

July 12, 2020

Speaker: Eric Naus **Series:** This I Believe – The Book of Romans

Passage: Romans 15:14-21

Community Group Questions: “The Main Thing”

Background: this passage is a transition into the final section of the book of Romans. Paul will remind the Roman Christians of his Apostolic authority in ministry, share his travel plans, and invite them to partner with him in his mission to Spain. Paul will also greet various members of the church, and he'll conclude with a doxology. Take a moment to read Romans 15:14-21, and then work through the following questions.

1. In verses 14-15, Paul encourages the Romans about their current spiritual progress, but he explains that he wrote the book of Romans to them with boldness as a “reminder” of the gospel that they already knew. Have you ever thought about the book of Romans as a “reminder”? Why is it so important to review and remember the gospel regularly in our Christian lives? What spiritual habits can we engage in on a regular basis that would help us remember and internalize the gospel?
2. In verses 15-16, Paul implies that the Roman Christians should listen to his words in this letter, because of his Apostolic authority. He was commissioned by Jesus as an Apostle, and now, he works as a “priest,” offering his Gentile converts to God as an “acceptable offering.” What do Paul’s words here imply about how we read the book of Romans today? Is it important to read this book as the very words of God? How is the biblical text different than any other book, and why does this matter?
3. In verses 17-19, Paul says that ultimately, his ministry is empowered by Christ himself. The only ministry that is truly effective comes from God. Following Paul’s example here, what lessons can we learn about how we carry out the ministries that God calls us to?
4. Paul’s ultimate goal was to bring the Gentiles to “obedience” to the gospel (see vs. 18). This is almost certainly a shortened version of the longer phrase, the “obedience of faith” (see Romans 1:5 and 16:26). What does the “obedience of faith” mean, and what would it look like when our lives are truly defined by the obedience of faith?
5. In verses 20-21, Paul shares his heart to keep bringing the gospel to new frontiers where Christ has not yet been named. As he will show in the rest of the chapter, Paul wants to recruit the Roman church’s help in bringing the gospel to the unreached region of Spain. How can Christ Community Church members imitate the Romans in their relationship with Paul, by supporting “frontier” ministries around the world? Give some specific examples of how we can get involved in global missions efforts.
6. In the end, Paul aims to “keep the main thing the main thing,” namely the gospel. Notice how he mentions the gospel three times in this passage (verses 16, 19, 20). The gospel was the central ambition in Paul’s life. The gospel should be our central focus too! How can we keep the gospel at the center of our thinking, actions, and focus in these challenging days, where so many other things vie for our attention?