



Holy Boldness

January 18, 2026

Romans 15:14-21

(Video 50:00)

Well, Romans chapter 15. Turn, if you will, in your Bibles to Romans chapter 15. And as we underscored last week, we left off in Romans 15 at verse 13, because Paul had finally completed the deep doctrinal portion, if you will, I shouldn't say deep doctrinal portion. He left the primary doctrinal portion of his magnum opus, if you will, the book of Romans, with 11 chapters, as we've indicated, of orthodoxy. And he started with orthopraxy and practical application of all that our salvation in Christ entailed there in Romans chapter 12, verse 1. And he finally concluded at verse 13. But now, throughout the rest of the book of Romans, Paul has given us his theology. Now he's going to give us his heart. Now he's going to unmask his soul. You see, there's a key word that's involved in these first couple of verses that needs to be underscored. And it's a key word, I submit to you, that needs to be in the forefront of all of our lives when it comes for living and standing for the Lord Jesus Christ. And that key word is found in verse 15. He says, [***But***] ***I have written very boldly. Boldly.*** And that's one of the reasons why I picked that particular Puritan's prayer to utilize as our corporate prayer time this morning is because he underscores boldness, a holy boldness.

That word, bold, Paul is going to use it to defend the manner, he's going to use this section of Scripture, I should say, in verses 14 to 21, to defend, if you will, why he was so bold in talking to these Roman believers, these believers at the church at Rome. You've got to remember something. Paul didn't found the church at Rome. He was never at the church at Rome as of the time this was written yet. He's still yet to get there. He's never fellowshiped with the people in the church in Rome. He didn't found it, he didn't pastor it, and so forth. He hasn't built any big bridge of fellowship with them. And yet, he comes on strong in his exhortations



to them. Well, how could he do that with ones he had never met? And he is about to tell us exactly why.

Now, when we talk about a holy boldness, we talk about a holy boldness characterizing Paul's life. When we talk about a holy boldness characterizing your life and mine without being a sinful type of thing, you need to understand we're not talking about rudeness. We're not talking about an arrogance. We're not talking about being overbearing. We're not talking about being an obnoxious individual. We're not talking about having an attitude of superiority and looking down your nose at other people. We're talking about a courage. Boldness is a courage. It's a willing to take a stand. It's a daring, if you will. To speak boldly means to speak clearly, directly, confidently, courageously, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit in your life to give you wisdom and direction and to trust in what you are doing as guided by God, the Holy Spirit, as you speak for the Lord Jesus Christ, exactly as Paul did. I remember as a kid growing up and actually even as a young adult, on television, there was an ad that came on all the time. People would even make fun of it, but it shows you how effective the ad was. It's still remembered to this day. Many of you will know what I'm talking about when I describe it. There would be a party going on in the ad. People would be having a party or they'd be eating in a restaurant and somebody would be serving food and you'd see a waiter in the background and people would be at different tables and booths and there'd be a couple, a man talking to a man or a couple of couples talking together in the forefront and one of the individuals would talk about investments and he would turn and he'd say, well, you know, my broker says this. What does your broker say? He says, well, my broker is E.F. Hutton and E.F. Hutton says and then immediately everybody in the commercial would stop. You're laughing. I can see Lisa Blaine's laughing. You know exactly what I'm talking about. Everybody stops and the waiters pouring the water would look over. The bartender and



