

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon
Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Romans 15:23–28

²³ But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, ²⁴ whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while. ²⁵ But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. ²⁶ For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. ²⁷ It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. ²⁸ Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.

Increasing Boasting in Christ

Main idea: we should love to serve, and to see other believers serve, because believers' service is Christ's fruit unto Christ's glory.

Introduction: Remembering the apostle's Isaiah 52:15 motivation in v21. Christ is building His church, so He gets the glory in it. His praise is a primary reason for us to desire our own and others' fruitfulness.

- 1. Paul's fruitfulness among the Romans, v23–24a (cf. v29; 1:11).**
- 2. Paul's fruitfulness among the Spaniards, v24a, 28b.**
- 3. The Romans' fruitfulness unto the Spaniards, v24b, 28b.**
- 4. The Romans' fruitfulness unto Paul, v24c (cf. 1:12).**
- 5. Paul's fruitfulness unto the Jerusalem saints, v25.**
- 6. Christ's fruit in Macedonian and Achaian hearts, v26a, 27a.**
- 7. The Macedonians' and Achaians' fruitfulness unto Judeans, v26b, 27c.**
- 8. The Israelite saints' fruit unto the nations, v27b, (cf. 3:2; 9:4–5).**
- 9. Paul's fruitfulness for the Macedonians and Achaians, v28**

Conclusion: Behold how good a thing it is, and how becoming well, when Christ's prophethood, priesthood, and kingship is displayed by the wonderful fruit that He makes His saints to bear!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Romans 15 verses 23-28. These are God's words. But now no longer having a place in these parts. And having a great desire, these many years to come to you, Whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For, I hope to see you on my journey. And to be helped on my way there by you.

If first, I may enjoy your company for a while. But now, I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the Saints. For it pleased. Those from Macedonia and Ikea to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who were in Jerusalem. It pleased them indeed. And they are their debtors for if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things Their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. So far, the reading of gods inspired. And inerrant work.

The Apostle begins. Portion before us this evening. By saying he no longer has a place in these parts. Now, he doesn't mean that he doesn't have a place to go or a place to stay. In fact, in God's generous and Powerful blessing of his ministry. There were many who were as it were children of the faith children, uh, his children in the faith.

Um but what he means is he no longer has that place that he was talking about in verse 20 and 21 a place where the gospel had not yet been preached. A place that would be a fulfillment of Isaiah 52 and verse 15. Because if you remember two weeks ago, how the Apostle was choosing where to preach the gospel, he was making sure to cover the places where Christ had not yet been heard Because that's what Isaiah 52 said.

The Lord Jesus would do that. He would preach where he had not yet. Been heard. And so in that prophecy about Christ, and Paul being Christ's Apostle to the Gentiles that is how he was. He was making his decisions. Now for Paul it was very important. If someone was going to be one through whom Christ was fulfilling this prophecy about himself that he would preach where he had not yet been heard Ah, even as if you did.

Isaiah reading, in Isaiah, 61 1-3. Last week's Isaiah reading. You remember that the Lord Jesus when he reads about the servant preaching peace. Not like the false prophets who preached peace, peace, where there was no peace but Jesus came and he preached peace in himself for he is the Prince of Peace and he himself is our peace and in that wonderful exchange of the reconciliation of God and man, God made him whom, you know, sin to be sin.

So that we might become the righteousness of God in him. And in this way, God Christ made peace for us with God, through his blood. And so, Isaiah 61 reminds us That the Lord Jesus is the great preacher of the Gospel. And so he had preached the gospel in Nazareth.

You remember, when he opened up and the scroll was in his own Providence, remember the Lord Jesus is not only man, but also God, according to his divine nature, he ordains what passage will be on the scroll, when he gets it in the synagogue, and he tells them today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

Not just that they have heard it fulfilled, but that they're hearing has fulfilled it. Well, the Lord Jesus didn't didn't only preach in Jerusalem. He began there and Judea and Samaria, and now to the ends of the Earth, but it was really that to the ends of the Earth part that has been assigned, especially to the Apostle Paul and that's how he was.

Making his choices. Uh, and yet, the Lord continues to minister, even in those places that have been named any ministers, Evangelistically from, uh, from the church wherever she is, and he ministers within the church. As each part of the body, having by Christ's Apostles, prophets, evangelists and Pastor teachers, having been stabilized theologically each part of the body.

