

**The Bible (Unmuted) Transcript**  
**Episode 55**  
**Romans, Part 24 (Rom 15:14-33)**  
**February 27, 2024**

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**Episode Summary:**

How did Paul envision his apostolic ministry with respect to, say, the Old Testament's levitical/sacrificial system? Did Paul think his ministry was wholly discontinuous with that system? Or did he see it as operating in continuity with it? Moreover, how did Paul think his missionary efforts related to the ministry of Isaiah's suffering servant? And finally, what role did "signs and wonders" play in Paul's work as an apostle? Listen to find out!

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Check out Matt's newest book, *The End of the World As You Know It*: <https://a.co/d/7fuglXx>

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**Transcript:**

0:00 Hey, friends. Welcome back to another episode of The Bible Unmuted. My name is Matt Halsted, and it's a pleasure to be with you once again this week. Well, today we find ourselves back in the Book of Romans. Today we'll be finishing up Romans chapter 15. Next week we'll jump into Romans 16. And because there's no such thing as Romans 17, next week will be the end of our series through the Book of Romans. And that's really bittersweet, because I've enjoyed this study so much. At the same time, I'm looking forward to jumping into do new topics and into different texts. We've been in Romans for quite a while. I don't even remember how many episodes this is. We're in the twenty-something episode in our series of Romans.

I hope that you've enjoyed it. I hope you've learned something. I hope it more that more than just giving you answers. I hope that it's caused more questions. I hope that it's inspired you to look at different topics from fresh angles, different angles; and that it gave you a new set of questions to ask the text. So in many ways, I think the series through Romans was a sort of an introduction to the book itself; but also to maybe Paul's theology, and the way that he understood the various questions that were important in his day.

It was a lot of fun and we're we'll be wrapping up this series next week with Roman 16 and then we're going to jump into a new topic or new text. I've got some things mulling

over in my mind, so I'm excited to share those with you in a couple of weeks. Lots of cool things ahead.

Well, as we look behind us, we've had a month of interviews, really fun interviews. I hope you enjoyed them. I got a lot of good feedback from these interviews. So if you haven't had a chance yet to go listen to those. You can find those here on the podcast. But I've also uploaded videos- that's such a 90s term, videos... I've also uploaded - what do you call them? I don't know, I guess a video. My mind's going blank here. I haven't had a lot of coffee this morning, so perhaps That's the reason. But anyway, yeah, there are videos on YouTube most, except I think with one or two perhaps. Most of the interviews that I do, I generally upload them to YouTube. So you can find them on the YouTube channel as well. Of course, they're here on the podcast too. But either way, go back and listen to those if you haven't had a chance.

We had a lot of fun diving into the Hebrew Bible with Robert Altar and talking about his commentary set. It's a three-volume commentary. It's in actually a 3D volume translation of the Hebrew Bible. That was a lot of fun. I enjoyed that conversation very, very much. Getting his take on translation theory, and method and so forth. That was just a lot of fun. I need to go back and actually re-listen to that. There's so much gold there. If you haven't had a chance yet to check out Robert's translation of the Hebrew Bible - definitely do that. It's a lot of fun. And I just learned the other day through. A friend of mine there's actually an audiobook. So in other words, it's not just a Kindle version. There's actually an audio version. So if you don't want to buy the actual text, it might be worth buying the audio version. So check that out as well.

Let's see. After Robert Altar, we had Berel Dov Lerner, a Jewish philosopher. And we chatted about his new book; which is a collection of essays about various things in the Hebrew Bible which have to do with Covenant and God's relationship with man. And that was a two part series. I think we spent like two hours chatting about stuff. And I knew it would be a long conversation before we even recorded it because there's so much in that book that I wanted to talk about. And he raises a lot of really good and interesting questions that I think deserve a lot of reflection. So, if you haven't had a chance yet, go listen to those two different episodes, Part One and Part Two here on the podcast. Or, you can listen to the entire thing on YouTube. I just uploaded the entire conversation on YouTube as one whole video.

