

**July 19, 2020**

**Speaker:** Rob Davis **Series:** This I Believe – The Book of Romans

**Passage:** Romans 15:22-33

Community Group Questions: “The Gospel that Sends”

Read Romans 15:22-33 aloud as a group and then work through the following questions:

1. In verses 22-29, Paul describes his travel plans. Though God had providentially prohibited him from visiting the Roman Christians to this point (vs. 22), he now planned to do three things: First, he would deliver a financial gift from the Gentile Christians to the poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (vv. 25-27). Second, he would make his way to Rome to encourage the Christians there and preach the gospel there (vv. 24, 28; Romans 1:9-13). Third, he would be financially and logistically “helped” (vs. 24) by the Roman Christians as he set off for Spain, to take the gospel to this unreached area (see vs. 28).

We know, from the record in the book of Acts, that Paul did make it to Rome, but in an unexpected way. When he went to Jerusalem to deliver the gift, the Jewish leadership stirred up mob violence against him, and he was arrested by the Romans, jailed, made to testify before various Roman officials, and eventually taken by sea to Rome in order to stand trial before Caesar. At the end of the book of Acts, Paul is under house arrest in Rome, awaiting his trial before Caesar, proclaiming the gospel to all those who came to see him (see Acts 28:30-31).

From Paul’s experience, what lessons do we learn about God’s sovereignty in our planning? (See James 4:13-15 and Proverbs 16:9). In your life, have you ever made important plans, only to see God change them unexpectedly? How can Christian believers engage in careful planning, while at the same time honor the sovereign guidance of God?

2. Verses 30-33 are Paul’s request that the Roman Christians would “strive” with Paul in prayer so that his gospel motivated plans might succeed. Does Paul believe that prayer really “works”? How does this align with his understanding of the sovereignty of God? Assuming that the Romans did pray for Paul, were their prayers answered? How so? What should we learn about our own prayer lives by wrestling through these verses?
3. Taking a look at this passage as a whole, what lessons can we learn about the relationship between the local church and cross-cultural missionaries? In what specific ways could the Romans help Paul in his journey, and how can we follow their example?