

Series: Acts

Title: Glory of God in Paul's Purpose (The Beloved and the Begotten Son)

Scripture: Acts 19: 21, 22

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Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Princeton, NJ

Acts 19: 21: After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. 22: So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Tonight we will see God's Glory in Paul's Purpose. Paul had been at Ephesus over 2 years. Now he purposed to visit the brethren in these various places.

I. LET'S GET AN IDEA OF WHY PAUL PURPOSED TO GO TO THESE PLACES.

As we see look at these things, keep a few thoughts in mind:

1: The Lord promised to give pastors after his own heart. In these things that were on Paul's heart and his desire for the edification of the brethren, we see the faithfulness of Christ Jesus in giving ministers to those he has everlastingly loved.

2. As we see these great burdens on Paul—in his care for the churches, in the opposition he received, not to mention the warring between flesh and spirit which Paul endured personally—may it be our purpose to be a help to God's messengers, and guard against being critical and a hindrance.

I MUST ALSO SEE ROME

Paul purposed to end up at Rome. Paul was a Jew. And you remember from Acts 18:2

Acts 18: 2:...Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome.

Claudius Caesar died in the second year of Paul's stay in Ephesus. So the door was open now for Paul to safely travel to Rome. In his letter to the Roman brethren, Paul says why he purposed to go there:

Romans 1: 11: For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

BUT FIRST PAUL PURPOSED TO GO TO MACEDONIA AND ACHAIA

Macedonia included the church at Philippi where Paul and Silas witnessed God's sovereign grace in giving life and faith to the jailor and his household; the church at Thessalonica is where Paul witnessed the Lord work so effectually in the hearts of so many and the church at Berea is where the saints were eager to search the scriptures. Philippi was the chief city of Macedonia.

Achaia included the chief city of Corinth where Paul stayed for a great while, where the Lord had told Paul he had much people.

There were several reasons that Paul wanted to go to Macedonia and Achaia.

First, the saints in these places had let Paul know that they wanted to take up a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. So for the poor saints at Jerusalem, Paul purposed to take up this collection and move on to Jerusalem to minister to their temporal needs. Paul wrote of this in his letter to the church at Rome:

Roman 15: 25: But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26: For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. 27: It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. 28: When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

Later, Paul wrote of the generosity of those in Macedonia:

2 Corinthians 8: 1: Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2: How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3: For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themselves; 4: Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

Comparing these temporal gifts to Christ's gift of giving pastors and teachers, I can't help but think of God's unspeakable gift to his elect, his Son, Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 8: 9: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Enriched of Christ fullness. Rich in his righteousness. Rich in free justification. Rich in sanctification by his blood and through the washing of regeneration. Rich in complete acceptance with God. Rich in access to God. Rich in gifts of his grace both inwardly, and even in his pastors and teachers such as the apostle Paul. Christ Jesus is the good and righteous Man in:

Psalm 112: 9: He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

2 Corinthians 9: 8: God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work: [by Christ who is that righteous and good giver] 11: Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

Secondly, concerning Achaia, Paul had been notified by brethren in Corinth of trouble in the church there.

I Corinthians 1; 10: Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11: For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 : Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

Do you see what God has given us in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ? Do you see the faithfulness of Christ Jesus in giving ministers to us? Do you see the great burden on Paul's heart for these brethren? This is what was on Paul's mind when it says he, "purposed in spirit." So Paul has on his heart, the brethren at Rome, the poor brethren at Jerusalem and taking this offering to help them, and the brethren at Corinth who are in trouble.

II. PAUL PURPOSED TO GO TO THEM IN SPITE OF THE TREATMENT HE RECEIVED FROM MANY AT CORINTH.

A CRITICAL TONGUE CREATES STRIFE

Paul was criticized by some by some at Corinth. Paul addresses this more in his second letter but it was already happening at the time he wrote the first recorded letter.

1. They criticized Paul's bodily presence:

2 Corinthians 10: 10: For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.

I Corinthians 4: 19: But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. 20: For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power.

Paul was not concerned about their fleshly wisdom, their intellect or those things the carnal man highly esteem. He says, I want to know the power of the gospel working in them.

1 Corinthians 1:24:...Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Romans 1: 16:...the gospel of Christ:...the power of God unto salvation

Romans 14:17: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Not the righteousness of men, not what you eat or don't eat or what you drink or don't drink--the more they focused on the flesh, the more carnal they became. But the kingdom of God—the gospel of God—concerns the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ imputed freely by God to those Christ has made the righteousness of God in him. The power of the gospel consists of the peace Christ has made between God and his people through his blood. That peace and joy we are made to enter into by faith when Christ ministers the Holy Spirit, when in the power of his grace he creates a new man in righteousness and true holiness, truth and righteousness in the inward parts where the laws of God are written.

