

1) As a priest of the gospel Paul is bringing Gentiles to obedient faith pioneering gospel proclamation according to Scripture (Romans 15:14-21).

i) Paul affirms his readers, [M] stating his confidence in their spiritual maturity, [Ed] establishing a foundation of mutual respect (Romans 15:14).

a.) ¹⁴ [Now,] my brothers and sisters, [M] I myself am convinced [RMI, persuaded] [about you] [Ed] that you also are [PAI] 1.) full of goodness, 2.) filled [RMP] with all knowledge, 3.) [S] and able [PMP] to instruct [PAN, admonish] one another [see 15:1-13].

ii) [Adv] Yet he writes boldly [C] because he is a priest of the gospel [E] and must present the Gentiles as an offering to God (Romans 15:15-16).

b.) [Adv] ¹⁵ Nevertheless, I have written [AAI] to remind [PAP] you

[C] 1.) [more boldly on some points]

2.) [because of the grace given [APP] me]

3.) [by God.]

3.) ¹⁶ [For] to be [PAN] a minister [λειτουργὸν] of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving as a priest [ἱεουργοῦντα, PAP] of the gospel of God.]

[E] God's purpose is that the Gentiles may be [AMS] an acceptable offering, sanctified [RMP] [by the Holy Spirit [Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ]].

iii) [I] As a priest he has a legitimate boast in Christ about what God has done [C] through him in Christ by the power of the Spirit (Romans 15:17-19a).

[I] ¹⁷ Therefore I have [PAI] reason to boast [glory in, to exult, to rejoice] [in Christ Jesus] regarding [what pertains to God].

[G] ¹⁸ For I would not dare [FAI] say [PAN] anything

[C] except what Christ has accomplished [AMI] 1.) [through me by 1.) word 2.) [S] and deed] 2.) [for the obedience [ὕπακοήν, attentive submission] of the Gentiles], 3.) ¹⁹ [by the power [δυνάμει, force] of 1.) miraculous signs 2.) [S] and wonders], 4.) and [by the power [δυνάμει, force] of God's Spirit [Πνεύματος Θεοῦ]].

iv) [E] So Paul proclaimed the gospel in a vast region [C] [E] as a pioneer [Adv] fulfilling prophecy of Christ's revelation to the nations (Romans 15:19b-21).

[E] As a result, I have fully proclaimed [RAN] the gospel of Christ [from Jerusalem] all the way around [to Illyricum].

a.) [C] ²⁰ My aim [PMP, ambition] is to preach the gospel [PMN] where Christ has not been named [API],

[E] so that I will not build [PAS] [on someone else's foundation],

b.) [Adv] ²¹ but, as it is written [RMI],

a.) Those who were not told about him will see,

a.) and those who have not heard will understand. [Isaiah 52:15]

2) So, he plans to visit Rome on his way to Spain after delivering the Gentile gift to Jerusalem, and asks and offers prayers (Romans 15:22-33).

[I'] Because his work is finished, [Adv] He plans to go to Rome on the way to Spain [G] to enjoy their company [S] and receive support (Romans 15:22-23).

a.) [I'] ²² That is why I have been prevented [IMI] many times from coming [AAN] [to you].

b.) [Adv] ²³ But now 1.) I no longer have [PAP] any work to do [in these regions],

2.) [S] and I have [PAP] strongly desired [for many years] to come [AAN] [to you] ²⁴ whenever I travel [PMS] [to Spain].

[G] For I hope [PAI] 1.) to see [AMN] you when I pass through [PMP]

2.) [S] and to be assisted [APN, προπεμφθῆναι, send on their way] [by you for my journey there],

[C?] once I have first enjoyed [APS] your company [for a while].

ii) He is going to Jerusalem [G] to deliver the Gentile contribution [I'] and hopes to come to them after, with Christ's blessing (Romans 15:24-29).