Speaks the truth in love to each other part and the whole body builds itself up into the head that is the Lord Jesus Christ. So although none of us are the Apostle to the Gentiles. In fact none of us are Apostles and only a couple of us are even Elders and only some of us are even husbands or fathers and yet all of us.

Bearing. The fruit of Jesus Christ. It is no longer we who live. In order for us to be alive, we as we were had to be crucified with Christ. And now it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us, and the life that we live in the body, in the flesh, we live by faith, the Son of God, who loves us, who loved us and gave himself for us.

Which means whenever we walk, according to the spirit instead of according to the flesh, whenever we are walking in that way, that demonstrates That we are no longer under condemnation not walking necessarily well even possibly not walking in a way. That is perfect. No, there is still much evil that we hate that we do and much good.

That we want to do that. We don't want to do. And yet the law of the spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death. And we walk Recording. To the spirit, we walk according to the righteous requirements of the law. And whenever we do that then, It is Christ's fruit.

We could say it is our fruit too, it is the fruit that he bears in us and we Rejoice to be used that way. When we are telling of the great things, that the Lord Jesus has done, and we want to give witness we want to give testimony that the Lord Jesus saved, Sinners and the Lord, Jesus uses Sinners.

We could be well, we could. Well be like the Apostle was in the previous passage. Saying I would not dare to speak of what the Lord Jesus has done through others but here I have firsthand witness of my own sin and I have first hand witness of Christ's salvation of me.

And here are the things that he's even used someone like me. That he has borne. This is what he has done. And so we love to labor for the fruit of Christ's glory Christ is the one who is building his church. And we often think of that in terms of the confidence that we have, and well, we should Whenever we look at the church in herself or as she is in in her partially Sanctified State, we might be very discouraged.

But she is the one whose Builder is God. And so when we look at the church, when we think about her future, when we Even as we are. Hoping in God, as we pray for her, as we will tonight, not only of course for this congregation, but for his whole church, and the whole world, the whole church militant will be praying.

This evening as we always do as we do so we can remember Christ saying, I will build my church for the confidence that we have about his church. The Gates of hell will not Prevail against it. And yet it is not only with reference to our confidence about the church, but shouldn't it be also The thing that shapes how we think about the praise and the glory that comes from the building of the church.

We live in? A country that is I guess it's not just a country and we in our flesh are easily impressed with things that are physically. Impressive numerically, impressive. But when we say, when we see that which is genuinely spiritually impressive, there is, of course, the danger. On the one hand of that being something that That we are full of ourselves and proud of ourselves.

And but there's the opportunity on the other hand, to Rejoice over what Christ has done to be full of Thanksgiving. In. Mercy to me. Last week, I got to hear. Several. Ministers. Um, more or less. Uh my age, my season of life laboring in congregations, that would not be considered by those who seem to be something.

To be large or impressive, but relating some of the things that the Lord had done in blessing, the ordinary means of Grace, In their own congregations mirroring some of what the Lord has done among you. And seeing and enjoying with Brothers, rejoicing over the fruit that Christ is bearing in his church, because it is Christ.

Who is building his church? And that's what the Apostle is aiming at here as he kind of Well, lets the Roman Church in On his travel plans. And he's not just letting them in on his travel plans. He's speaking in terms of the fruit that he hopes to have that he hopes for The macedonians and acayans to have that, he hopes for the Roman Church to have.

And if you grabbed an outline, you can see there's at least these these nine fruitfulnesses these nine instances of fruitfulness That he is anticipating or rejoicing over. As Christ is being glorified by his work in the church. The. That we've listed here is Paul's fruitfulness among the Roman Church.

This is something that he said. Back in chapter 1 and verse 11. That he hopes to see them. He Longs to see them that he may impart to them some spiritual gift and he's not saying that he hopes that when he comes, they will get new spirit superpowers. And he's not even saying that he hopes to come exercise, a spirit superpower, the language of spiritual gifts, as many of, you know, now and remember means that when Jesus Works in and through someone it's a gift, not for that individual, although that he's honoring the individual by using him, just like he honors you whenever he uses you.

But it's a gift for his church, if it had a gift tag on it to be like to the church from the Lord Jesus. And the idea is that you would be like the box or the rapping Of a gift to his church. So he wants to go to Rome.

To impart to them some spiritual gift, to establish them to strengthen them, to make them to stand. And so, we saw that in chapter one and verse 11, and he in the first verse for in next week's abortion, he's going to express his confidence that that will be the case.