somebody at another table they'd all focus on what this guy was to say and then a commentator, a voiceover would come on the screen and he'd say, "When E.F. Hutton speaks...", what? Everybody, see, you've all heard it. "Everybody listens." Well, what's the point? When the Word of God is shared, when Almighty God speaks, it demands our attention and that's where Paul was coming from. In Romans 6, he said, just a couple of examples. In Romans 6:12, he says, **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies that you should obey its lusts, neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness:...** and so forth. In Romans chapter 8, he says, look, if you live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit. Don't think that you have a relationship with God if you're not motivated by the Spirit of God and on and on and on. Now, you need to understand something, though. He is saying that to a church that he has great respect for. But it's amazing to me how watered down we as Christians become when it comes to speaking about the truths of God. C.S. Lewis told a true account. He went to visit a young pastor one time who he'd heard about and he went to visit him at his church and the pastor was preaching away and at the end of the pastor's sermon he says words to the effect, and now, my dear friends, do not, if you do not believe these truths, he says, I want to read this, he says, there may be for you "grave eschatological consequences". If you don't believe what I'm preaching to you, there could be grave eschatological consequences. Well, Lewis went to see the guy later and he says, I was at your church this morning and I heard your sermon and I heard you close your sermon by saying that if people didn't follow the truth, the mandates, the thing, there'd be grave eschatological consequences. He says, yeah. He said, well, did you mean they'd be in danger of going to hell? He said, well, yeah, that's exactly what I meant. He said, good grief, man, why didn't you say so? And it's the same way. It's amazing how people do not share the truth and they don't have that, what I would call a winsome, holy boldness. Spurgeon says so much so, he says, I heard a preacher one time talk



about the fact that there was severe consequences for not following the word of God and he ended his sermon, Spurgeon says, by saying, "See to it that you don't end up going to a place that is not polite to mention". Spurgeon says, if he doesn't think that should be mentioned, he should never get in a pulpit again. We need to use plain words, and we need to use a holy boldness. He said, if I saw your house on fire, I wouldn't look over there and say, "Me thinkest that yonder there is combustion happening." What would I do? I'd look out there and I'd say, "Fire! Fire! Your house is on fire!" Let me tell you something, friends. We're living in a culture that desperately needs the light of the gospel of Christ. We're living in a culture that desperately needs to hear the truth and we need to be a people who lovingly, kindly, humbly, yet boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. And like I said last week, or maybe it was a couple of weeks ago, the number one prayer on, at least in the top four or five prayers that I pray anymore every day and that we should, I think all do, is to say, "God, I know somewhere in North Phoenix, I know somewhere in Scottsdale, You've got many, many of Your elect who still have not come to the realization. Please bring those elect souls that You've ordained for eternal life across my path and give me the opportunity to explain the truth of the gospel of Christ, to explain a reason for the hope that I have within me." And that is a type of boldness that we need to have. It's a boldness that Paul had. It's a boldness that we're called to.

You know, the late John MacArthur, I've shared this with you a couple of years ago, I know, the late John MacArthur, he says, you know, because I preach at conferences and I travel around, he says, I'm on planes a lot. And invariably, I sit down, I'm on the plane, you know, I got a gun to my head time-wise and I'm trying to prepare a sermon or finish writing a commentary or doing something and so forth and I just really want to spend this two, three, four hours, whatever I got to study and get the job done, you know, and so I said, and invariably, you'll sit down next to somebody and they'll turn to you and they'll say, and what



do you do? He says, I have developed a stock standard answer to that question. He says, I always turn to them and say, my job is to tell people how they can be relieved of the guilt of their sin. He says, one of two things will always happen when you say that to somebody. They're either never going to say another word to me for the next three or four hours of that trip and I'm going to have a very profitable time working on what I'm supposed to work on or they're going to say, "Well, tell me more about that." And, he says, and I'm going to have an opportunity to talk about the cross of Jesus Christ and their need to know the Savior and the next three or four hours is also going to be a very profitable, wonderful, God-honoring time. But either way, we're definitely not going to waste time on foolish fluff and nothingness. Now, I don't know if you want to try that on your next plane flight or not, but I will tell you something, it is a type of holy boldness that I think is wonderful.

Now, back to Paul here. The question might be in the minds of some of the folks there at the church at Rome, where does he get off saying this to us? We don't even know this guy. He hasn't even been here yet. He's not our pastor. Who is this individual who does this? And Paul is going to give them reasons for his boldness. And the reasons he's going to give here is in, like I said, in verses 14 through 21. By the way, just so you know where we're going towards the end of the book of Romans, 14 to 21 here, we're going to talk about Paul's reasons for his boldness. Then we're going to obviously get in to verses 22 to 33 in the next couple of weeks, Paul's plans for the future. And lastly, he's going to end up in the 16th chapter of Romans with some personal greetings. And you'll see when we get there that even the divinely inspired personal greetings of Paul is used by God for a purpose of edifying you and me. And I think you're going to be encouraged by it.