²⁵ At the moment I am travelling [PMI] [to Jerusalem] to serve [PAP, διακονῶν] the saints,

[G] ²⁶ because 1.) Macedonia

2.) [S] and Achaia were pleased [AAI] to make [AMN] a contribution [for the poor among the saints] [in Jerusalem].

[G] ²⁷ Yes, 1.) they were pleased [AAI], 2.) [S] and indeed are [PAI] indebted [ὀφειλέται] to them.

[G] For [C?] if the Gentiles have shared in [AAI] their spiritual benefits,

[E] then they are bound [PAI, ὀφείλουσιν] to minister [AAN, λειτουργῆσαι] to them [in material needs].

[I'] ²⁸ So when 1.) I have finished [AAP] this

2.) [S] and safely delivered [AMP] the funds to them, I will visit [FMI] you [on the way] [to Spain].

²⁹ I know [RAI] that when I come [PMP] [to you], I will come [FMI] [in the fullness of the blessing of Christ].

iii) Paul asks the church in Rome to [M] pray for [Ed] his safety, the mission's success, and their joyful reunion (Romans 15:30-32).

³⁰ Now I appeal [PAI] to you, brothers and sisters, 1.) [through our Lord Jesus Christ] 2.) [S] and [through the love of the Spirit], to strive together with [AMN, συναγωνίασθαι, intense, collaborative spiritual struggle] me [in prayers] [to God] [on my behalf].

[M] ³¹ Pray [προσευχαίς]

[Ed] 1.) that I may be rescued [APS] [from the unbelievers [PAP]] [in Judea],

2.) that my ministry [διακονία] [to Jerusalem] may be [AMS] acceptable to the saints,

3.) ³² and that, [by God's will], 1.) I may come [AAP] [to you] [with joy]

2.) and be refreshed together [AMS] with you.

iv) Paul prays that the God of peace would be with the church in Rome (Romans 15:33).

³³ [Now] May the God of peace [be with all of you]. [Amen] [note Romans 16:25-27 appears hear in some manuscripts].

Sermon preparation worksheet

Passage: Romans 15:14-33

1. How has the author organised this passage? a) *An outline*, b) *Tools*, c) *The emphasis*.

- a) 1) As a priest of the gospel Paul is bringing Gentiles to obedient faith pioneering gospel proclamation according to Scripture (Romans 15:14-21).
2) So, he plans to visit Rome on his way to Spain after delivering the Gentile gift to Jerusalem, and asks and offers prayers (Romans 15:22-33).
- b) I identified Romans 15:14-33 as discourse, and used grammatical syntax analysis. The repetition of gospel, proclamation, and Gentiles revealed the first section (Romans 15:14-21), while come, travel, and visit revealed the second section (Romans 15:22-33). The Διὸ in Romans 15:22 hinges Paul's present ministry of proclaiming the gospel the Gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum and his future aspiration of proclaiming the gospel in Spain.
- c) God's unfolding plan to reach the Gentiles through Paul's pioneering ministry necessitates the church's active partnership in prayer and support.

2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage? a) *Literary*, b) *Historical*, c) *Cultural*, d) *Biblical*.

- a) In Romans 14:1-15:13, Paul called for unity between Jews and Gentiles in the church, because Scripture prophesied that Jews and Gentiles might glorify God together. This matters because Paul's pioneering gospel proclamation to the Gentiles is the fulfilment of God's Biblical plan.
- b) Paul is about to travel to Jerusalem with a collection of money from the Gentile churches in Macedonia and Achaia for the poor Jewish Christians there. His plan is then to visit Rome on his way to Spain. The Roman church was a mix of Jews and Gentiles. This matters because it explains why he must articulate his plans so carefully. His future itinerary (Jerusalem, then Rome, then Spain) is dictated by his commitment to gospel partnership. As others have partnered for the work in Jerusalem, he desires them to partner for the work in Spain.
- c) There was often tension between Jewish and Gentile believers. Gentile believers feeling superior. And Jewish believers requiring adherence to the Law. The collection was a deeply significant cultural act, a voluntary financial gift from one group to another. This matters because Paul is not just doing charity. It is an act of solidarity that cements the partnership between Jewish and Gentile churches.
- d) Romans 15:21 quotes Isaiah 52:15. Isaiah prophesies that the suffering servant will astonish and purify many nations, who will witness and understand the profound truth of his redemptive work. This matters because Paul's past ministry is the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. His future goal of Spain is the logical extension of this same prophetic trajectory. The biblical context proves that his pioneering work is not innovation, but the unfolding of God's eternal, revealed plan.

