

“The Fullness of Blessing”
Romans 15:29
(Preached at Trinity, January 22, 2012)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We now come to the end of this section of **Romans 15**. Paul has been expressing his desire to come to Rome and now that his work in the Gentile region has been most blessed of God he now feels at liberty to fulfill this desire.
2. Two priorities, however, would drive his trip.
One, it was essential that he travel to Jerusalem to deliver the offering for the poor.
Two, his ultimate destination would be Spain so he planned to make Rome a stopover on the way.
Romans 15:24 NAU - "whenever I go to Spain-- for I hope to see you in passing"
3. We should keep in mind the overruling Providence of God. We have no record that Paul ever made it to Spain and his trip to Rome was nothing like he had planned. It would be delayed by several years and when he finally did arrive it would be under the arrest of the Roman authorities.
4. As we come to **Verse 29** Paul makes a wonderful statement that should fill us with encouragement, hope, and expectation.
Romans 15:29 NAU - "I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ."
5. A textual matter. The KJV (TR) adds the words τοῦ εὐαγγελίου – translated: "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."
It should be kept in mind that these words are in later manuscripts. The earlier manuscripts do not contain them.
Most of the time these slight variations result in little difference in meaning.
Here, though, the difference is more pronounced.
 - A. The KJV speaks of the blessing of the gospel of Christ which would refer to conversions.
Romans 1:16 NAS - " For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."
It should be noted that the KJV adds the words τοῦ Χριστοῦ in Romans 1:16 which keeps it consistent with our present verse.
 - B. In the other versions such as the NASB Paul writes of the “blessing of Christ” which is much broader than the “blessing of the Gospel.” It includes this but it means much more.
6. What is Paul referring to as he speaks of the “blessing of Christ?”

- I. On one hand Paul is considering his confidence in God's blessing upon his life
- A. Paul lived his life under the reign of Christ
1. Everything he did was with an eye to serving Christ
 2. He considered himself a slave of Christ
The first verse of this epistle reads:
Romans 1:1 NAS - "Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,"
 - a. The word for "bond-servant" is δούλος
 - b. The CSV is one of the few versions to translate it properly – it means slave. "one who gives himself up to another's will"
 3. For Paul his entire life was Christ
Philippians 1:21 NAU - "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."
- B. A life lived in Christ is a life lived with confidence of the blessings of Christ
1. Paul marched forth with boldness and confidence
 2. When the saints of Caesarea heard of his plans to go to Jerusalem they plead for him to reconsider—but Paul would not be deterred
Acts 19:21 NAS - "Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome.""
Acts 20:22-24 NAS - "And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. ²⁴ "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God."
Acts 21:12-13 NAS - "And when we had heard this, we as well as the local residents *began* begging him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.""
 3. So now Paul is able to state with confidence,
Romans 15:29 NAU - "I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ."
The word for fullness describes a filling up – Paul is saying that every blessing of Christ will be upon his journey.
 - a. It should be noted, however, that Paul saw God's blessings differently than most today. Most see blessings as an increase in material goods or the absence of suffering.
 - b. Paul didn't have material goods and he suffered greatly
2 Corinthians 11:24-25 NAS - "Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep."
Galatians 6:17 ESV - "I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."

II. But Paul is speaking broadly here. Not only is he speaking of the blessings *on* his journey, he is talking about the blessings *through* his journey. He is speaking of the blessing of Christ that he will bring with him to Rome. In other words, God's blessings are not only something we can receive, they are something we can share.

Romans 1:9-11 NAU - "For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the *preaching of the gospel* of His Son, is my witness *as to* how unceasingly I make mention of you, ¹⁰ always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. ¹¹ For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;"

A. What exactly does Paul mean by this word, "blessing"?

1. We use it in many different ways
 - Someone sneezes and we say, "God bless you."
 - We ask the "blessing" before we eat.
 - We declare that we have been blessed
2. It is interesting that it falls under the semantic domain of conversation or speech
 - a. The Greek word is εὐλογία and we can hear the word λόγος
 - b. For example James used it in terms of the use of our tongue, namely praise

James 3:9 NAS - "With it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God"
 - c. Again we see this use of the word signifying praise in Rev. 5

Revelation 5:13 NAS - "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."
3. The Bible uses it in several different ways
 - a. As an expression of praise as we've just seen
 - b. As a token of God's favor and goodness in granting good things

Genesis 1:22 KJV - "And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth."

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 KJV - "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; ²⁷ A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: ²⁸ And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God"
 - c. To describe something set apart unto God. Blessings were often bestowed upon Israel

Leviticus 9:23 KJV - "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people."

- d. To describe supreme happiness
 - a. We can see this in the Beatitudes
 - b. We can often see this in the Psalms
Psalm 89:15 KJV - "Blessed *is* the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance."
- B. So how is it that Paul speaks of coming in the fullness of the blessing of Christ?
1. Paul had been praying for them. He prayed with assurance and expectation. He prayed as one who had confidence that God honors the sincere prayers of His people.
Romans 1:8-9 NAU - "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the *preaching of the gospel* of His Son, is my witness *as to* how unceasingly I make mention of you"
 2. He had the great desire to preach the Gospel at Rome for the salvation of sinners. He had witnessed God's blessings upon his ministry and this blessing would now be felt in Rome. The salvation of sinners would serve to strengthen the Church of Rome
Romans 1:15-16 NAU - "So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."
 3. He had the great desire of bestowing upon them the spiritual blessings that accompany the teaching of the word of God.
Romans 1:11 NAU - " For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;"
 - a. Paul probably isn't talking about some charismatic gift although the miraculous gifts were still functioning within the church. He is most likely talking about the gifts bestowed by God's teachers for the building up strengthening of God's Church
 - b. Notice the expression in Ephesians 4
Ephesians 4:8 NAS - "Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men."
Ephesians 4:11-13 NAU - "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."

Conclusion:

1. So how is it that we can impart blessings upon one another?
 - A. Through prayer. Most Christians do not realize how much is lost by their prayerlessness.
 How much weaker are your brothers because you do not pray for them?
 How much weaker is our church because we do not pray for it.
 How much more could we be?
 Are we seeking the “fullness of the blessing of Christ?”
Spurgeon in a sermon preached on November 19, 1871 –
 “This week has been a very memorable one in the history of this church. Larger numbers than ever before at one time have come forward to confess Christ—as plain an answer to the supplications of God’s people, as though the hand of the Most High had been stretched out of heaven handing down to us the blessings for which we asked.”
 - B. Through the exhortation of the Word of God. Not all of us are called to be pastors or teachers—but all of us are called to encourage one another through the Word of God.
Romans 15:14 NAU - "And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another."
2. When we live our lives with Christ at the center, with an eye towards the Gospel and a passion for the wellbeing of our brethren we can expect the blessings of Christ. In fact, we can live with the expectation of the “fullness of the blessing of Christ.”