Okay. So he starts out, let's read the passage together and then we'll pick it off as much as we can in the time that we have left as I'm continuing to dodge the sunbeams here. Now, like I



said last week, because of the time of the year and until we get these windows covered, I'm going to be doing this dodge game. And, and, and again, the evil one would do anything he could to try to distract us from the Word of God. So just ignore that. I hope the reflection and stuff doesn't bother you too much. Let's do our best to ask God to help us to focus on the truth of His Word. Romans 15, pick it up, in verse 14, here we go. He says, ***And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are***, and he's going to give them three condemnations here, I want you to see them, we're going to talk about them in a little bit, that you are, I'm convinced, you Romans, you believers at Rome, he says, I'm convinced, what? You ***are full of goodness***, that's one, you ***are filled with all knowledge***, that's two, and three, ***able also to admonish one another. But I have written very boldly***, there it is, ***to you on some points***... What he means, on some of the previous things I've set forth in the previous 14 and a half chapters of this letter to you (and of course there were no chapters, there were no verses at the time it was written), but he's saying on some of the things I hit you guys on, I was pretty bold, I get it. He says, I have written very boldly to you on some points, ***so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God***, what he's saying is, look, I got a holy mandate here. I've got grace given me from God, the reason why I'm so bold about this, Paul says, is because God has given me the grace to do so, and instructed me to do so, verse 16, ***to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest, the gospel of God***, this is beautiful imagery here that we'll get to, the gospel of God, ***so that my offering of the Gentiles***, look at that, he looks at his ministry to the Gentiles as a spiritual offering that he presents to God, and you're going to see how this ties in to you and me as well, ***may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore in Christ Jesus, I've found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. For I will not presume to speak of***



anything except that which Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, and he goes on.

All right, back up there, he says, first of all, what's he do? After 14 and a half chapters of just laying out all this stuff, what's he now say? He now makes some personal amenities to them. He says, what? I'm convinced, I know, you're full of goodness, you're full of knowledge, and you're able to admonish one another. That phrase there, **full of goodness**, is really, really a rich phrase. You know, by the way, there's not one particular identifiable sinful conduct or activity that Paul points to in the book of Romans in terms of a problem in that church. Only the church at Thessalonica, only the two letters to the Thessalonians and on the book of Romans does Paul not pinpoint a particular problem existing at that time in the church. Now, they're sinners, they're not perfect, they have their own struggles, but everything he says as an exhortation to them, they, the church at Rome was a good church, a strong church. How do you know? He says, I know you're full of goodness. The word *goodness* there means moral excellence. It means virtue, character. And by the way, that can only come about by the operation of the Holy Spirit of God. You know, it's Galatians 5:22 & 23. For the **fruit of the Spirit is** what? Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness. Goodness. It's a aspect of the fruit of the Spirit of God. He says, I know you **are full of goodness**, moral virtue. They weren't perfect, they weren't without sin, but they were striving for a godliness. And by the way, I want to say this now as well. So, broad brush is the congregation of Reformed Living Bible Church. There is, I know that the vast majority of the people sitting in the pews of this church are striving for a moral excellence. We're not perfect, but I want to encourage you in that regard, in your striving to do all that. He says something else about them, and I'm going to tie it into Reformed Living as well. He says, not only are you full of goodness, but he says, you're **filled with all knowledge**. Filled with all, and *filled* there is a passive verb. It means



