

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon
Wednesday, June 5, 2024

Romans 15:17–22

¹⁷ Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God.

¹⁸ For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—¹⁹ in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. ²⁰ And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, ²¹ but as it is written:

*“To whom He was not announced, they shall see;
And those who have not heard shall understand.”*

²² For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.

Boasting for the Right Cause

Main idea: proper Christian boasting glories in Christ's past work to stir up desire and confidence in Christ's future work

Introduction: What can make boasting right? What ought to trigger it? At what should we aim by it?

1. **Cause, upon which, to glory**, v17 (the propriety of his boasting)
 1. In Christ Jesus (n.b. “through me” in v18)
 2. It is for God (the working is for God, and the glorying is for God)
2. **Cause, in response to which, to glory**, v18–19
 1. Words and deeds that came from Christ, by the Spirit
 2. Gentiles being obedient to the faith came from Christ, by the Spirit
 3. Mighty signs and wonders proved that it was from Christ, by the Spirit
 4. Full coverage of that part of the world from Christ, by the Spirit
3. **Cause, aiming at which, to glory**, v20–22
 1. The fulfillment of Christ's preaching mission, v20–21, cf. Isaiah 52:15. He was specifically the apostle to the Gentiles, but the mission continues today (cf. Mk 16:15; Mt 28:19)
 2. The continuation of his mission to Rome (and Spain) necessarily held up until the previous mission was completed, v22. But now his coming to Rome (and Spain) necessitated by his continuing mission.

Conclusion: Christ is the One Who has done this work, by His Spirit. Throughout the history of the church. Throughout the spiritual history behind your life. Throughout your spiritual life. And now, through those who are assigned to minister to you, and to whom you are assigned to minister.

(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 chapter 15. Our portion this evening is verses 17 through 22. These are the words of God. Therefore, I have reason. To glory in Christ Jesus. And the things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things. Which Christ has not accomplished through me in word and deed to make the Gentiles obedient.

And mighty signs and wonders. By the power of the spirit of God. So that from Jerusalem and round about to Lyricum. I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. And so, I have made it my aim to preach the gospel. Not where Christ was named. Lest I should build on another man's Foundation.

But as it is written. To whom he was not announced. They shall see. And those who have not heard. Shall understand. For this reason, I also have been much injured. From coming to you. So far the reading of God's inspired and iner tort Verse 17 opens up perhaps a little bit surprisingly.

Because we are prone to making too much of ourselves and being full of ourselves. Uh, we received the instruction in scripture. Not to be boastful, not to be proud. And we feel how much of A struggle that is in our hearts even if we are not accustomed to being outwardly showy and immodest in our boasting.

We tend to be. So proud. Uh, in our hearts. And so, Uh, we may be surprised to hear therefore I have reason to boast This glorying in verse 17 is not from the word for Glory. Which does have a verb form or so glorify. The word from which we get our word, doxology.

No, this word is the word for boasting to be full to bursting. With. The expression. Of how glad we are or full. We are of whatever the object is, and we even have this sort of idiom about boasting. In English, don't we? As you might. Perhaps meet someone and They're going on and on about their accomplishments and what they've done and these things and someone who Um knows them or maybe very quickly, even if they don't know them, they might turn and say under their breath Oh, he's full of himself.

Well, we are to be full. But not of ourselves. The Apostle says, Therefore, I have reason and Good. Cause Good reason. To boast it is proper. Uh, for him to boast, but notice that the boasting is not in himself. That is in Christ, Jesus. And so, as he Speaks about.

What the Lord has done so far through him in his ministry and he is anticipating of course coming to Rome. That was one of the main reasons for the letter. You remember way back in chapter one he He talked about his being under obligation as being indebted. To preach the

gospel to the Gentiles, to the Greeks for which reason he's coming to Rome and he wants to come and preach the gospel to them too.

And we get this wonderful exposition of the Gospel that Paul hopes to come to preach. Flowing out of that because when he is just complimented the church in Rome. In, in chapter one, about how famous their faith is and how much he's looking forward to meeting, uh, such well-spoken of Saints.