3. What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?

God's plan for Gentile salvation, fulfilled in Paul's ministry, requires gospel partnerships and prayer.

4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

This passage connects to the gospel of Jesus Christ through Paul's quotation of Isaiah 52:15. Paul draws on the climax of the fourth Servant Song, where the Suffering Servant, whose atoning sacrifice for sin is detailed in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, is said to sprinkle many nations. Paul sees his own ministry to the Gentiles as the direct fulfilment of this prophecy. The part of the gospel primarily in view is its universal scope and effectual purpose. The Servant's death was always intended to purify and claim a people from every nation. This connection is made explicit and authentic to the passage by Paul's self-description in Romans 15:15-16. He is a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles engaged in the priestly service of the gospel of God. His goal is to present the Gentiles as an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Paul's missionary ambition to preach where Christ is not named and his aspiration to go to Spain are not merely logistics. They are the historical outworking of the gospel itself. The risen and ascended Servant is now, through his appointed ministers, gathering the offering of the nations that his own sacrifice made possible.

5. What is the main point you will argue to your audience?

The God who gathered you plans to use you to gather them.

6. What applications will you make? a) *To believers*, b) *To unbelievers*.

- a) Actively partner in God's gathering work through urgent, specific prayer and sacrificial giving. Write down the name of one missionary, one unreached people group, or one gospel ministry. Place it where you will see it daily, and pray for them at a specific time. Treat their struggles as your own. Identify one regular expense you can reduce or eliminate, redirecting those funds to support those who go.
- b) Be gathered by the God who is even now gathering a people from every nation through the blood of His Son. Acknowledge that you cannot make yourself acceptable to God. Look away from your own efforts and trust entirely in Jesus Christ, the Suffering Servant, whose blood was shed to sprinkle and purify all who call upon Him. Cry out to Him with empty hands, saying, Lord, I have nothing to offer but my need. Save me for Your Son's sake. Those who call upon Him will never be cast out.

7. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? a) *Sermon outline*, b) *Sermon title*.

b) The one thing Paul couldn't do without

- a) 1) What Paul could do (Romans 15:14-21) - Paul was a spiritual giant, an apostolic force, a man of extraordinary accomplishment.
- 2) What Paul couldn't do without (Romans 15:22-33) - Paul needed the prayers of the church, and he depended on partnership.

Pray

Read Romans 15:1-13

¹⁴ Now My brothers and sisters, I myself am convinced about you that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.

¹⁵ Nevertheless, I have written to remind you more boldly on some points because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶ For to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving as a priest of the gospel of God. God's purpose is that the Gentiles may be an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷ Therefore I have reason to boast in Christ Jesus regarding what pertains to God. ¹⁸ For I would not dare say anything except what Christ has accomplished through me by word and deed for the obedience of the Gentiles, ¹⁹ by the power of miraculous signs and wonders, and by the power of God's Spirit.

As a result, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum. ²⁰ My aim is to preach the gospel where Christ has not been named, so that I will not build on someone else's foundation, ²¹ but, as it is written,

Those who were not told about him will see,
and those who have not heard will understand.

²² That is why I have been prevented many times from coming to you. ²³ But now I no longer have any work to do in these regions, and I have strongly desired for many years to come to you ²⁴ whenever I travel to Spain. For I hope to see you when I pass through and to be assisted by you for my journey there, once I have first enjoyed your company for a while.