you have been filled with. What's he saying? You're doctrinally sound. You are doctrinally sound, Church at Rome. So, here's a church that has moral excellence, they're striving for godly character, and they got their doctrine straight. They got the principles from the Word of God straight. That is an absolute perfect balance. That is exactly what we're supposed to be. We're supposed to have our doctrine straight, our orthodoxy, if you will, and we're supposed to have our orthopraxy straight as well. This is Paul's admonition to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:18 &19. What does he say? Fight the good fight. Keeping the faith. That means keeping your doctrine sound, and he says, and having a good conscience. That means knowing that you have no unconfessed sin and that you're striving to do it right. And it's possible for every believer in Christ to have just that. I had Ben read from Colossians 2 and into chapter 3. Why? Because I love that one passage. I love the whole thing, but that one part that's in there where he says, in Christ are all the treasures of what? Goodness and wisdom. Let me just read for you Colossians 1. Ben did 2 through 3. Let's just listen to Colossians 1:9 through 12. ~~Paul says this, He, God, made known to us the mystery of His will according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him, in Christ, with a view to an administration suitable.~~ And it would be great if I now left Ephesians and read Colossians. In Colossians 1:9, it's part of the issue I'm struggling with this. He says, ***For this reason also, since the day we heard of it,*** talking about the Colossian believers, Paul says, ***we have not ceased to pray for you and asked that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,...*** Why? For what purpose? Why does He want them to be so filled with the Word of God? So filled with the knowledge of His will? He says it in verse 10, ***...so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.*** Orthodoxy is intended to lead to orthopraxy. What you know is intended to be applied and lived out. And Paul is encouraging the Roman church by saying, look, I know you're full of goodness and I know that you're full of



knowledge. You've got the knowledge and the doctrine and the goodness down. And I want to encourage Reformed Living Bible Church in that regard. And so you say, well, why does Paul say all these things to them? He doesn't say them as condemnation. He says it to them by way of exhortation. He says it to them, one, because he's under mandate from God to share it with them. But there's another reason why he shares it with them and we'll get to that as well. Key verse, by the way, though, a key phrase at the end of Romans 15:14. He says, you're filled with all godliness, excuse me, goodness. You're **filled with all knowledge** and look at that last phrase: **able also to admonish one another**. That phrase, **able to admonish**, *noutheteō* (G3560). We get *Nouthetic* counseling from it. *Noutheteō*. It means to, by warning and instruction and teaching, take someone from a wrong path and place them on a right path. You know how we'd say it in today's language? I know that you're full of goodness, that you're full of knowledge. I know that you're striving to act in moral purity and holiness and good character. I know that you got your doctrine sound and able to admonish and you're competent to counsel. That's what that word means. You're competent to counsel. You see, somewhere along the line in the church, especially, it's bought into this whole idea that we need to go to a psychiatrist. We need to go to a psychologist. We need to go to some professional counselors who have learned a bunch of humanistic philosophy and somehow we need them to apply to our problems. Such is not the authoritative teaching from the Word of God. The Word of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. The Word of God says you are to comfort one another with the comfort with which you have been comforted. You who are mature in Christ are to come alongside those who are struggling and hurting and so forth and to counsel them. You are competent to counsel as believers in Jesus Christ.



What happened? For 1800 years there was no Sigmund Freud. There was no Carl Rogers. There was no Jung. What did the church do for 2000 years before there was psychoanalysis? They did what the Word of God says we're to do. They come alongside and counsel one another with the truth from the Word of God. You have all the knowledge you need. The Word of God is sufficient. Secular psychiatry and psychology has only done one thing. They have given us some convenient labels and boxes in which to categorize various sins. But basically that's all it has done. And so you say well you know maybe Rome was a very cosmopolitan place. Rome was a major, major, city in the first century just like it is today. And there was every sort of hedonistic philosophy vulgarity and opportunities to do anything and everything. And instead of going back and trying to blame your circumstances or the fact that your parents put you up for adoption or you were abused when you were one year old even though you don't remember it and all of these various things, he says look take ownership of your life and allow people who understand the Word of God and are striving to live in godliness themselves come alongside. You don't need Paul and you don't need Sigmund Freud. You're competent to counsel. That is a huge, huge, message from the Word of God.

