

**Romans 15:14-33**  
**(Psalm 1; Matthew 16:24-27)**  
**“What Christ Has Accomplished through Me”**

## **Introduction**

Two Sundays ago, Jon Shuler brought a strong and clear message from these verses in which he graciously commended and powerfully challenged us, as the apostle Paul did the Church of Rome, with regard to the mission entrusted to us. I was away preaching in Brazil that Sunday, but since returning have heard the message online, and as a result have been asking myself what Christ might be calling me as an individual and us as a congregation to be and do, but that we have not yet heard and heeded and begun to pursue. This morning we return to these verses to look particularly at the apostle Paul as a model of a man on mission with Christ.

In the fourteen chapters of this Roman letter that we have studied together, Paul has proclaimed the gospel of grace and challenged us to live lives transformed by that gospel so that those around us will have reason to believe that the gospel is true. He now speaks personally of his own missionary calling and his plans for the future. In these autobiographical verses we have one of the supreme illustrations of one who is truly mature in Christ, and on this last Sunday of our annual Global Mission Conference, I would encourage us to look to Paul as an example of spiritual maturity well worth emulating, for what we see is the power of God in the gospel conforming Paul to the image of Christ. And this is God’s will for each of us, whatever our gifts and whatever our calling.

In 1873, American pastor and evangelist D.L. Moody heard British evangelist Henry Varley say, "The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through and in a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him." Moody determined that he would seek by grace to become such a man. But I would contend that there have been many such men and women over the past two thousand years, not perfect, not sinless, but completely consecrated to Christ, and when we encounter them in history or in life they serve as encouraging and challenging models for the rest of us, their lives seeming to say what the apostle Paul said to Christians in Corinth, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

This morning, I would ask something of each of you: If you are God’s child, do you realize what that means, what a high and holy calling it is? Do you realize that all you are and have belongs to him and that he expects you and me to live by the power of his Spirit in the light of his total claim on our lives? If you are not yet a believer, do you realize that most of what you see in our culture that passes for Christian is not Christian at all, but rather a thinly veneered natural life of someone who has not yet begun to yield to the life-transforming power of the gospel? What we find in Paul is simply someone who by God’s grace is following Jesus.

## Body

### 1. Note Paul's *relational* maturity: charity and modesty (15:14-19).

Note his charity in assessing others.  
Note his modesty in assessing himself.

### 2. Note Paul's *missional* maturity: clarity and diligence (15:20-24).

Note his clarity in understanding his unique calling.  
Note his diligence in pursuing that calling.

### 3. Note Paul's *theological* maturity: word and deed (15:18, 25-28).

Note the priority of the word throughout Paul's ministry.  
Note his insistence that the gospel be fleshed out in works of love.

### 4. Note Paul's *emotional* maturity: confidence and dependence (29-33).

Note Paul's proper confidence in "the fullness of the blessing of Christ."  
Note his dependence upon the prayers and encouragement of others.

## Conclusion

Imagine what God has yet to do in and through us? So many opportunities for the gospel throughout the world today, but most of us spend more on cable than we are willing to give to advance the gospel of Christ. Some of you are giving faithfully, even sacrificially, to the mission of Christ throughout the world. But many of us have not yet begun to obey with joy the call to give, to pray, to send, perhaps even to go.

I challenge us this morning as a congregation to give to global mission as we never have given before, without taking from the other funds of the church. If five hundred families would give an additional two thousand dollars this next year designated to global mission, imagine the new gospel work that we could do all around the world with that million dollars (that's less than \$40 per week, less than \$6 per day). Some of you honestly cannot afford that. So give what you can – the Lord will take it and multiply it if it is sacrificially given in love and gratitude to him.

Let's not stand back watching, merely spending on ourselves in this crucial hour when the mission of God has been entrusted to us, his people. Let us give as he has given to us, and find ourselves loving what he loves, for where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also.

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