I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. And we, eagerly anticipate thinking about how that is true for all believers in their assigned roles, Dependence upon Christ and Union with Christ and carried by theirs. By the spirit, we won't take The time now to to open that more fully, but he expects to come and have fruit among the Roman church.

Now. No longer having a place in these parts and having a great desire, these many years to come to you and that great desire. Pulls from chapter 1 and verse 11, the longing about which we have just read in that. Place says, whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you.

He wants to bear fruit. Among them in part a spiritual gift to them. So that the resurrected and ascended, Lord, Jesus, who, when he ascended on high would be glorified having given gifts

among men. There is Ascension Glory. Whenever you attend the prayer meeting there is Ascension Glory. When you are gathered on the Lord's day and you are singing, the Psalms and you are listening together to the word of God being preached and you're lifting up your hearts together.

The Lord Jesus, who has ascended on high has given gifts among men, not just Apostles prophets evangelists, Pastor teachers, but every joint in the body, every member every part, every body part, every person in the body is a gift from the glorified ascended, seated, Lord, Jesus, by whom he is working in the rest of the body.

And so the Ascension glory of Jesus, Um, Paul as Desiring would be on display in his fruit among the Romans, and also then his fruit among the Spaniards. Whom the Lord, he is praying and Desiring that the Lord would bring to Faith through him. So he says, whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you in the first part of verse 24 and he picks it up again.

In verse 28, he says Therefore when I have performed this and have sealed and then this route I shall go by way of you to Spain. He is Desiring to go where Christ has not yet been named and bear fruit among them. Among the Spaniards. But this would also then be an opportunity for the Romans, the Roman Christians to have fruit among the Spaniards, they're having fruit among one another.

He's just said a few verses ago that That they have everything that they need in the knowledge of God to admonish one another and in the goodness of God uh to admonish one another God has filled them with everything that is Necessary for for admonishing one. Another for edifying.

One another being called alongside one another. But now, they have an opportunity because Paul is going to Spain to participate in what God is doing in Spain, by sending the Apostle Paul there. And he hints that at the fact that if they help Paul, if they give Paul things that he's going to need, maybe some money, maybe some other things, maybe even send someone from their church, that they're going to commission to go with Paul and serve him.

Because Paul's getting old, it gets cold in the winter although hopefully it's not going to be too cold in Spain, and his eyes are going and he's got all these parchments and books and things you. They maybe maybe they'll send a young man with him, whoever they would send they would get to participate as a church in what the Lord is doing in Spain, we still do that with missionaries today.

Someone to preach the gospel where Christ has not yet been named, we have an opportunity. Uh, to send resources to them, or with them, or even send people to help them. And this. Something that Uh, that the macedonians and decayans. Have gotten to do in a way as well.

Not so much for Evangelistic work, but to bear fruit among the judeans as we'll hear about in a moment from the end of verse 26 and into verse 27 but he's inviting then the Roman Church to have fruit among the Spanish Christians. He's also looking forward to the Roman Church having fruit in his own life.

End of verse 24 and he said, and to be helped on my way there by you. If First. Uh, of that, which is of you if if of that which is of you first I would enjoy Um, Very literally. Of that, which is of you. First, I would enjoy here is it's translated.

If first I may enjoy your company for a while, but it's really not the word company. The implication is Ministry fruit, that God intends to bless and edify and strengthen Paul. When he goes to Rome after all he said about them in chapter one, that they were already, this famous, this church, whose Faith was famous and the, the reputation of their faith, in the Lord, Jesus

Christ had gone throughout the world and he's just said about them a few verses ago their Ministry to one another.

They're full of knowledge and goodness and able to admonish one another. But he had also said, immediately after that verse that we read about his longing, to go and impart some spiritual gift to them in verse 11. That is. That I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual Faith, both of you.

And me this is one of the blessings. Of spiritual humility. And one of the very sad effects of spiritual Pride, spiritual humility enables us to desire for other people, to be fruitful in our lives because we can see how needy we still are of the Lord Jesus Christ, how much we need to grow in Grace, how much we need to grow in understanding God's word and every time we read it, we learn something new.

Every time we hear his word preached, he brings something home in a new way to our hearts, or even something new to our hearts. And in Christian conversation with one another he's ministering to us by all sorts of people. How many of you children have been? The means of God to bless your dad, and mom and family worship.

When you asked a question that they had not yet thought of and there, the answer was in the text. Were you even made an observation like children sometimes can do of something that that?