And then he's going to come and preach the gospel. Doesn't he think they've heard the gospel? Doesn't he think they believe the gospel? And it's at that point. That he says that he is not ashamed to keep preaching the gospel and he in that case, he's not talking about being unashamed to preach the gospel.

To the world that hates it. He's talking about being unashamed to still be preaching the gospel to those who know it and love it. He doesn't need to come with something fancy or something else. And he's excited, then to go to Rome and preach the gospel, and he is getting them excited for him to come to Rome and to preach the gospel.

And so he is full to bursting with. Over what Christ has done so far through him and he's announcing it to them. That by the spirit blessing to. These inspired words. And we know that Paul knew that he was being carried along by the Holy Spirit. You remember, for instance, Uh, when he was writing to the Corinthians that if, if one of them was a prophet then he should acknowledge that.

Paul also was writing. According to the spirit that he too had the spirit as he wrote. As he writes his Spirit inspired words. To help them. By the spirit's blessing of his own words to the Roman Church to be excited for the Apostle to come. And to preach. Well, what application does that have for us?

Well, we do not have the Apostle, Paul coming to preach. But we do have the same Christ. Who preached through Paul. And the same. Who attended the ministry, indeed. You fathers and husbands who have so often come to. A passage and a family worship time and you're tired and the family's tired and you look at the Words on the page and they're swimming.

And then when they stop swimming and your eyes focus, and they crystallize, your thoughts, don't do any better. And yet, is it not God? Is it not Christ who has appointed you to your task? And is it not his Spirit who is not only carrying you along to help you in your weakness, but he is the one who is doing the work of Christ, preaching, his gospel, to the ends of the Earth and in your home and around your table.

And does that not get you children excited? To pay attention as Dad leads and family worship and teaches you the Bible and applies it to you. And does he not do the same for us in the in the Lord's Day assemblies with our elders, with our pastor? Whom Christ has ordained and set apart for this.

This is one of the reasons why the doctrine of ordination is so important. There are many reasons for it, but we want to know that it's Christ to put that man there and Christ who addresses us through him, and his Spirit, who carries both the preacher and the hearer.

And does this work of Jesus? Well. Getting a little ahead of ourselves. Whereas he then is full to bursting with joy as he is boasting or glorying. In what Christ has done through him, he gives us The. For his glory. And we're using that word in three different ways.

We're not going to go through Aristotle's four causes, or anything like that this evening. But first, he, he gives the cause for his glorying meaning, he has good cause he has good reason, the propriety Of his boasting. The reason that his boasting is proper and then he gives the cause in response to which he is glorying.

So, the occasion upon, which he is glorying. So, first, the reason that his glorying is right and then the occasion, Upon which or to which he is responding with this glorying and then he gives us the cause for his glorying as he begins to imply the purpose for which what he's aiming at as he glories.

And all three of this, all three of these things. Then show that this boasting is right and they give us an idea of what the right kind of boasting is. And it is not at all a boasting that is full of ourselves. That is a boasting that is full.

Of Christ. So first that which makes us boasting proper? Uh, you can see it right there. Immediately in verse 17, therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus. In that which pertains to God or in the things for God. So the first two, the the two reasons that is boasting is proper, has a good cause is that it is in Christ, Jesus.

He is not full of himself. In fact, the Lord Jesus had refused to answer one of his prayers. One of his urgent prayers, which he's gone through three seasons of dedicated prayer probably with fasting. He tells us in second Corinthians chapter 12, the Lord had refused to answer those prayers precisely so that he wouldn't be too highly exalted so that he wouldn't be full of himself.

But you remember what he said. When the Lord answered, no, my grace is sufficient for you for my strength is made perfect in weakness. You remember what he said? He said, well, then I will boast in my I'll be all glory in being weak. Why? Because we all go around and it's a reformed doctrine that we're all weak, so we'll all just be as weak as possible together.

And I will glory in how much weaker I am than you because that'll make me really reformed. No. Because when I am weak, then I am strong. Because then everything that Christ does through me, it is shown that it is entirely from Christ, even though it was through me.

And I can, I can then rejoice in Ministry fruit and I can rejoice in progress and sanctification and I can rejoice in rejected Temptation, I can rejoice in all of these things that I know couldn't come from me. It came. From Christ. So, he has good cause for boasting.