So, by the way, why is it then, that Paul would say these things to them? If they're a good church, if they are striving for moral excellence, if they basically have a handle on their doctrine, why in addition to the fact he's got a mandate from God and the grace of God is on him and he's been commanded to do this and of course we know the Holy Spirit of God wrote this text really and so it was God wanting him to write it and get it to them, but there's another reason for that as well. And he sets forth for us the fact that, and there's two things really that you have to underscore and have to remember, they're called: familiarity and forgetfulness, forgetfulness and familiarity. The simple fact of the matter is that it's been proven to be true: within 24 hours from now 90% of you will have totally forgotten 95% of what I've said. Isn't



that amazing? In 48 hours from now, the majority of people in this room will not be able to call to mind one verse in particular that I highlighted. Now, you say, that is an astounding statistic. It's true over and over and over and over again. It's proven by studies and so forth. You say, well, then why in the, this is exactly why we are called upon to remind one another, remind one another, remind one another constantly, constantly of these truths. In Timothy, in 2 Timothy 2:14, Paul says, Timothy, remind them of these things. I love the passage in 2 Peter chapter 1, which I've decided I was going to read for you. In 2 Peter 1:12-15, he says this, ***Therefore, Peter speaking, I shall always be ready, are you ready, to remind you of these things, even though you already know them and have been established in the truth which is present with you. And I consider it right as long as I am in this earthly dwelling to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure, you may be able to call these things to mind.*** He says, after I'm dead and gone, you'll remember, you'll hear the echo of my voice because I reminded you of them.

It is so true. And the other thing, in addition to forgetting, is familiarity. Things spoil on us when they get familiar. And so, and you see this proved out over and over and over again in the Word of God. If you go from book to book to book to book, you'll see Paul, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Romans, 1st and 2nd [Corinthians], on and on and on, all of them, you will see them saying the same principles many times over and over and over again. But you know what? He says them in different ways. He packages them a little differently. If he said the exact same words every time, the first thing, as soon as you heard a couple words, you say, oh, I know this, I've heard this before. And you have a tendency to check out. But if he says it to you in a little different way, if he gives you a little bit different



example, like any good Bible teacher will do, repeat, repeat, repeat, and do it with a different story, with a different nuance, with a different emphasis or whatever. It has a way of taking root.

I'll tell you one that you've heard me share before, and it's so true, and I only share it with you again to encourage you. Remember the young man who was encouraged to read his Bible daily, and he comes to this older pastor, and he says, Pastor, I'm really frustrated. I'm feeling really discouraged and really down. He says, well, why is that, young man? He says, well, I gave my life to Christ, as you know, in one of your worship services about two months ago. You encouraged me to read the Word of God every day, every day of my life. He says, I'm spending 15, 20 minutes as best I can every morning reading the Word of God, reading the Word of God. Sometimes I spend more. He says, but Pastor, I can't remember. He says, I seem to forget so much so quickly. He says, the only way I know to analogize it, he says, it's like my mind is like a sieve, and the Word of God is water. And as much as I pour that water in, it just seems to run out the other end of that sieve. I don't retain it. The pastor, this wise pastor, had a great line. He said, young man, you just keep ingesting the Word of God, and you will be the cleanest sieve in town. What's the point? The Word of God has a cathartic effect. The Word of God has a power. The Word of God does not return void. The Word of God has an effect. Ancient words ever true. Changing me, changing you. And so that is exactly what Paul is talking about here. He's repeating and repeating. I mean, you're a great church. And by the way, Reformed Living Bible Church, and I see I did it again. Teri many times prompts me, he says, John, you got to stop doing something. I said, what's that? She says, you're pointing at people. You're pointing at people. You look like you're talking down to people. And she's trying to break me of that, and she hasn't had much success. But I want you to know something. I'm so happy that she points that out to me, because I want to share it with you.