²⁵ At the moment I am travelling to Jerusalem to serve the saints, ²⁶ because Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. ²⁷ Yes, they were pleased, and indeed are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual benefits, then they are bound to minister to them in material needs. ²⁸ So when I have finished this and safely delivered the funds to them, I will visit you on the way to Spain. ²⁹ I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

³⁰ Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in prayers to God on my behalf. ³¹ Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, ³² and that, by God's will, I may come to you with joy and be refreshed together with you.

³³ Now May the God of peace be with all of you. Amen.

Introduction

You know the Comrades Marathon. Ninety kilometres of pain. Ninety kilometres of hills. Bruce Fordyce won it nine times. A machine. A legend. He could conquer Polly Shortts when everyone else walked.

But even Bruce Fordyce could not run alone.

Runners need seconders. Men on bicycles. Handing water. Shouting encouragement when his legs burned and his lungs screamed. When he crossed the finish line in Pietermaritzburg, he crossed alone. But he did not get there alone. The victory belonged to him. And it belonged to them.

Behold the Apostle Paul. Spiritual giant. Apostolic force. He planted churches from Jerusalem to Illyricum. He wrought miraculous signs and wonders.

But even Paul could not run alone. Runners need seconders. He needed the Roman church. He needed their partnership. He needed their prayers. The God who gathered you plans to use you to gather them.

Two movements. First, what Paul could do. [Romans 15:14-21](#). Second, what Paul could not do without. [Romans 15:22-33](#).

Let us examine what this great apostle could accomplish by Christ's power.

1) What Paul could do (Romans 15:14-21)

Before Paul asks for help, he establishes who he is. And he establishes who they are. He does not come as a stranger. He comes as a priest with a completed work. Look at **Romans 15:14**.

¹⁴ Now, my brothers and sisters, I myself am convinced about you that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.

Paul affirms them. He is convinced. He names three things they persuade him of. They are full of goodness. That's their character. They are filled with all knowledge. That's their content. And they are able to instruct one another. That's their competence. He establishes a foundation of mutual respect. He is not writing to strangers but to partners. He sees them as mature. He sees them as capable. This matters because what he will ask requires spiritual adults.

¹⁵ Nevertheless, I have written to remind you more boldly on some points because of the grace given me by God. ¹⁶ For to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving as a priest of the gospel of God. God's purpose is that the Gentiles may be an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

He writes boldly. Why? Because of grace. Look at his office. He describes himself as a minister. It is a priestly word. He serves as a priest of the gospel. His work is liturgical. His sanctuary is the nations. His offering is people. The Gentiles themselves are the sacrifice. And they are made acceptable. Not by their works. Not by the law. But sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Paul is not merely teaching. He is officiating. He is presenting people to God. That is his calling.

¹⁷ Therefore I have reason to boast in Christ Jesus regarding what pertains to God. ¹⁸ For I would not dare say anything except what Christ has accomplished through me by word and deed for the obedience of the Gentiles, ¹⁹ by the power of miraculous signs and wonders, and by the power of God's Spirit.

Paul boasts. But not in himself. He boasts in Christ Jesus. He will only say what Christ has done. Notice the grammar. Christ accomplished it. Through Paul. By word and deed. For the obedience of the Gentiles. And the power? Miraculous signs. Wonders. And the Spirit of God. The work is divine. The instrument is human. Paul is the tool. Christ is the hand that wields him. This keeps him humble. And this keeps him confident.

As a result, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum. ²⁰ My aim is to preach the gospel where Christ has not been named, so that I will not build on someone else's foundation, ²¹ but, as it is written,

Those who were not told about him will see,

and those who have not heard will understand.

