

## **If the Lord Will**

(Rom 1:7-15)

Read Introduction: Rom 1:1-15

- We've divided this section (v.7-v.15) into 2 parts: what Paul says about the Romans and now what he says about himself

### **I. Paul's personality and spirit**

A) "First"- this one word gives great insight into Paul's personality

1. Notice he never goes on to say "2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>", etc.
  - i. Paul was a great intellect and highly educated, yet here all that is overcome by his love for God
  - ii. Anacoluthon- the interruption within a sentence or statement from one construction to another, against the expected logical order. A digression.
    - a) Paul is guilty of this many times in his writings and is almost characterized by it
    - b) A man with so great an intellect and a mind is still not controlled supremely by these, but instead by his heart and Spirit (v.9)
    - c) Paul never allows himself to be controlled by the form
      - 1) This is not so prevalent a problem as it was once, in times past in the church
      - 2) We must beware of incessantly following form:
        - (a) 3 points to a sermon
        - (b) Alliteration- lists beginning with same first letter
        - (c) Acrostic- list that spells out something
        - (d) Simply doing what is considered popular or acceptable for the times
    - d) "There are lots of loose ends in revival" -MLJ
      - 1) Jonathan Edwards writings are considered atrocious by the stylists and grammarians
      - 2) Dwight Moody spoke in horrible and broken English
      - 3) Charles Spurgeon was called "profane" by the Conformists because he used common illustrations and speech

### **II. Paul's prayer life**

A) Thankfulness (v.8)- Paul at once thanks God even in the midst of his plans being overturned so often

1. Eph 5:20- Giving thanks for ALL things

B) "My God"- this should be the first thought in prayer and the first reason to be thankful

1. He is MY God due only to His election and work

- i. Jer 31:33- “I will be their God”
  - C) “Through Jesus Christ”- this thought must always be linked to “My God”
    - 1. 1 Cor 1:30- All things of God through and in Christ Jesus the Lord
      - i. Paul can never separate the Lord Jesus Christ from any of his thoughts about God the Father
        - a) John 14:6- No man comes to Father but by the Son
          - 1) 1 John 2:22-23- Any person who thinks they have access to God without Christ is not a Christian at all
          - 2) Heb 10:19-22- “Having a great High Priest.....by the blood of Jesus”
  - D) Intercession- Busy as Paul was, traveling, preaching, teaching, writing, care of all the churches, etc. he still makes time for intercessory prayer
    - 1. Intercession in prayer is a great gauge of our sanctification
      - i. Time spent praying for self -vs- time spent interceding for others
      - ii. Eph 6:18- Prayer for all saints (Eph 1:16, Phil 1:3-4&8, 2 Tim 1:3)
    - 2. Phil 2:3-9- Christian attitude is always one of putting others first
- III. Paul’s submission
- A) Rom 1:10- “By the will of God”
    - 1. Paul was by nature a very zealous and strong-willed person, as is evident from his activities as a Pharisee
      - i. Yet look how greatly the Spirit of God had worked in Him to bring even this strong-willed man into submission to God
    - 2. Paul wants badly to go to Rome, but not against God’s will
      - i. Rom 1:10- “If by any means”
      - ii. Rom 1:11- “I long to see you”
      - iii. Rom 1:13- “Oftentimes I purpose to come to you”
      - iv. Rom 15:23- “Great desire these many years”
    - 3. Even this great apostle was led one step at a time, and often had his desires and purposes rejected and prevented by God
      - i. Yet we never find him murmuring or quitting
      - ii. Paul believed absolutely in the sovereignty of God
        - a) Rom 8:28-30- All things are working to God’s purpose for us
        - b) Rom 15:22-24- Paul has often made plans, but he never enforces his will against God’s
  - B) How can we know God’s will?
    - 1. By hindrances & encouragements
      - i. Rom 1:10- “Prosperous journey” (that I may be prospered in the journey)
      - ii. “That the way be by some means made clear”- Weymouth
      - iii. Prospered does not refer to our own efforts (1 Cor 16:2, 3 John 2)

- iv. Rom 1:13- “let hitherto” is the opposite of “prospered”
  - a) Rom 15:22- “much hindered” from coming to you
  - b) A man so self-willed and zealous is still not led by his own will, nor does he barge ahead against all obstacles
    - 1) Paul is instead very aware of God’s providence, and allows himself to be guided by it
    - 2) He doesn’t hate the hindrances, he appreciates them
- 2. How do hindrances appear?
  - i. By prospering elsewhere, hindered in one cause by prospering in another
    - a) Rom 15:16-23- “For which cause”- Paul’s ministry among those that had never heard had prospered and been blessed of God all these years (Paul simply had not been given the time by God)
    - b) His success assured Him of God’s approval
      - 1) John 15:5- Without Me, ye can do nothing
  - ii. By sickness/physical injury
    - a) 2 Cor 1:8-9- Despaired even of life at Ephesus
    - b) Gal 4:13- Paul had been kept to preach in Galatia by sickness
  - iii. 1 Thess 2:18- Satan is sometimes given power/allowed to be the instrument of the hindrances
    - a) 1 Thess 2:18- “hindered” = “dug a trench”
    - b) Considered the way Satan was used by God in the sanctification of Job
- 3. By the Spirit
  - i. Acts 16:6-7- “Forbidden of the Holy Spirit”, “Spirit suffered them not”
    - a) “Assayed”- Paul has tried, tested his will and found it wrong
    - b) “Suffered”- allowed, enabled
  - ii. This is something that happened in Paul’s spirit and understanding, as is evident by the way in which the guidance came (Acts 16:10)
    - a) We do reason, and plan, and contemplate, makes lists of pros/cons, but in the end we must be guided by God’s will made clear to us
      - 1) Circumstances may allow, but if we do not have peace of mind that we are in the will of God, do nothing
        - (a) Rom 14:23- Whatsoever is not of faith is sin
- C) Submitting to God always prospers His kingdom and purposes
  - 1. Look what became of Paul’s work in the gospel by going into Europe
    - i. There he sat at the waters edge (Troas), and all logic said go to Bithynia but God knows best
- D) Even when hindered so long and often, Paul continued to pray about it, while hindered still and when it becomes clear

1. Phil 4:6- Make your requests known to God
- E) Paul gets to Rome, but look how! As a prisoner of the state
  1. “Man proposes, God disposes”- Thomas Kempis
  2. Consider Paul testimonies and work due to his arrest
    - i. At Jerusalem, before kings, on the boat ride, in Malta, at Caesar’s household
  3. James 4:13-15- “If the Lord will.....”
    - i. In Gods will is the only place of true comfort, joy and peace, and when we are outside of it, we will know by the lack of these things
  4. Matt 26:39- The ultimate example of the Lord Jesus Christ