But in God's, Kindness to us, to give us this experience with one another. He had made to escape our notice until one of our children, just set it in plain English. And so the Lord is always using us in one another's lives and and if by his grace the spirit would strangle and suffocate and kill our spiritual Pride.

We would have this desire for those who they may not be as far along in Grace, or in Doctrine. As or in Christian maturity, as we are certainly the the Apostle Paul No, it would have been. Highly esteemed in comparison to any one of the Roman church but we don't make those comparisons.

Because Christ is the standard and Christ is the worker and we want Christ to get glory for bearing fruit in our lives. And so as he's describing, the fruitfulness of various Saints in other Saints or prospective Saints. We don't know of any Believers yet in Spain at this time, um it's mostly perspective Saints there.

One of the One of these instances of Christ bearing fruit in, and through his people to, which he is looking forward, is that of the Roman Church in Paul's own life? Uh, Of that is which of that, which is of you first I enjoy. There, at the end of verse 24.

Well then there's also Paul's fruitfulness unto the Jerusalem Saints. Notice, he doesn't, he doesn't just want to come and Uh deliver the monetary gift and seal unto the macedonians and acayans their fruit notice verse 27. Sorry, verse 25. But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister. Uh, to the Saints to serve.

The Saints. So he is hoping to have fruitfulness among them as well. And we can hear a little bit of enthusiasm, and a little bit of delight there. Because he said several times hasn't he especially in chapters 9 through 11? How his heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they might be saved how he had great grief and continual sorrow over the Over the spiritual state of his countrymen.

And so there are many Jewish Believers who will be a cheer Who will cheer his heart, who will be an encouragement to his heart and whom he hopes to be a help to when he goes to Jerusalem. But not just Paul's fruitfulness among the Saints but the Macedonian and achaean Macedonian and achaean Christians fruit among the Saints.

Of course, in Macedonia the main city that you would think over the main church that you would think of is Philippi. And in Ikea, the main church that you would think of as as Corinth So, He's not here just naming those cities. He's using the the broader Justice when he wrote to the Corinthians and he wanted to let them know that they were in a competition for sending these gifts.

He referred to the macedonians whose poverty had had resulted in an overflowing of generosity. In order to give to the Saints in. In Jerusalem and so he is eager for the the fruit from these great Christian Orchards that he has been used by God to plant. There's a Christian Orchard in Ikea with With Corinth as the big church there and there's a Christian Orchard in Macedonia with Philippi as the big church there and some of the fruit of what Christ has done and the people that he has saved has been their generosity to the Saints in Jerusalem and so Paul's actually carrying money with him.

From Corinth and Philippi, and the and the surrounding regions and there are other men titicus and and others who are traveling with him. Uh, but Although he's physically carrying money, the picture is carrying, bushels of spiritual fruit, taking the produce of what Jesus has done in those people's lives, and how we should long to see fruit and.

And for Christ to be glorified, In the fruit that he produces in our own life, as we serve others in others lives, as we help them serve, give them opportunities to serve and recognize. Acknowledge. Christ and what he has done in them in their service. And so verse 26, a it pleased those from Macedonia and Ikea to make a certain contribution for the poor.

But notice what he does you might say, oh well that's just a way of talking, you know, if you're being really former formal, you don't say, well, they they sent a contribution, you say it, pleased them to send a contribution. Well, it is not just a way of talking and, and he re-emphasizes it by beginning verse 27, the same way, it, pleased them indeed, Didn't just give because they felt they had to They didn't just give because the Apostle wrote a few letters and and verbally twisted a few arms.

And you have to watch out for people who who are operating out of the Flesh and you appeal to them from scripture and you appeal to them, for the glory of God, you appeal to them for their own good and they say oh you're so manipulative. You say well I'm trying to motivate you the way the Bible motivates us.

That's not really manipulation. What I'm hoping is that God will do a gracious work in you. You remember what he had said to the Corinthians, God loves A cheerful Giver. And what's he saying now about the macedonians into indications, That they were grumbly givers. No, he's saying they are cheerful givers.

It pleased them verse 26 and then verse 27, it pleased them indeed. And so that is another reason to ask God to help us not just to give cheerfully but in whatever spiritual service we do whatever material service we do whether under the authority of the elders or under the authority of the deacons.