Because it's all from Christ. And it's not about him. He's glorying in Christ Jesus. And not only is it from Christ, but it's for God. In two different ways. First of all, the working is for God, the things that he has done, are for God, and so he's not glorying that he has achieved things for himself.

He's glorying that what God has purposed for his own glory is coming about. But then he's also not, not just the works over which he is glory and were for God, but also the glory in itself is for God. So that God may be exalted in his servant so that God may be exalted in his church.

You know, it is a distinct lack of thankfulness and a distinct lack of praise to God. When we turn a blind eye, we put blinders on. To the good things that he has done in our life or our family, or our church. It's almost like that, that worldly self-deprecation that not everyone is supposed to have just those with quote unquote privilege.

Privilege is not a bad thing. It is a mercy from God. It is to be self-forgetfully. Enjoyed from from him and employed for him. Not for the raising up of oneself or the taking Advantage for, uh, for oneself. But for the service of God, and for the service of neighbor and especially for the service of brother and the church

Our glorying is for God. We ought to give thanks. We ought to be self-forgetful enough. And this is this is where the mortification of Pride becomes all the more necessary. That we suffocate all being impressed with ourselves that we starve it. That we don't feed at little thoughts that we permit because they're little, you know, No, if you've got this raging monster than you that you're fighting against called sin, you're you're what remains from your former nature.

You don't give it any oxygen, you don't give it any food, you don't give it any drink, you suffocated, and strangle it, and starve it. For those of you who have done a little bit of military reading you give, no quarter. You kill that remaining Pride. Because whatever Pride there is is going to get in the way.

If we have, let our pride have have room, if we've tolerated, it and allowed it to breathe and feed and live. Then how will we know? When it comes time to Glory over, what Christ has done. Whether we're really glorying over Christ. Or whether we're painting a christ veneer You know, paint to veneer.

Whether we're whitewashing our pride, in the name of Jesus. Now, the glorying must be forgotten desire, that he We'll get Glory just like the working was for God and if the working wasn't for God, Then we ought not to glory in it at all. But just to be grateful.

That he Um, that he used just despite ourselves and repent. Blessed having been used to bring others into the kingdom and build others up. We would find ourselves at last shut out. Well, he has good cause to Glory good. Is. Boasting is proper. He also has good cause for the glorian.

Um, in that that That which has immediately caused that, which he is responding to and we see this especially in verses 18 through 19. Note, the way that he speaks of it. He does not say for I will not dare to speak of any of those things. Uh, which Have not accomplished through Christ.

He says which Christ does not accomplished through me. Not that he's he's not doing the That after the, The sporting event or the contest or the great success or or whatever. It is thing, these trots out, Philippians 4 13 and says, yep, we won that game because I could do all things through Christche.

Strengthens me now. Praise God for athletes who at least have enough awareness. That there is a living God, And that they are nothing that they will always begin their interview with giving some credit to God and we may pray that the church would be stronger and more sound and more God glorifying in our day that we might have more hope about, uh, when we hear, Such things but praise God for that.

But, This is not Paul's accomplishment. This is Christ's accomplishment. This is Christ's Mission. As will hear in verses 20 through 22. Uh, where he quotes about Jesus's Mission at the end of Isaiah 52, which is already in that wonderful part, uh, the of the suffering servant that starts In Isaiah 52 verse 13 and he's going to quote from verse 15 of that chapter more on that in a moment.

But this is what Christ has done. So when he says, therefore, I have reason, sorry for I will not declare dare to speak of any of those things, which Christ has not accomplished, through me,

in word, indeed, you hear what he's saying? He's saying I never spoke a good or useful word in the ministry except that Christ was accomplishing.

Those words. I never did. A single useful act in the ministry except that it was Christ. Who by his grace, Made me to act that way. The the accomplishing of those words, the accomplishing of those actions that was Christ's accomplishment. The miracle. Is that he did it even through me.