1 Thessalonians 1:5: For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;

Paul said, I will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

2. They accused Paul of taking advantage of the saints in temporal support:

2 Corinthians 11: 9: And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*.

Remember how Paul worked with Aquilla as a tentmaker at Corinth? Then remember how Silas and Timothy came to him with the gift from Macedonia? in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*.

3. They accused Paul of taking advantage of the churches through the pastors he sent.

2 Corinthians 12: 16: But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, [this is what his accusers were saying] being crafty, I caught you with guile. 17: Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? 18: I desired Titus, and with *him* I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? *walked we* not in the same steps? 19: Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

Once these carnal men cast a doubt on Paul by criticizing him, falsely accusing, making him out to be a self-promoter and taking advantage of the brethren, then they moved on to cast doubt on his gospel.

Do you remember how Satan beguiled Eve in the garden? He did so simply by raising a doubt in her mind about the faithfulness of God. "Hath God said...you won't die. He knows in the day you eat of that fruit you will be wise, knowing good and evil." So the first steps which caused these brethren to turn from Paul's gospel came by those who cast doubt upon Paul's person and his faithfulness.

2 Corinthians 11: 3: But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4: For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*....13: For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14: And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15: Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

THE FLESH LOVES TO BE PUFFED UP

This critical tongue and a gospel of fleshly wisdom always strengthens the old man of the flesh.

I Corinthians 4: 8: Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

They were full of themselves. In their fleshly minds they had a high opinion of their abilities, of their learning, of their oratory and eloquence, of their ministers, and of their own knowledge. As the full stomach loathes the honeycomb, so they loathed the apostle's ministry. In their minds, Paul had become ignorant to them. They thought there was more to be learned than the pure Gospel of Christ Jesus. They imagined they had attained to something above it, and stood in no need of it. Truth is, they were far from what they thought themselves to be. They were but babes, children in understanding, and needed milk instead of strong meat.

Listen to this comparison Paul makes and yet Paul loved them in spite of them.

I Corinthians 4: 9: For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. 10: We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but ye *are* wise in Christ; we *are* weak, but ye *are* strong; ye *are* honourable, but we *are* despised. 11: Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; 12: And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: 13: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the offscouring of all things unto this day. 14: I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you*. 15: For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16: Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

III. THE GLORY OF GOD'S FREE GRACE IN PAUL'S PURPOSE.

THE BELOVED SON AND THE BEGOTTEN SON

Love for our brethren is not based on love from our brethren. As we just saw, these brethren were not showing love toward Paul. Yet, for his love for them, Paul sent Timothy, who he loved, who ministered to him and was a great help to him, in order for the children at Corinth to be edified.

Acts 18: 22: So he sent into Macedonia [Timothy went on to Achaia from Macedonia] two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Catch Paul's wording in I Corinthians 4: 15:

I Corinthians 4: 15: For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16: Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. 17: For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

Now compare what Paul did in sending Timothy to what our God did in sending his Son:

1 John 4:9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

God the Father gave his Son for children who did not love him, whom he loved freely. His Son laid down his life for to redeem those children of God. The Lord Jesus Christ our Everlasting Father begat his son Paul, and gave him as a gift to Corinth to minister the gospel to them. By God's grace, Paul begot them through his gospel. They were like children to Paul. Though they were walking in disobedience, showing Paul no love, Paul gave Timothy, who was his beloved son in the gospel that those children might be saved through the gospel of Christ like as God gave his only begotten Son.

Later in his second letter Paul describes what he was feeling for them when he sent Timothy

II Corinthians 2: 4: For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

After giving that long list of things which he endured outwardly in the flesh....stripes, beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, robbed by his own countrymen, he said:

II Corinthians 11: 28: Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily the care of all the churches...

we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

2 Corinthians 12: 14:...for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

Where did Paul get such a spirit?

1 John 4: 13: Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

Listen to how this love is wrapped up in God and the brethren:

I John 3: 14: We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren...5:2
By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments...4: 21: And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Oh, the faithfulness of our God and his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ Jesus. Paul never treated them as anything less than the royal sons of God.

I Corinthians 1: 4: I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5: That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge; 6: Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: 8: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9: God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

May he make us a help to his messengers and to our brethren for the glory of him who has given us all things in his only begotten Son. Amen.