

PAUL'S VISION AND SELF UNDERSTANDING

Introduction – The Roman letter is a full exposition of the wisdom that the Holy Spirit gave Paul to see the practical application of the gospel.

A. Paul's identity and purpose are rooted in Christ Jesus.

Romans 1:1-7

1. Paul sees his vocation as being a servant sent on his Master's mission to the Gentiles.
2. The good news message he brings is that the promised King of the world has been declared the Son of God by the power of the Spirit that raised him from the dead.
3. The gospel calls for the obedience that comes from authentic faith.

B. Paul is a man of prayer who is full of gratitude.

Romans 1:8-17

1. Paul did not plant the congregations in Rome and had been prevented from traveling there.
2. The gospel produces the kind of faith described in the Old Testament book of Habakkuk.
3. Paul desired a spiritual encounter with the church in Rome where mutual edification could occur.

C. Paul's vision as a church planter

Romans 15:14-22

1. Paul considers the Christians in Rome competent to teach one another and his letter only served as a reminder of the truths they already knew.
2. Paul sees himself as a priest of God, offering the Gentile converts as an acceptable sacrifice in God's Universal Temple.
3. Paul has planted strategic congregations around the Mediterranean and does not see his primary mission as building up congregations that he did not plant.

D. Back to Jerusalem and then on to Spain

Romans 15:23-33

1. One of the purposes of Paul's letter was to seek their support for a church planting in Spain.
2. First Paul is taking a special contribution from Gentile congregations he has planted to the poor saints living in Jerusalem.
3. Paul realized this was a potentially dangerous mission and requested they agonize in prayer with him over it.

Conclusion – Things did not work out the way Paul planned and he ended up in Rome many years later in chains. Paul's execution and the ensuing persecution of the church could be viewed as mission failure. Like the cross of Christ, God made it work for the salvation of the Roman Empire.

Discussion Questions

1. How do I envision my personal identity, mission, and vocation in Christ?
2. Have you personally experienced what seemed to be a defeat that God turned into a good purpose?