Even through this one. Who was given that ongoing weakness in second Corinthians. Chapter 12. So, The great Miracle of the Christian Life. Isn't that someone such as weak as I am? Can do such strong things. If I have, you know, if I belong to Jesus, I trust in Jesus, boy.

What great things. Someone so weak. As I can, I am can do. That's true. But that's actually not so miraculous, as the fact that Christ who is doing his divinely great things, Right. Not not the, not the great accomplishments of man, but the accomplishments of God, for which you don't need adjectives, because they are the accomplishments.

Of God. And he's using men to do them. That is a far, greater Miracle. Than thinking the other way. And so these words and deeds came from Christ by the work of his Spirit, The Same Spirit who is making them to abound in Hope by filling them with joy and filling them with peace.

Uh, like, we heard back in verse 13, The Same Spirit, who is using his power to do that. Is the one who has made. Paul to speak words that were the accomplishments of Christ Jesus to do Deeds that were the accomplishments of Christ Jesus. And the spirit testified that they were Christ's words, not Paul's.

By signs and wonders. And the spirit testified that they were Christ's Deeds and not Paul's By signs and wonders. So that when he says in Mighty signs and wonders by the power of the spirit of God, The power of the spirit of God is especially for the words and for the Deeds.

And the signs and wonders testified that this is the power of the spirit of God because the signs and wonders are also, of course, only by the power of the Holy Spirit. But which is easier to say, Repent and believe in Jesus Christ. Or a rise and walk. But the book of Acts records for us, Paul performing Miracles having the gift of Miracles that are an extension of the work of Christ.

Jesus said, the works that I do you will do speaking to the apostles Then he said Greater Works. Well, what greater works? Well, how about fully preaching the gospel from Jerusalem? Which if you're thinking about the eastern half of The Roman Empire is you try to do this correctly for you, in the south east corner to olyricum, which until you get to the region.

That Rome is all of the regions in between alyricum is the far Northwest corner. So a Paul is saying is God has made Gentiles obey, the faith come to The Obedience of Faith. Something he talked about in chapter 1, something he's going to talk about again in chapter 16.

The preaching of the Gospel requires a response. We are to obey the gospel by believing in Jesus Christ and Gospel. Now through Paul has been fully preached through that whole region. And the spirit of God, the spirit of the Lord Jesus. Has testified that as Paul spoke the words through which that was done.

It was really Christ, who was doing it. He was an apostle. Paul was an apostle, he was a sent one. There's, Um, In these last days, he has spoken to us by his son. In fact, he would tell the Ephesians that Jesus had come and preached peace to them.

Well, when did Jesus visit Ephesus? Well, when Paul And preached there. And when others went and preached there and he challenges them in the next chapter, in the book of Ephesians, you know, whether or not they believe the the preaching and teaching that Jesus had what Jesus has preached to them and what Jesus has taught to them.

Well, when did they have Jesus preach to them and teach to them. Well. It was when those whom Jesus had appointed had come now. I have never performed a sign or wonder, Uh, in connection with the sermon. I haven't had to. You know, that Christ is the one who has appointed your Minister If he is preaching from the scripture, according to what the scripture itself says, we have a completed Bible.

And if he has been called and ordained in the way that the Bible itself teaches that the church is to recognize those who are called and to ordain them. And this has continued this is why when we have an installation of deacons hopefully not long from. Now one of the things that you will see is the laying on of hands There is a chain of laying on of hands, there's, there's not a chain of descent from Papa Peter.

Who wasn't even Papa Peter in his own day, let alone having the ability to hand that down to anyone else. But there is a continual chain of laying on of hands. So just as Paul laid hands on Timothy Timothy was to lay his hands on. Other Ephesian elders and the Presbytery.

The elders, who also had laid hands on Timothy were to keep laying hands and so forth. And so We can know in two ways and it's important. So that we can rejoice in the ministry that is done without exalting a mere man on Earth. But rather exalting exu LT glorying, rejoicing being full to Joy with bursting over Christ in heaven.

Who is at work in his church? On the earth. And so it's particularly, it's particularly in seeing this. Obedience to the gospel, Verse 18. Which has now been fully preached. All the way. From. Uh for the for the whole eastern, half of the Roman Empire from the Southeast corner to the northwest corner that's cause for rejoicing.