When you see me do that, I'm excited. This is my punctuation mark. I'm not meaning to ever talk down to you. Quite the contrary. I'm very serious about that. I want to encourage you. Let me tell you, we got our doctrine down. And I know what involvement I have with many, many of your lives. You are striving to live in personal holiness. You want to do this right. And I mean, you're not here to be entertained. You're here to be fed the Word of God so that you can go out there and try to live it and apply it. And I get that. So please know that I literally am never, ever doing that when I point my finger and say that.

Paul says, by the grace given me. This is 2 Corinthians. He says, what does Paul say? Paul says, the love of God constrains me. I'm under compulsion. I've got to share these truths with you. Let me tell you something. I can relate a little bit to that. I'm not in the realm of Paul. You understand. But I get it. I literally, literally can't go very long without explaining some aspect of the Word of God to somebody who'll listen. Okay? It's just my gift in this way. But can I tell you something? Every believer in Christ, really, you know that same compulsion. Your gift may not be teaching, but you know exactly what that compulsion is. Teri's got the gift of mercy. And I'm going to tell you something. If you got an itch, she's going to scratch it. Whether you want her to or not, it's just the way the gift of mercy works. Some of you have a gift of administration. And you know what? You can't stand to see something unorganized. You're going to grab it and organize it, whether anybody wants you to or not. You want? Because you just feel compulsion. That's the way you serve Christ. That's the push on your heart. We all should take a stand for Christ. We all want to be good witnesses for Christ. We all want to be able to be, share the gospel when the opportunity arises. But some of you can't walk by a stranger, so to speak, without grabbing them by the collar and sharing. I mean, you've got the gift of evangelism. We all want to be evangelists, but some of you, it's the motive, just, you can't breathe without sharing the gospel with somebody. You understand



what that's all about. That's what Paul's saying here when he says, look, this grace of God has been given me. You know, there's different kinds of grace. There's a saving grace, a standing grace in Romans 5:2. There's electing grace we talked about in Romans 11:5. There's a calling grace in Galatians 1:15. There's a forgiving grace in Ephesians 1:7. There's a comforting grace in 2 Thessalonians. There's a standing grace, like I said in 5:2. He's talking about an apostolic grace. As an apostle of Jesus Christ, it's a compulsion on my heart. In verse 16, he's going to say, he's going to talk about his threefold offices of Paul's ministry. And I'm going to tell you, they're the threefold office of every ministry. Everybody in this room, as you know, who's a believer in Christ, you're all ministers. Every one of us have the ministry of reconciliation, okay, as bringing the lost to a saving knowledge of Christ and encouraging those within the family of God to greater holiness. That's your ministry of reconciliation within and without the body of Christ.

He's going to tell us, first of all, I view my ministry, Paul says, in verse 16, as a priest. Then he's going to tell us, I also view it as a preacher. And then he's going to say, and I also view it as a pioneer, meaning going out and taking further ground for Christ. And we're going to unpack that over the next couple of weeks. But this one for today, in verse 15, excuse me, chapter 15:16, he says, **to be a minister**, this grace was given me, in the end of verse 15, in verse 16, **to be a minister**, *leitourgos (G3011)*, we get the word liturgy from that, **to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest, the gospel of God.**

Now, please understand the language construct there. He didn't say, I'm a priest. Some people take this out of context. They say, you see, he's creating an earthly priesthood. It's okay to have Greek Orthodox priests and Roman Catholic priests and Anglican priests and, you know, Russian Orthodox priests and Antiochian priests and Psycatic priests and different priests, Lutheran, some Lutheran denominations have priests. The Church of Sweden has a



priesthood. That is not what Paul's talking about here. The Word of God is very clear in 2 Peter 2:9 and some other places, is that we are a holy nation. We as believers, we are a royal priesthood. What's it say in Hebrews? ***There is only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.*** There's no need for earthly mediators. That was an Old Testament concept. And so, all believers are priests. I said 2 Peter. It's 1 Peter 2:5 and 1 Peter 2:9 is what I meant to quote. And so, he's using an analogy. And what he's saying is, look, as priests made offerings to God, God has laid upon me this compulsion by His grace to be a minister, to take the gospel to the Gentiles. And he uses a great word picture here, and he says, I see God's enabling me and using me to draw elect Gentiles to a saving belief in the Messiah. He says, and I present those Gentiles to Almighty God as a part of my spiritual offering to God. That's what he's talking about there.