And then after that, we had Steve Walton, a New Testament scholar. And he is currently writing a commentary. I think he said two volume or three volumes, I can't remember. I think it's a three volume set on the Book of Acts. So that was a fun conversation. I've known Steve for a number of years, and it was fun to reconnect and to learn from him, and get his thoughts and take on Luke-Acts. And especially I thought that was helpful because as we've been studying through Romans one of the questions I asked him was, what can Luke-Acts tell us about Paul, and Paul's theology and so forth. And so that was a lot of fun. So, go check that out too. It's also on YouTube.

5:05 I just enjoyed this past month. It was a lot of fun here on the podcast. Okay... By the way, speaking of podcast, if you would, it really helps out a lot if you like this podcast, if you enjoy these episodes, if you find value in it; would please maybe hit pause real quick and then share the podcast with your friends. Maybe on your social media accounts, or

whatever. Send it in a text to a friend, perhaps... or friends plural. You know, like, share it, review it...you can leave ratings. The podcast is I think every platform. I'm not super tech savvy, so I don't know how all this works, but I do remember setting it up to be on Google, Amazon, iTunes, Apple... I'm sure there's other platforms too. I don't remember, but whatever your favorite platform is, if you would leave a rating and maybe a comment, that helps other people find the podcast. I'd really, really appreciate that so much. Thank you for that!

And also, if you can, maybe consider joining Patreon, which is a way to financially contribute to this project. I consider this a ministry. So that's a way that some people are supporting the podcast. And, a shout out to all the Patreon members. Thank you so much for your support. More than I can say... thank you so much for doing this. It helps me do what I do in my ministry and it's a huge encouragement to me. And if you're interested in Patreon, there's always a link in the description for each episode. You can click that link, go to the Patreon page, and there's a list of different ways of supporting the podcast. And depending on what tier that you choose, depends on the benefits that you get from supporting. So everybody gets, for example, an invitation to a book club that we do. That's on a schedule of every two months or so - we get together for a book club. We're currently reading the *Great Divorce* by C.S. Lewis. We read David Bentley Hart's book on universalism, *That All Shall Be Saved*. But, this time we're reading the great divorce. And so everybody gets an invite to that. Everybody gets a bonus episode - a *Patreon Only* bonus episode, every month. And so it's cool. And there are other things, too. There are Zoom sessions that we do, depending on the tier that you choose.

Everybody can sign up for Patreon, for a free trial. So you can test run it for 7 days, I think. And if you want to just do that, and that should give you access to everything, whatever tier you sign up for, should give you access to that. And so you can try it out. If you like it, then you can continue. If not, then you don't have to, no worries. And if you can't support here on Patreon, that's totally fine. I would ask just pray. Pray for this podcast if you would.

I don't say that flippantly. This is kind of getting into a rabbit trail, but my wife and I...we...we could tell you stories of just how important prayer has been in our lives, and in our ministries, especially the past few years. I just can't emphasize how important prayer is. And I'm still learning. So I'm not by no means an expert on prayer. But I just might encourage you. Prayer is so important because you get to communicate not with just a friend, but a friend who happens to be the God of the universe. So when you think of it like that, it's actually pretty cool. And you know, it's just so important to pray. And so I covet your prayers. I mean that very sincerely. Again, just from personal experience, I've seen God answer some cool things, some prayers that I needed that we, my family needed. It's so cool. It's so neat. I need to have my wife on the show. I have to set a time so we can maybe just share a little bit about that. It's been really cool. And I actually... the things I'm thinking about actually have to do with my writing ministry, just that how God has provided and opened up doors that shouldn't have been even available. You know, it's just really cool to see how God brings things our way. All the same. Thank you so much for your prayer support. It just means so much to me. I believe so much in power of prayer.