The Lord blessing us and every time he adds to our church we have good cause for rejoicing. Um, whether it's Babies. Like The two who are in attendance tonight. Or the Lord adds new families and the Lord brings new people to Faith and the Lord continuing to do that.

Lord willing, we'll plant a daughter church. And as faithful churches, multiply or if we hear about another church in the area, having Revival and being reformed in their Doctrine, the two of which always go together, because the same Spirit does both. You know, we would have good cause for rejoicing, can you imagine If the Lord raised up a man, Like unto Whitfield and used him in, in this age of Of the ability to live stream anything.

And instead of tens of thousands you had tens of millions. It's the same Christ with the same. Do you not think that with what he has given man, the ability to do, or do you not even suspect that the reason he's given, man, the ability to do it. Is that he intends to raise up a servant.

And that we might glory. The entire nation being changed. The way this when it wasn't a nation when it was colonies. These colonies were changed which is one of the ways that our nation got the sort of start that it did. We would be. To bursting with joy over Christ.

And what he has accomplished. We wouldn't say. Oh, that great, man. Even as Whitfield. Refused to defend himself. Saying, let the name of George Whitfield perish. But the name of Jesus be glorified, forever and ever. Well. What's he responding to he's responding to words and deeds that came from Christ by the Holy Spirit he's responding to the Gentiles.

Being obedient to the faith that came from Christ by the Holy Spirit. He's responding to this Mighty signs and wonders. That Christ by his Spirit, granted to prove. That this is what was happening and he is responding to the full coverage of that part of the world from Christ.

By the spirit. So lots of good reasons, good things occasions to which to respond by glorying in Jesus. This helps us make very specific application to our lives because it's one thing to say we should Glory in the things that are done in Christ and we should glory in the things that are done for God.

That's true that makes the glorying proper But we want to know when in response to what And he gives us an example of the types of things. To Glory over. It is not wrong. For a mom or dad. To glory. Over what Christ has done. In helping them speak words that were used to bring their child to Faith.

In helping them to do actions to be faithful in the family Worship in the instruction all day long. Every day in the disciplining, When there is sin and then the instruction that comes with that discipline and and the taking opportunity for the gospel and all those words and deeds.

That we look back and we see all of our failures and and the the the way whole path was strewn with those. But we also see all of those moments Where the flesh would say, huh? I'm a pretty good dad. But the spirit comes and says, You know, anything good and that didn't come from you.

Don't you see? How merciful and Powerful the Lord Jesus is that even you could speak words like that and do actions like that. And then it comes to a combination and the fruit. And you hear the hope of the Gospel coming out of your child's mouth, not just grief over sin.

Praise God for grief over sin, but the hope of the Gospel relief over the cross and rejoicing over Jesus. And should we not be full to Joy with bursting? An occasion like that. All not the entire congregation at every profession of Be thinking. Christ in Heaven by his Spirit by whom he works on the earth.

Has done so many wonderful things for us. And through. And then the last use of this word. That at which he is aiming. And he is aiming. To keep preaching the gospel. Wherever Christ has not been named in verses 20-22, he says. And so I've made it my aim to preach the gospel not where Christ was named lest I should build on another man's Foundation but as it is written, To whom he was not announced, they shall see and those who have not heard shall understand.

Well and this is a paraphrase. Of Isaiah 52 verse 15. And in the original, it's Jesus himself. Who was announcing his salvation that he is accomplishing his salvation which, uh, the the next couple verses as you get into chapter 53, are going to come hell. By his stripes, by his being wounded by his being chastened by his being stricken and Afflicted, And so, The Apostle is just is.

Using as his mission verse in verse 21. Something that's actually Jesus's Mission verse. Because it's Christ. Who is accomplishing that mission? Through his church through his people and for Paul very specifically through Paul to the Gentiles just as he described the grace that was given to him in verse 15 that he might be a minister of Jesus Christ.

The Gentiles. This litter, just if you remember from last week of Christ to the Gentiles, And so he knows what he's going to do. Because this is what Jesus was prophesied that he would do.