He has fully proclaimed the gospel. A vast region. From Jerusalem to Illyricum. But his ambition is not to settle. He is a pioneer. He goes where Christ is not named. He will not build on another man's foundation. Why? Because in **Isaiah 52:15**, the suffering servant astonishes nations. Those not told will see. Those not heard will understand. Paul is not inventing a mission. He is fulfilling Scripture. Prophecy drives him. Spain is next because the Word requires it.

Think of a father who labours in secret. He works double shifts. He goes without sleep. He endures the cold morning and the late night. His children do not see him. They only see the food on the table and the roof over their heads. Then one day, they find his worn boots and his calloused hands. And they understand. He did it for them. The suffering servant laboured in anonymity. The nations did not see Him. He didn't have an impressive form or majesty that we should look at him. But now, His nail-pierced hands are raised. We see. And understand. He did it for us. Behold, God's servant has sprinkled the nations.

Paul operates as a priest of the gospel. His work is to bring Gentiles to obedient faith. He does this as a pioneer. And he does this according to Scripture. The text shows us a man with a completed ministry. From Jerusalem to Illyricum. The gospel has gone forth. This point contributes to the larger argument. God's plan for Gentile salvation, fulfilled in Paul's ministry, does not end at Illyricum. There's more gospel ministry work ahead.

If Paul could do all that, what could he not do without?

2) What Paul couldn't do without (Romans 15:22-33)

²² That is why I have been prevented many times from coming to you. ²³ But now I no longer have any work to do in these regions, and I have strongly desired for many years to come to you ²⁴ whenever I travel to Spain. For I hope to see you when I pass through and to be assisted by you for my journey there, once I have first enjoyed your company for a while.

The **that is why** in **Romans 15:22** connects everything. Paul's pioneering work from Jerusalem to Illyricum is complete. The gospel, proclaimed. Churches, planted. The pioneer, done. So now he turns westward. Toward Rome. Toward Spain. But notice. He does not blast through Rome like a conqueror. He wants to come as a guest. He desires their company. He hopes for their help. He wants to enjoy them. And he needs their support. The great apostle. The man who turned the world upside down. He cannot go to Spain alone.

²⁵ At the moment I am travelling to Jerusalem to serve the saints, ²⁶ because Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. ²⁷

Yes, they were pleased, and indeed are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual benefits, then they are bound to minister to them in material needs.²⁸ So when I have finished this and safely delivered the funds to them, I will visit you on the way to Spain.²⁹ I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

But first. Jerusalem. Paul carries a gift. Money. Collected from Gentile churches. For poor Jewish believers. This is not mere charity. This is partnership made visible. The Gentiles received spiritual wealth from Jerusalem. The gospel. The Scriptures. The Messiah Himself. Now they return material wealth. As an act of worship. An offering. Paul must deliver it safely. He will deliver it personally. The unity of Jew and Gentile depends on it. Then Spain. And on the way, Rome. With the fullness of Christ's blessing. Paul is confident. But he is not careless.

³⁰ Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in prayers to God on my behalf.³¹ Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,³² and that, by God's will, I may come to you with joy and be refreshed together with you.

And here is the hinge. The appeal. Paul does not command. He appeals. He does not demand. He requests. And notice the urgency. Strive together with me. The Greek word means agonising. Wrestling. Struggling. Together. Paul is walking into danger. Unbelievers in Judea want him dead. Suspicious saints in Jerusalem may reject him. The collection could be refused. The unity of the church could shatter. Paul knows his limits. He cannot control hearts in Jerusalem. He cannot disarm every enemy. But the church in Rome can strive in prayer. They can wrestle with God on his behalf. Three specific requests. Rescue from unbelievers. Acceptance by the saints. Joyful reunion with them.

³³ Now May the God of peace be with all of you. Amen.

And then the benediction. The God of peace. Not the God of chaos. Not the God of panic. The God of peace. Paul walks toward danger. But he entrusts himself and them to the God of peace.