I do want to say a few things about my book, *The End of the World as You Know It*, that was released on February 7<sup>th</sup>. So, I think we're about 19 days from the day it was

released. Thank you so much to everyone who has purchased the book, grabbed a copy of it, and left a review on Amazon. It's kind of the same thing for that, too, I'd like to add, from what everybody tells me. And again, I'm not like a marketing guru. I don't know how algorithms work. I barely know what an algorithm is, but everybody says it really helps with Amazon, especially, to have people rate your book, and to encourage them to leave a comment. That helps get the word out. So people are telling me to tell you that. So, if you don't mind, if you like the book, you enjoyed reading it, go to Amazon and just leave a rating and a short review. It doesn't get have to be long or anything - like a sentence or two. And of course if you would, share it with your friends. That's the way these books get out to people. And everything that I'm telling you, is pretty much the extent of my marketing knowledge. I've been sharing a lot on social media. I guess, I've been doing that and I'm continuing doing that kind of stuff, but other than that I don't know much about all this. So like I tell people all the time, I would rather be writing a book than marketing a book because I'm just not good at that. But anyway, I appreciate your help in that regard. And so thank you so much for that.

10:45 I want to share just a brief little section, a slice of the book that I think is actually important to bring up. In my chapter on the rapture...so for those of you who are not familiar with the book and how it's laid out; there's essentially seven chapters (if you don't count the introduction and the conclusion), but there are seven main chapters that each ask a question. Like, Will There Be a Rapture?; Who is the Antichrist?; What can we know about the Antichrist? - that kind of stuff. And then I and the reader just sort of take a journey through the text and try to answer that question. and one of those chapters is, will there be a rapture? And, it's really interesting in that....it was just a fun chapter to write, I think, because I share a quote from a prophecy teacher who in his book (and it's all in the footnotes. You can go track all this down if you want to). Basically he says, and he's talking about that passage from Peter that says, "in the last days there will be scoffers on the earth;" In other words, it's going to get really bad in the end times and so forth, and he makes this comment that the very fact that we have people who deny that there's a Rapture (I'm paraphrasing), is proof that we're in the end times. He takes that to be a very bad thing, that you shouldn't deny that there's a Rapture. I mention that here because, not that I think that there aren't sincere Christians who do believe in the Rapture, I actually think there are many sincere Christians who believe in a Rapture Theology. The problem I have though, is whenever we start saying that those who take a different view about Rapture Theology are part of the problem.

I mentioned this in the book, and I've just been thinking a lot about that because I don't necessarily think the prophecy teacher that I'm referring to intended this, but really what ends up happening when you say things like that is you shut down conversation. You kill off the possibility of genuine questions because no one will ever think or even want to ask the question about the Rapture. If you've already set it up such that to ask the question means that you're part of the problem...that that you're part of the scoffers, the mockers, who will show up at the end times. I don't like that because I think what we need to do as exegetes, especially as teachers and so forth, we need to leave room for the question because it's through the question that we gain answers. And I don't think anybody should be afraid of questions because we're all on, hopefully, the pursuit of truth. And questions are the avenue down which we can travel to find the truth.

Now if you if someone were to question my theology about the End Times, I shouldn't be threatened by that, right? If my view of the End Times is correct then who cares if I get the question. The question is an opportunity to explore my belief, and since I'm after the truth, I don't need to fear the question. And it's interesting to me how on this topic you know for some people questions are dangerous because it assaults their view. And so what you have to do is sort of malign the question itself such that everybody will be afraid to ask it.

So, I'm just bringing this up because as you know, this podcast is very important with respect to maintaining the primacy of the question. I love dialog. I love bringing people on the show with whom I disagree. I enjoy exploring topics that are difficult to perhaps understand. I'm okay with putting my own views to the test because that's a healthy thing to do. It's hermeneutic humility and I'm not saying I'm actually good at this, but that's my goal. At least and it should be all of our goals as followers of Jesus. You know when it comes to these tertiary, secondary matters of the faith, like will there be a Rapture or, what sort of Rapture will there be? I think we need to show a lot of humility and say, 'we welcome questions here.' We welcome this, and we want to explore this further.