You know, I've said you many times before, nobody says it better than Spurgeon. Talking about earthly priests. Spurgeon says this: *I reckon of all the crimes, the greatest for man is for a man to assume to mediate between men and God. Little as I respect the devil, I prefer him to a priest who pretends to forgive sins. For even the devil has too much honesty about him to pretend that he could ever give absolution in God's name to another individual.* He goes on further. I mean, you talk about a holy boldness. He says, did your priest grant you pardon? Did you offend your priest? He says, your priest is a fallen, depraved sinner like you are. If you've offended him, he can extend you forgiveness. But if you've offended Almighty God, only God can forgive that. And God has made provision of that in the person of work and work of Jesus Christ.

By the way, this whole idea of offerings to God with priesthood of the believers, I took that concept and ran sort of wild with it a little bit in the last 72 hours. Well, it's a beautiful word picture of exactly our role as believers in Jesus Christ. Now, you know, and I started, what I



did is I started looking at all the various things that the scriptures say that we're to present to Almighty God as offerings in worshipping God. Well, the first one right off the bat is Romans 12:1 and 2. Present your bodies, present your whole life, present all that you are, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to Almighty God. Well, that's obviously entails everything. But then I started breaking it down into some of its subparts. Here you go. Here's some scriptures on that. Your praise and your worship are specifically delineated as aspects of offerings to Almighty God. Hebrews 13:15. ***Through Him, then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*** That's exactly what you did when you sang the doxology. That's exactly what you did when you got in your car and you walked in here and said, you know what, I want to acknowledge God today. I want to come in here and participate in a worship service to God. And when we sing praises like that, when we pray, when we acknowledge His holiness, when we extol His attributes from the Word of God with our lips, what we're doing is we are literally offering a spiritual sacrifice to Almighty God. Psalm 50:23. ***He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me...*** Praise and worship. Here's another sacrifice, spiritual sacrifice. Your prayers. Your prayers. Romans 5:8. Romans 8:3 & 4 refers to our prayers as incense before God. As a matter of fact, Mark and I were talking in your office just the other day. You made me think of this sitting here. And he made a comment about, you know, our prayers are that fragrant aroma, John, that fragrant incense before Almighty God. That's exactly right. Every time you have a seat, every time you utter a word of prayer to God, you're literally offering a spiritual sacrifice as a part of your role as a royal priesthood. Our good works and our acts of obedience. Hebrews 13:16. ***And do not neglect doing good [and sharing], for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*** Here's another one. Generosity. The material gifts you give. You know, you say, well, I'm going to help out this individual. It'll be a hopefully a real blessing. You know, this will be ministry. It



is. It's not only ministry to the individual. It absolutely is a sacrificial offering to Almighty God. Every time you financially use your resources to help another individual. Where are you getting that at, John? Philippians 4:18. Paul says, ...*having received from Epaphroditus*, he's writing to the Philippians, *having received from Epaphroditus, what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, a pleasing sacrifice acceptable to God*. He's talking about a financial gift that was given him. It was your spiritual sacrifice to God. Here's another one. Repentance and humility. When you repent and tell God you're sorry, do you know what you're really doing? Among other things, you're offering a spiritual sacrifice to the God who bought your soul. Where are you getting that at, John? Psalm 51:17. A humble and a contrite spirit thou will not despise. The sacrifices of God are a humble and a contrite heart. Humility is a spiritual sacrifice to Almighty God. But what I want you to see is to the extent God uses you to save, I shouldn't say save, God does the saving, but to the extent God uses you as the vehicle through whom He chooses to save another human being. If you're ever used to lead another human being to Christ, that human being is a part of your spiritual sacrifice to God. Where are you getting that? Paul says about these Gentiles, they're a part of my spiritual sacrifice to Almighty God.