Great marathon runners don't run alone. They need seconders. Wives on bicycles. Friends in cars. Water carriers. Encouragers. When they cross that finish line, they might cross alone. But they don't get there alone. The victory belongs to him. And it belongs to them. Paul is the forerunner. Called to Spain. Called to the nations. But he cannot run without seconders. He needs the Roman church. He needs their prayers. He needs their support. When the gospel advances in Spain, the victory will belong to Paul. And it will belong to them.

So here is Paul. The man who planted churches from Jerusalem to Illyricum.

The man who wrought miraculous signs and wonders. The man who boasts only in Christ. That man cannot go to Spain without the prayers of the Roman church. He cannot deliver the collection without their striving. He cannot face the unbelievers in Judea without their agonising. God's plan for Gentile salvation, fulfilled in Paul's ministry, requires gospel partnerships and prayer. Runner needs seconders. Pioneers need partners. Preachers need prayers.

Paul could do the extraordinary. But he could not do without them. And neither can we.

Connect to the gospel

Behold the Suffering Servant. Despised. Rejected. Acquainted with grief. Smitten by God. Wounded for our transgressions. Crushed for our iniquities. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

But wait. Read **Isaiah 52:15**. He will sprinkle many nations. Kings will shut their mouths. Those not told will see. Those not heard will understand.

Paul quotes this. He sees himself in that verse. Not as the Servant. As the servant's instrument. Christ accomplished. Paul administered. The nations are seeing. The Gentiles are understanding.

This is the gospel. Not a Jewish Saviour for Jewish sinners. A suffering Saviour for rebellious nations. His blood sprinkled you. His death purchased you. His resurrection secured you. The Servant died. The Servant rose. The Servant now sprinkles. With His own blood. And the nations come.

Paul grasped this. So he planted. From Jerusalem to Illyricum. He preached where Christ was not named. Because the Servant's victory demanded it. The nations must see. The nations must hear.

But notice. The risen Christ does not gather alone. Paul could turn the world upside down. Paul could not go to Spain without seconders. Without partners. Without prayers. Without you. God's plan for Gentile salvation, fulfilled in Paul's ministry, requires gospel partnerships and prayer.

Here is the wonder. The God who gathered you plans to use you to gather them. You are His instrument now.

And so we turn to how this works itself out. In Benoni. In Dunnottar. In your life. Today.

Believers

Here is the wonder. The God who gathered you plans to use you to gather them. You are His instrument now.

Runners need seconders. Choose your runner. Our church plant in Benoni. Our church restoration in Dunnottar. The Funnels. The Mollers. The Webbs. Paul Richardson. Write the mission down. Place it on your mirror. On your dashboard. By your bed. Pray for them each day. Treat their battles as your battles. Their victories as your victories.

And give. Sacrificially. Find one expense you can sacrificially reduce. One luxury you can forego. Redirect those funds to those who go. This is not meant to be a burden. It is an invitation. The God of peace invites you to join His work of gathering. Not from a distance. But as a partner. A seconder. A fellow labourer.

Benoni needs planting. Dunnottar needs restoring. The nations wait. The gospel advances. And you can have a joyful part in it.

Unbelievers

But you are not yet gathered. You hear the call. You feel the pull. But you still stand outside. Why?

Be gathered. Today. The God who is even now gathering a people from every nation calls to you. He calls through blood. The blood of His own Son. The Suffering Servant. Wounded for your transgressions. Crushed for your iniquities. His blood sprinkles. His blood purifies.

You cannot make yourself acceptable. Not by effort. Not by performance. Not by religious duty. Your hands are empty. Your works are filthy rags. So look away from yourself. Look to Christ. Trust Him completely. Cry out to Him with empty hands. Say, Lord, I have nothing to offer but my need. Save me for Your Son's sake.

Will you say it? Will you cry out? Will you be gathered? Those who call upon Him will never be cast out. Never. No, not one. Come. Be gathered. Be washed. Be made whole. The nations are coming. Will you be among them?