And so anyway, you'll have to go check out the book. Go read that Rapture chapter, especially. And tell me what you think. I'd love to hear your feedback. But the most important thing I would say is, don't be afraid to ask the questions. You should feel the freedom, the permission to say, What about X? What about that topic? And what about that view on that topic? And what about your interpretation of that passage on that topic? Guys, ask the question. If you never ask the question, you'll never find the answer. And so always engage with the biblical text with questions, and always be prepared to hear what the biblical text actually says. Again, it's called The Bible Unmuted for a reason. Like specifically, I want the Bible to speak. And the way we let it speak, is to not flood it with unhelpful assumptions. And the way to let it speak, is to not destroy the possibility of the question. Ask the question. If you never ask the Bible questions, it'll never really speak. And we wanted to speak to us anyway. I hope that analogy works, the analogy of a dialog, because I think that captures the hermeneutic adventure that we're on. Okay. Well, speaking of hermeneutic adventures, what do you say we jump into Romans chapter 15. And today we're looking at vv 14-33.

16:53 Let's begin by reading vv 14-16.

**Romans 15:14–16 (NRSV) 14 I myself feel confident about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. 15 Nevertheless on some points I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.**

So that is as usual, the translation of the New Revised Standard Version. And there's a couple things I want to mention specifically about the translation choice that was made with respect to this to these words, *brothers and sisters*. So he says, 'I feel confident about you my brothers and sisters.' So, why do they say brothers and sisters when the word

*adelphoi*, in the plural, (*adelphos*, singular) when that's used? Because that can actually be translated as brothers, in verse 14, though the idea is that this is a gender neutral idea. And the reason we know that is because Paul is obviously talking to the entire church - male and female. So that's why it's appropriate to translate this as brothers and sisters. So if you went and maybe did a little word study and you hovered over the word *adelphoi*, or *adelphos* in the singular, you would probably see a gloss that says brothers. Why is NRSV saying sisters? It literally add sisters? Well, it doesn't really add the word because that's sort of contained in the word. It's sort of like in modern parlance when we say, 'Hey guys, listen up.' In that sense the word, 'guys' is a gender neutral term. We mean, 'Hey, everybody.' And so here I think the NRSV makes a wise decision in translating *adelphoi* as brothers and sisters, otherwise Paul would be excluding half the church, and he doesn't want to do that. This is a letter to the church all of male and female.

Anyway let's move on.

Paul sums up his letter by saying that he's simply reminding them of the things they already know. He says, reading it again, **14 I myself feel confident about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. 15 Nevertheless on some points I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder.** In this sense, he's fairly optimistic about the church's ability to maintain spiritual health. But Paul still feels compelled, he says, to remind them—to encourage them—in these truths that he has outlined for them. His justification for doing this is **'because of the grace given [to him] by God 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 17 In Christ Jesus, then, [he says] reason to boast of [his] work for God.'**

**20:05** Let's pick this apart a bit more, because there are some important terms he's using that we need to bring to the surface. When Paul calls himself a "minister of Christ Jesus," the word minister is the term he uses, *leitourgos*, λειτουργός. We get our word *liturgy* from this word. The word means some type of ministry worker. So, in liturgical churches, for instance, *liturgy* is important because it's considered *the work of the people/congregation*. The idea is to get the entire church involved in the service. So, instead of being a passive observer of the events on a church stage, the congregation is invited to pray aloud together, to recite Scripture antiphonally, to stand in praise, to kneel in prayer, to walk up to the altar to receive the Eucharist, etc. So that's the idea of the work of the people here in the liturgy, λειτουργός. Here in the text it is Paul's way of capturing and describing his own active involvement in the worship of God.

This is a really interesting word for another reason with respect to the Old Testament. Let's take a look at this. In the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, for example, we see the word *leitourgos* appear in English. In Exodus 28:31, the infinitive λειτουργεῖν is used to describe the ministering actions of Aaron. We see this in other places as well—for instance, in Exodus 30. So, the question is why would Paul use this particular term to describe his own work?

By the way, let's bracket this for a moment. Did you notice what I did here? I'm not taking anything for granted. It goes back to the beginning of the show. When I talked about the power of asking questions, I I'm not content in just saying, 'Oh, Paul uses the word later,

and *leitourgos* is a word that was common in the Torah.’ And I don’t just say, ‘Okay, that’s interesting. I can go on.’ No, I stop and I ask a question. So the question I ask again is, why would Paul use this particular term to describe his own work? Now, that sounds like a simple question, but it’s my belief and my conviction that even simple questions have profound effects. If you don’t ask questions because you think they’re too simple, you might be robbing yourself of a fresh application or understanding of the text you are trying to read and interpret.