And and we're doing this service to ask God always to add to us this grace of cheerfulness and willingness in that which we do. In all parts for instance of our church membership and everything that he gives you to do in your family, in your household. Not only because it is

much more pleasant to live in a household where everyone is glad to serve one another and that's one of the ways you love each other but because this cheerfulness shows that this is fruit of Jesus's work in your heart.

And so your savior is glorified by producing this fruit. And if an apostle were to write a letter about you, he would say, it pleased her to do those dishes. It pleased him, indeed, to sweep that up or change those. Diapers it, pleased them to be quiet and turn off the lights.

Because mom said, it's time for everyone to take a nap. It pleased them, it pleased them to go to church. It pleased them to hear the sermon and please them to do something for their neighbor that they've been praying will come to the Lord Jesus. It, pleased them. To whatever it is that the Lord has called you to do.

It pleased, it pleased, indeed, those from Macedonia and from Ikea and indeed, they were just, they were just repaying a fruit debt. Notice in verse 27, for if the Gentiles had been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them. In material things. Now, this is true in a big way that we started to hear about in chapter three because we heard in chapter one and two.

That. That. Everyone is under the wrath of God. Everyone is in ourselves are unrighteous and ungodly and none can be saved by what we do or who we are. Even if you're an Israelite even circumcision and one of the questions then was, what advantage then does the Jew have?

Or is there any advantage to being a Jew in chapter 3? He said much indeed chiefly they have the Oracles of God He goes somewhere else in his argument, he doesn't revisit that idea of the, the continuing specialness or the great specialness of Israel in Christian history, until chapter nine verses four and five.

So he takes that to them. We're entrusted. The Oracles of God. That was back in chapter 3 and verse two. And then in chapter 9, verse 4, he adds to whom pertain the adoption the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God and the promises of whom are the fathers and from whom according to the flesh Christ came who is over all the eternally blessed, God, Tiles have been partakers of the Jews spiritual things, but they've also been Uh, particularly partakers of the Jewish church.

Spiritual things. Because you remember, It was. By. The churches in Judea it was especially in Paul's home synagogue. Where this Pharisee of the Pharisees Paul ran into a little kid. Little snot-nosed young man named Steven. Who reasoned about Jesus being the Christ in a way that Pharisee of the Pharisees Paul could not answer.

And after Stephen was executed and Paul stood there, holding the coats and agreeing. This is what you do with people who claim that there has been a man who has got that, there is a man who and that this man who claims to be God is the Christ and Paul agreed.

And In this great persecution, that arose who became one of the greatest persecutors. Why Paul, or if you use his Jewish name, Saul? Who had come from, who was originally from Tarsus and who had been a member of the synagogue of the Friedman. And yet. In that synagogue and from this faithful, Deacon of the church, who was able to give an answer for the hope that was within him.

And wanted to answer his great big sermon when he was dying. Um, Paul had heard so much of the Gospel. And and he had, uh, begun to understand those things that he would come to submit to when the Lord Jesus himself. Interrupted Paul the persecutor. And knocked him down literally on the road to Tarsus.

And so, indeed, they are debtors. These macedonians and these acayans. If there weren't A church in Jerusalem. Whose brand new church officers were willing to die for their faith. Instrumentally speaking. Paul would not have been. Convert it and sent. From the church in Antioch and Syria. To minister. To the Believers in Philippi and the rest of Macedonia to minister.

To the Believers in Corinth and the rest of Ikea. And so they have indeed. Partake in of their spiritual. Uh, things. And then, of course, Paul. Fruitfulness, ministering on behalf of. Of the macedonians and the canes you see in verse 28, he says, therefore when I have performed this and have sealed to them, This fruit.

I shall go by way of you to Spain. We should be glad to bring the news. Of other believers, progress and Grace and to be delivery, boys. Of the good things that others. That others have provided. By the grace of Christ, we should be glad for every instance, Of Christ producing fruit among his people and whatever part he can give us.

In the display. And the delivery and the The blessing of that fruit unto his people unto those, whom he is bringing to Faith unto his glor. And so you see how good a thing it is. And how becoming well? When those who are Brethren, don't just dwell in unity.

But they serve one another And they serve others who are far away. And yet also in Christ. Because it is like precious oil. Going down the beard not of Aaron. Aaron is not the great high priest. He was the greatest high priest, they had had to that point. In Psalm 133, But it's a, it's a seal upon.

It's a praise of. Christ's prophethood, Christ's priesthood. Christ's kingship When those who are Christ's. Bear fruit. To his glory.