After the service, come meet with me here at the pulpit. I, or someone from the evangelism team, would love to share the gospel with you. Or make an appointment to see me during the week. My contact details are in the bulletin or on our website.

Conclusion

Behold the Apostle Paul. Spiritual giant. Apostolic force. He planted churches from Jerusalem to Illyricum. He wrought miraculous signs and wonders.

But not even Paul could deliver the collection to Jerusalem without the church's striving. Could face unbelievers without the church's agonising. Could go to Spain without the church's partnering. Runners need seconders. Pioneers need partners. Preachers need prayers. The runner crosses alone. But he did not get there alone. The victory belongs to him. And it belongs to them.

Here is the wonder. The God who gathered you plans to use you to gather them. You are His instrument. The same God who propelled Paul to Spain invites you to partnership in Benoni. The same God who opened the hearts of Gentiles invites you to prayer.

Will you pray? Will you give? Will you go? Benoni needs planting. Dunnottar needs restoring. The nations wait. The gospel advances. And you can have a part in it. Joyfully. Together.

Now may the God of peace. The God who gathered you. The God who will gather them. Be with you all. Amen.

The benediction

Romans 16:25-27, Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation about Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept silent for long ages but now revealed and made known through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of the eternal God to advance the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles – to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ – to him be the glory for ever! Amen.

This is how I parse Greek verbs:

- I use a three-letter combination in square brackets (e.g. [PMI] for Present, Middle, Indicative) after a verb, which I underline.
 1. First letter indicates the tense. Tense deals both with time and kind of action.
 2. Second letter indicates the voice. The relation of the subject or agent to the action.
 3. Third letter indicates the mood, participle, or infinitive.
- Tense:
 - P: present, continuous or linear action.
 - I: imperfect, continuous action in the past.
 - F: future, both progressive and punctiliar action.
 - A: aorist, expresses punctiliar action that has happened.
 - R: perfect, represents an action that is complete but has an ongoing resultant state of being.
- Voice:
 - A: active, reflects the subject that performs the action.
 - M: middle, the agent participates in the results of the action.
 - P: passive, subject is being acted upon by someone or something else.
- Mood/participle/infinitive:
 - I: indicative, reality, that which is actually occurring.
 - S: subjunctive, likely to occur.
 - M: imperative, a command that is possible.
 - P: participle, participles are verbal adjectives that behave like a verb and an adjective..
 - N: infinitive, verbal nouns that use the preposition "to", and they can also be used with "ing".

This is how I indicate the function of conjunctions:

- I put a letter in square brackets before a clause to indicate a logical relationship.
 - [S] - SERIES, Each proposition makes an independent contribution to the whole (and, moreover, furthermore).
 - [P] - PROGRESSION, Each proposition is a further step toward a climax (then, and, moreover, furthermore).
 - [A] - ALTERNATIVE, Each proposition expresses an opposite possibility arising from a situation (or, but while..).
 - [W] [Ed] - WAY-END (ACTION-MANNER), Statement of an action and one which tells more explicitly what is involved in carrying out this action (in that, by).
 - [I] [I] - COMPARISON, Statement that clarifies an action or idea by showing what it is like (even as, as...so).
 - [-] [+] - NEGATIVE-POSITIVE, The relationship between two alternatives in which one is denied so the other is enforced, implicit in contrasting statements (not...but).
 - [Gn] [Sp] - GENERAL-SPECIFIC, Statement of a whole and one or more statements which set forth parts of the whole.
 - [Ft] [In] - FACT-INTERPRETATION, Statement and clarifying statement; does not set forth a distinguishable part of the preceding whole.
 - [G] - GROUND, Statement followed by the argument or reason on which it stands; supporting proposition follows the supported proposition (for, since, because).
 - [I'] - INFERENCE, Supporting statement followed by the conclusion drawn from it; supporting proposition precedes the supported proposition (therefore, wherefore, consequently).
 - [C] [E] - CAUSE-EFFECT (ACTION-RESULT), One action and another action which results from the first as an automatic consequence (that, so that, with the result that).
 - [C?] [E] - CONDITIONAL, Like cause-effect except existence of the cause is only potential (if...then, if, except...).
 - [M] [Ed] - MEANS-END (ACTION-PURPOSE), One action and another that is intended as the goal or purpose of the first (in order that, that, lest, to the end that).
 - [T] - TEMPORAL, Proposition and the occasion when it occurs (when, after, before).
 - [L] - LOCATIVE, Proposition and the place where it can be true (where, wherever).
 - [Adv] - ADVERSATIVE, Main clause that stands despite a contrary statement (although, yet, but, nevertheless).
 - [Q] [A] - QUESTION-ANSWER, Statement of question and answer to that question (question mark ?).
 - [S] [R] - SITUATION-RESPONSE, The relationship between a situation in one clause and a response in another.
 - [B] [L] - BILATERAL, A proposition which supports propositions in both directions, rarely used.