Okay, so again, the question, why would Paul use this particular term, *leitourgos*? I think it’s because he sees himself as, in some way, continuing the ministry that was given to the Jewish people—his own people. He sees his ministry work as *not* some new thing that requires him to abandon the Jewish story. To the contrary, he sees it as a continuation and fulfillment of that story. This is clear, I think, from how Paul couples the term *leitourgos*, λειτουργός with this idea of *priestly service*.

For example, in the same verse (v. 16), Paul says that his being **a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles [is] in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit**. Let’s pay close attention to the terms here. The term or the terms of **priestly service** [ἱεραργέω]; the term offering: when he says **offering** [προσφορά] **of the Gentiles**; and the term **Sanctified** [ἀγιάζω]. So you have these three concepts of priestly service offerings sanctified.

As I say in my book, *Paul and the Meaning of Scripture*, what Paul is doing is drawing from the rich conceptual world of his Jewish heritage and explaining his work in those terms. He’s doing this because these terms hold conceptual currency for describing the work he’s doing as an apostle of Jesus the Messiah.

Paul sees his ministry as priestly work. He sees his ministry to the gentiles as “an offering” that is “sanctified” *by* the work of the Holy Spirit. The language of priests; the language of offering; and the language of sanctified, or the priest temple work. You know that kind of thing. A lot of the language and conceptual categories that he uses here comes from Leviticus. In Leviticus, there are certain cultic (or we might say *religious*) liturgical rules and movements are set in place that will help guarantee a holy priesthood and holy offerings. Just go and read Leviticus.

25:03 Here in Romans, Paul sees the Gentiles as being sanctified *not* by obeying certain food laws or observing Torah in that sense, but rather through the faithfulness of Jesus and faith in Jesus, which is the result of the Spirit’s work. This is why he can say in v. 17 **In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast of my work for God.**

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Hey friends. I hope this episode is a blessing and encouragement to you. I hope that every episode of the Bible Unmuted gives you something fresh to consider and something deep to Ponder. My goal is to offer food for thought to give listeners the tools they need to be faithful interpreters of scripture. I cherish your continued prayers for this ministry and thanks so much to everyone who lifts me up in prayer each week.

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26:40 Let's move onto vv. 18-21. Paul says,

***18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ. 20 Thus I make it my ambition to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on someone else's foundation, 21 but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him shall see, and those who have never heard of him shall understand."***

A few things are worth mentioning here. First, notice how Paul conceives of the content of his message: it is thoroughly Christ-centered. It's all about Jesus. Everything pivots around what we might call the Christ-event – his life, his ministry, his crucifixion, resurrection, ascension – New Testament ecclesiology centers around the work of Christ. *In Christ, there is neither Jew or Gentile, male or female, slave or free; all are one in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3). The idea is that Christ has actually accomplished something that affects the ways in which people relate to one another. And for the church at Rome, given the context of chapters 14 and 15, that christological reality must flesh itself out in the life of the worshiping community. Not least with respect to Jews and Gentiles in the relationship with one another.

Second thing. Notice how Paul says his ministry seeks to “**win obedience from the Gentiles.**” If you don't remember our discussion about how Paul conceives of “faith” and “obedience” in relation to each other, go back and listen to the episode on Romans 1:5, where we chatted about Paul's concept of “obedience of faith.” I won't repeat all that material here again, but suffice it to say Paul's view of *faith* is something along the lines of loyalty and faithfulness. Simply put, Paul wants the Gentiles to get on board with what God is doing in Christ—he wants them to find their true *Lord* and follow him.



