Bible quotations in this study are from the NASB, unless otherwise acknowledged.

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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