This is how I use colour highlighting:

- **Orange**: structure indicator, conjunctions, and prepositions.
- **Yellow**: verbs, Greek, and Scripture reference.
- **Green**: keywords.
- **Red**: repeated words.
- **Pink**: imperatives.
- **Blue**: main idea.

On my sermon preparation sheet, these are the questions and an explanation:

1. How has the author organised this passage?

- a) An outline: The author's organization (or structure) is a way of talking about the shape or form of a biblical passage. Beneath the surface of each passage is an underlying arrangement of material and a logic that the author has used to organize the passage. And each part of the passage has a role to play in that structure.
- b) Tools: Identify the text type, and any grammatical tools used to identify the structure.
- c) The emphasis: The structure will reveal an emphasis that the author is making.

2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage?

- a) Literary context: How do the passage that comes before and the passage that comes after relate to your passage?
- b) Historical context: The historical situation or circumstances experienced by the first audience at the time when the book was written.
- c) Cultural context: The setting in the daily life of the people/characters in the book and how that will have been understood by the first audience. This is distinct from historical context in that it does not relate to a particular audience in a particular place at a particular time, but the details of life that the people/characters in the text had in common. Anything that requires extra-biblical knowledge should be treated skeptically.
- d) Biblical context: Is the author citing or alluding to some previously written Biblical passage? What connections could the author have reasonably expected his first audience to make.

3. What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?

The author's main point is a way of talking about the aim of a passage as a whole. It can be descriptive or prescriptive. It is not simply a summary statement. But rather, it is the idea of which the author is trying to persuade his audience. As you work on articulating the author's argument, please keep in mind that it needs to be specific enough to the passage that it clearly comes from the particular passage (and not any other passage), it is for the first audience, it should be one single sentence that is both short and clear, and captures the argument of the passage.

4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

What part of the gospel (the death and resurrection of Christ) is in view? Every part of the Bible, every passage of Scripture, in some way relates to the gospel of Jesus Christ. What parts of the passage connect to the gospel? The connection must be legitimate and textually driven.

5. What is the main point you will argue to your audience?

6. What applications will you make? a) To believers, b) To unbelievers.

The main point of a sermon is the fundamental statement of what you, as a speaker today, are trying to convince your audience today. It will certainly be intimately related to the author's main point for his original audience and it will consider the gospel connection. It should be well reasoned and, perhaps, articulated as the result of proof (so depending on premises and building arguments).

7. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? a) Sermon outline, b) Sermon title.

On my sermon preparation sheet, this is how questions relate to one another:

- 1 a) should be driven by the text.
- 1 c) should be driven from the outline in 1 a).
- 2) should be directly relevant to 1 c).
- 3) cannot be disconnected from 1 c), and should be clarified by 2).
- 4) must be found in the text.
- 5) cannot be disconnected from 3), and should be driven by 4).
- 6) should flow from 5).
- 7) should structurally relate to 1 a), and make the argument in 5).