Notice, thirdly, how Paul says his ministry is accompanied “**by the power of signs and wonders.**” In the New Testament, *signs and wonders* function to substantiate the Gospel message. In the western world—and depending on your particular tradition—we often think of evangelism as simply an intellectual or psychological enterprise. You know, just get someone to *believe* some propositions. And then we tell them the things to believe, and if need be employ logical arguments for why they should come to faith, and then hopefully they bow their heads and believe what we say. In some Christian traditions, evangelism is simply a matter of the mind—of *verbal* discussions and persuasion. But in the New Testament, sometimes *signs and wonders* accompanied the verbal proclamation of the Gospel. In other words, sometimes gospel proclamation wasn’t merely verbal in orientation. To the contrary, God used many early Christians to proclaim the gospel *visibly* through, say, miracles and other types of supernatural signs. In this way, evangelistic conversations become embodied and physical and earthly. Literally, people tasted and saw that God was good. We see this in the book of Acts; and in many ways we also see this in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11, where Paul talks about the Eucharist. In the bread and wine, there is both participation in the body of Christ *and* proclamation of Christ’s death until he comes again. In other words, ecclesiology and evangelism were very much embodied exercises. In his own ministry, Paul says that signs and wonders accompanied his gospel presentations.

30:39 Here’s a question for us - is this still a thing today? Are miracles for today? Our miracle for the twenty-first century? Are *supernatural* events still happening through the church? Of course! If you pay attention to what’s happening in the global church, for example, you’ll hear all sorts of amazing stories. And I suspect that some of you have experienced the supernatural intervention of God, yourself. True, God doesn’t always bring into the situation *signs and wonders*, but there are times when he does. And this teaches us something very important. First, it teaches us that God is far more than a distant being who has nothing to do with the world. To the contrary, God is near and his power affects and influences the world. And, when these things happen, they are meant to point us to the Good News of Jesus and glorify him. Signs and wonders can help substantiate the message of Jesus in the eyes of unbelievers. Sometimes God chooses not to use signs and wonders, but sometimes he does. It’s up to him how, when, and if, he uses them. And that brings us to the second important thing to remember, and that is this: You cannot put God in a box—not in Paul’s day, nor in our’s.

32:05 While we are on the topic of signs and wonders, I have a request. I need your help. I’m working on a research project that deals with supernatural experiences. This is a big interest to me, personally. Part of the reason is because I’ve had a rather supernatural experience myself. And I’m certainly not alone. I have had a lot of conversations in the past with people about their own supernatural experience. After I began sharing about my own experience, others have been more open to share theirs with me. I’ve spoken to scholars (names that you would know), friends, acquaintances, family members, and one thing that has struck me these past several years in talking with people is how these sorts of things are far more common than I ever realized. It’s interesting, really. Here’s why I’m bringing this up. If you have a story that you would like to share with me, I’m eager to listen. And, I’m interested in all the stories—miracles, visions, dreams, angels, paranormal, any odd thing that struck you as supernatural or non-explainable by a materialist account of the universe, then I’m all ears. My hope is to continue compiling such stories and possibly use them in my research (by the way, if you want to share your

story but don't want your name associated with it, no problem. I'll honor that request; you can tell me your story off the record, no problem). If you're interested, I have a form that I use and I'm happy to send it to you. Reach out to me at the contact page on my website ([matthewhalsted.com](http://matthewhalsted.com)), and I'll send it along.

Okay, back to Romans.

33:55 Paul says that his main desire is to share Christ where he has yet to be named. Paul finds validation for this strategy in Isaiah 52:15, which he quotes in Romans 15:21. This passage from Isaiah is part of the so-called Servant Songs. And here Isaiah 52, you might recognize that this particular Servant Song is about the *suffering Servant*. In the verse that Paul quotes, Isaiah tells us that this Servant will have an impact on the *nations*. Let me read Isaiah 52:15 (LES):

***“Thus many nations [ἔθνη] will be impressed at him, and kings will shut their mouth, because those to whom it has not been declared concerning him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.”***

The word here for nations is what is typical in Greek, namely, ἔθνη. We get our word *ethnic* from ἔθνη. It can be translated as *nations* or *Gentiles*. In fact, Paul uses this word in Romans 15 to speak about his *priestly ministry to the ἔθνη* (Gentiles in NRSV).