And so Paul as the liturgist of Christ, to the Gentiles is the one who's bringing about this worship of the Nations.

That Jesus is prophesied in Isaiah 52. Verse 15, as quoted here in verse 21 of Romans 15. As Jesus was going to do in bringing the Nations to worship. Not just restoring Israel. Now, that's the great theme of the book of Isaiah. We're much helped, aren't we? In Romans by having been in Isaiah at the same time.

Praise God. That this problem with Israel is not just going to be solved by God saving, a remnant of the Jews. God is actually going to gather in a multitude from the Nations. Who praise him, who repent and believe and are saved. And praise him. And many of you here tonight, probably.

All of us here tonight. Don't know if any of you are Have any? Israelite physical blood biological. Blood in. Are the fruit of that. And so, since Christ is going to preach to the ends of the Earth. And if Christ is going to give Faith to the ends of the Earth, and if Christ is going to gather worshipers to the ends of the Earth, then the Apostle who has been assigned as the Apostle to the Gentiles by the Lord Jesus.

He reads and he meditates in Isaiah 52 15 and what does he do? So I need to keep going places where Jesus has not yet been named I need to keep going and preaching the gospel. Where Christ is not yet known. He was specifically the Apostle to the to the Gentiles.

And he did. History records for us. Uh, make it to Spain as as he was hoping. But, Uh, the gospel needed to go further than the Roman Empire. There are still places. Where the gospel has not been heard today. The mission continues. Even though none of us are the Apostles or the Gentiles are there, not Rightly ordained ministers and Elders?

Are they not instructed by the scripture? Even by scripture that this Apostle to the Gentiles was used by the spirit to write? Are they not instructed to do the work of an evangelist? Bringing the gospel to the Nations there. The word not used in the sense of writing the gospels like we would.

Uh, like we would probably say in Ephesians chapter 4, But being those who are sent to preach, Where he has not yet been named Which is probably also appropriate. To read in Ephesians chapter 4. And so, he's going to continue his mission now. The reason he hadn't gotten to Rome yet verse 22 is because he was still doing Jerusalem to a lyricum.

Well, where is next? After a lyricum. In Rome and Beyond. And so he says, for this reason, I also had been much hindered. From coming to you. So, I needed to keep Doing. That which would bring Christ's glory. That which was prophesied to bring Christ's glory. And so. Yes, he has.

Cause to glory And that his glorying is proper. And he has good cause to glory and that he is responding to a right occasion for glorying. But he's also glorying for a good cause. He is rejoicing over. What Christ has done. As he looks forward to what Christ will do.

And as the Roman Church receives this, They too were then to Rejoice over what Christ had done through Paul elsewhere. And get excited. About what Paul would do, what Christ would do through Paul? When he came to Rome. Christ is the one. Who has done this work by his Spirit.

It didn't end in alyricum. Didn't end in Rome. Didn't end in Spain. Didn't end with Paul. It has not ended yet. That is going to. The globe has gone across the world and it has gone down

through the history of the church. And when you hear about the Christian Heritage of your own family, if you have a Christian Heritage in your family, You Rejoice over what Christ has done so far and you look forward to what Christ is going to do.

Not just in your life, but in the generations that come from you. And if you are the first or even if you're not and you're just thinking about your own life, it's Christ who has done the work of every gracious. Thought every good, thought every good, word, every good deed in your life, thus far, and he is the one who is still working in the rest of your life.

If you are a Christian And right now. Through those who are assigned to minister to you Christ, is the one who is working. And you can be excited over the Lord Jesus, and what he has done in all of that work so far, and all of those places and in all of your life, And you can look to him with anticipation and expectation.

That he will continue to work now in your life. Through Those whom he has given to minister to you. And as a father, or a husband, or as a mother, or as a church member every body part. Remember, in Ephesians 4, the reason for the pastor teachers to, uh, to stabilize everyone in their doctrine is so that what so that every joint can supply something.

And every member can do its share because we are all to speak. The truth to one another in love. And it is Christ. That is Christ. Who will do the work? Through you and we can Rejoice. Over his accomplishments. In a way that makes us expectant for More of his accomplishments.

Until the mission. Has been completed. Amen.