I'll close with this. A pastor, dear, dear pastor, called upon to go visit a man who's in a hospital dying of cancer. He went and he visited the man. And he sat down to him and he said, well, you're facing death. What do you think about that? He was specifically told to go share Christ with this man. And the guy looked at him and said, well, he said, I know that I'm going to heaven. And the pastor said, you do? How do you know you're going to heaven? He says, because I'm a good person. And I know that I'm the type of good person that God wants in His heaven. Now, at that point in time, you're thinking to yourself, oh, wow, what would I do? This pastor, I learned a lot from this individual, had such wisdom. And he said, well, you know



what? I am sure that God most definitely is pleased with man's good acts as opposed to his wicked and evil acts. So I'm sure that is more pleasing to God than anything, but in terms of what man can do. But he says, how good are you? Well, the guy says to him, well, I don't know. He says, no, really? How good are you? He said, well, I don't know. And with that, this pastor turned to Matthew chapter five. And he said, let me tell you about the scribes and Pharisees. And he explained a group of individuals who professed to love God with all their heart. And from an earthly standpoint, these guys were striving to keep all the rules. They were praying. They never missed a worship service. They had 600 and some odd different rules just to make sure they kept the Sabbath, how far they could walk and what they could say and what they could do and what they couldn't do. They're giving alms and they're giving tithes and they're doing this and they were doing that. And he says, and guess what Jesus said about them? Matthew 5:20, *unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.* Guess what? None of those "good guys" ... And, by the way, he said this guy that he was talking to, this guy facing death, he really was, humanly speaking, a good guy. He'd been faithful to his wife over 50 years of marriage. They had kids that he was a great father, a great grandfather to his grandchildren. He was a generous man. He was a regular churchgoer and so forth. So he was, earthly speaking, a "good guy". And when this pastor shared with him about these Pharisees, none of them may, *unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you can't enter the kingdom of heaven.* He said, all of those "good people", none of them made it. So this guy that was dying of cancer looks at this pastor and says, well, how good do I have to be? And the pastor took him also in Matthew 5, 28 verses later, to Matthew 5:48. He says, what does Jesus say there? And the man read it and says, Jesus says, you must be perfect as my heavenly Father is perfect. The standard is perfection. So the pastor says, you see, it's not a question about your goodness. It's a question



about your perfection. Are you perfect? And the man said, no, I'm not. He said, so you have sinned? He said, yes, I have. He says, as a matter of fact, the question really is, we need to set your goodness aside. The question is, what are we going to do about your sin? One mar ruins perfection. What are we going to do about that? And then he says, as a matter of fact, I'll bet you you've sinned more than once. And the man started weeping and said, oh, yes, I have. And with that, the pastor unfolded the gospel of Jesus Christ. And he said, would you like to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord? And he says, oh, yes, I do. The man's wife was sitting at the bedside next to him. And the man's wife says, oh, can I accept him too? And he said, absolutely. And they prayed together to receive Jesus Christ. And when it was over, the man says to my father-in-law, would you also preach my funeral so that everybody can know what's happened in my life? And of course, he said, I'd be pleased to do so.

What's the point of all of that? I can't imagine some people what their entrance to glory will be when they say, Father, part of my spiritual offering to you is this soul that you privilege me to lead to Christ. But I know one thing, I want to be better about it. I want to be more direct and intentional about it. And I know that you do as well. Let's covenant together. Yes, this memory challenge is fantastic. But let's also covenant together to start praying, "God, if you've got any of your elect around me that need to hear the gospel. Would you please bring them to me and enable me to share."

As Brian comes, let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for this time in Your word. Thank You for these blessed, blessed truths. We thank You for the privilege of unpacking this portion of Romans chapter 15, and Father we ask that every heart here, both mine as well as Your church family, would all be encouraged to be more faithful, more disciplined and better equipped to share the truth of Your gospel of love, the love You have for all of us, in Jesus Christ, in whose matchless name we ask it. Amen and amen.