What's interesting here is that Paul sees himself as working alongside the Suffering Servant, who is Jesus. Perhaps a better way to put it is that he sees his ministry as coextensive with the Servant's mission to bring Jews and Gentiles to God. And I think this is a good model for all ministry — We Christians are united to Christ in such a way that we share in his mission to announce his name to others. And actually that's a better way to put it. We share in his mission. Because we share in his body and we have no other choice but to be servants as well. It's not *our* mission—the thing we do in our own strength and prerogative; it his mission, and as those who are *in Christ*, we go forth as *his* body to the nations. This idea of being so unified to Christ that we embody his mission and life is also found in Philippians 2, where Paul calls believers to be humble servants toward each other *just as Christ became a suffering servant toward us*. We are to embody Christ in our lives toward each other in the church, as well as toward those outside the church. If Christ is crucified and raised again, then we ought to live cruciform and resurrected lives as well.

36:33 Let's read vv 22-33.

***22 This is the reason that I have so often been hindered from coming to you. 23 But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you 24 when I go to Spain. For I do hope to see you on my journey and to be sent on by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little while. 25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem in a ministry to the saints; 26 for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. 27 They were pleased to do this, and indeed they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things. 28 So, when I have completed***

***this, and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will set out by way of you to Spain; 29 and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.***

***30 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf, 31 that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. 33 The God of peace be with all of you. Amen.***

Here, we see here this idea of mutual support. Paul wants to go to Spain, and he wants to do so by way of Rome. He has hopes that they will, perhaps, support him. Christians have always partnered with one another in the advancement of missions. Cooperation in missions has been part of our shared tradition since the first century. We all have different resources and gifts, and we should share them with one another so that we can advance the kingdom of Jesus the Messiah. Those who have money can give it to those who have the ability to go on the mission field and/or teach. If you recall how earlier in the letter, Paul spoke about how believers have different giftings and that we should use the for each other's benefit. That same idea is here. Paul envisions a church that is harmonious — every part working, every part doing its thing.

But, it's not just missions that the church comes together for. Paul also wants the churches to partner with one another for the sake of other churches who are in need. So it's not just about foreign missions or missions among the unreached, but it's about, helping believers out too. Paul talks, for example, of churches in Macedonia and Achaia sharing their resources with the saints in Jerusalem who were needing help. He says that these Gentile churches were very eager to share their resources with those saints living in Jerusalem for theological reasons: **They were pleased to do this, and indeed they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things (v. 27).** This is a very important point to make. All of Paul's discussions in Romans 1-15 have been rich theologically and intellectually stimulating. But Paul thinks they should *also* be practically oriented. Since it's true, says Paul, that Gentiles have been able to come into the covenant through the Jewish covenants—which led to Jesus—then they should also feel a deep indebtedness and gratitude for such blessings.

We could perhaps draw a principle from this—namely, that theology needs to go from the head to the feet. You need to do something with it. Theology for Paul was more than what you talked about behind a lectern in a lecture hall. Far from it; the Scriptures were for the edification and uplifting of the downcast.

Here's a question for us all: How does your theology impact your life? Do you let the truths you learn from the text impact the ways you live in your world? Those are good questions, and they invite deep introspection. Remember what I said earlier about the importance of asking questions? This is an example of why it's important. And I suspect these are the sorts of questions Paul wanted the church at Rome to meditate upon as well. And no

doubt, if he, if he were here alive today, he would want us in the twenty-first century to ask these sorts of questions as well.

40:59 Well, friends, that's all for today. Thank you so much for listening. When we come back next week, we'll wrap up this series through Romans. It'll be a sad week because I've enjoyed this very much, and I hope you have too. But, in many ways, it'll be fun too because we'll be launching into new material, new texts, and we'll have new questions and, hopefully, find fresh answers. See you next week, friends!

41:29 That's the end of today's episode. And thanks again for listening to The Bible Unmuted. If you like this podcast, consider rating it on your podcast platform, subscribing to it, and sharing with your friends. You can also support the podcast by becoming a patreon member. Go to: <https://www.patreon.com/TheBibleUnmuted> - or simply find the link in the description of this episode. Thanks for listening. Until next time, friends.