

Able to Instruct
Romans 15:14-16

This text marks the beginning of the conclusion of Romans. Paul addresses his future travel plans and then sends his greetings to 30 individuals or specific groups of people. However, before these personal greetings, Paul makes some assessments of the Romans. Paul's ministry to Rome, I think, parallels mine to you. His assessments are mine as well.

I. My assessment of our church . . . (vs. 14).

Paul says of the Romans exactly what I feel of Emmanuel. It is never harmful to compliment others and these three characteristics of the church are worth naming.

(A). You are full of goodness . . .

The nature of man is evil continually. There is not an ounce of goodness in the heart of a human being apart from God's placement of it there through Jesus Christ. But when God changes the hearts of His people, goodness (kindness) is abundant in all. Alexis De Tocqueville, in his work *Democracy in America* said, "Americans are great people because of the goodness of Christians."

(B). You are filled with knowledge . . .

The Apostle uses the word "all" to modify knowledge. This does not need to be pressed literally. The people at Rome may not have known all about the sciences or the arts, or history, but they knew the great doctrines of grace. This word is used by Paul in his letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 8:1, 7, 10).

(C). You are free to instruct . . .

The apostle uses the phrase "able to admonish." Admonish is a fascinating compound word ("to put into the mind") or as we say "knock some sense in." Accepting your brother DOES NOT negate "instructing" or "admonishing." My encouragement to you is to open your eyes and see ministry around you.

II. My assessment of my calling . . . (vs. 15-16).

Just as Paul makes an assessment of the church at Rome, he also looks at his ministry. I think one of the greatest models for preachers is Paul. Do I fulfill my call from God?

(A). I fulfill my call when I boldly speak the truth.

"I have written the more boldly unto you because of the grace of God" (v.15). The job of a pastor is to speak the truth boldly, regardless of the controversy it brings. The Roman Christians needed to be reminded of the grace of God.

(B). I fulfill my call when I look to God for my strength.

"I should be the minister of Jesus Christ . . . ministering the gospel of God" (v.16). My duty is to share with you the good news that God provides righteousness.

(C). I fulfill my call when I see lives changed by God's grace.

The Apostle Paul was a minister to the Gentiles. He had a specific goal in mind. *"That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable . . ."* (v.16). This is an allusion to the Old Testament sacrifices which had to be perfect and without blemish of any kind. The pagan, profane Gentiles are made perfect and stand before God without blemish because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.