



## Holy Boldness Part 3

February 15, 2026

Romans 15 14-21

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(Video 41:52. Due to a YouTube issue, if it can't be fixed, there will be two videos, one leaves off where the first one ended with a brief section of the sermon left off. This document contains the whole sermon)

You want to turn in your bibles to Romans 15. Romans 15, and I am of course going to do the same. You know that Paul has been obviously, he gave us 11 chapters of orthodoxy, started in Romans 12 to give us some chapters of orthopraxy. He goes into Romans 12 and he talks about you presenting your body, and me presenting my body, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, and what that means in taking our spiritual gift, the you that is you, the only you that's ever existed, the only person like you that's ever lived in the history of humankind, and using it to His glory. He goes on and talks about our relation to people within and without the family of God and people in the world and people who are enemies and so forth. And then he gets into Romans 13 and he talks about our relationship to the government. And then he starts talking about the stronger brother and the weaker brother and how they're to react. And he spends a chapter and a half dealing with all of that. And then he gets into the middle of Romans chapter 15 and does a whole sort of a sea change, if you will, a whole shift, and that now he starts to bear his heart and explain why he's spoken so boldly all this time to these Romans whom he's not yet even met or visited for the most part. And in explaining all of that, he bears his heart and the Holy Spirit of God has recorded all this for us. And he said, look, I had an apostolic calling. I had a grace, an apostolic grace laid upon my life. I'm called to do this. And then he describes himself in Romans 15 verses 13 forward in three particular roles.



He says, first of all, I'm a priest. He analogizes himself to a priest. Now we realize it's not an earthly priesthood. It's a spiritual priesthood. The same priesthood that you and I have as believers in Jesus Christ, we're a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a people for God's own choosing, and we talked about that. He says, I offer up these Gentiles that you, Father, have been privileged to lead to Yourself through my ministry. I offer them up as a spiritual sacrifice to You. Where does he say that? Well, jump in real quick at verse 14 in Romans. ***And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another, competent to counsel. But I have written very boldly to you on some points so to remind you again, because of the grace that was given to me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in Christ Jesus, I found reason for boasting, in the things pertaining to God.*** I won't boast in anything but the things pertaining to God. He describes himself as a priest.

Then he transitions and he describes himself as a prophet or as a preacher, if you will, of the Word of God. Well, where's that? He says it right here in verse 18, ***For I will not presume to speak, preach, of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed.*** Verse 19, ***in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about, as far as Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.***

Now, we stopped on that last time. We camped on those two verses last time, because now we said he's talking about himself as a preacher, what he's speaking about. And we said that there were five features of a faithful preacher, of a faithful minister of the gospel of God that has been given to him, that are exemplified in those two verses, 19 and 20. And by application



to everyone, remember, I don't know how many times we have to say this, you've got to get this in your brain forever, you and I, all believers in Christ, are ministers of the gospel of Christ. Don't segregate this off into some sort of professional or special calling to stand behind a pulpit and preach. We all have the ministry of reconciliation, sharing the gospel with the lost. We all have a ministry of encouragement, stimulating one another to love and good deeds. So this applies to all of us, while it clearly has particular reference to Paul as an evangelist and a preacher, it applies across the board. So what's he say?

First of all, we saw in underlying that phrase, I'll only boast or speak about what Christ has accomplished through me. Verse 18, Paul had a **Christ-centered humility**, and we talked about that.

Second of all, he emphasizes obedience. A faithful preacher of the word of God, a faithful minister of the word of God, a faithful individual working out there somewhere who shares the gospel of Christ must, as a part of that gospel, underscore, understand themselves, as well as share that the gospel of **Jesus Christ calls for an obedience**. The whole concept that you could come to Christ and not come with a heart throwing your will and your desire away and wanting to be all in for Christ is totally foreign to the gospel. The very first thing Jesus says is repent and believe, and it's a command, and we talked about that last time. We talked about the Great Commission in Matthew 28, verses 19-20. Go ye therefore into all the nations, make disciples of all men, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and what? Commanding them, teaching them to observe, to obey all that I have commanded you. The gospel of Christ, coming to know Christ as Lord and Savior, yes, faith alone saves. But again we say it, the faith that saves is not alone. He even uses the phrase, I preach to cause the obedience of the Gentiles. That's a euphemism for saving faith. But even that euphemism for saving faith implies the fact that you come to Christ as Lord, Master, Savior, I'm all in for



you. And we have an anemic church that's not for the most part a church at all in evangelicalism today because that has been watered down. You're saved by faith, not by works, but obedience to the Word of God. Striving for holiness is a critical element of the heart that is a genuine heart responsive to the gospel call. And so he underscores that.

Now the third thing in these two verses, where we really left off last time, I just touched on it at the end, he says at the end of verse 18, **resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed**. By word and deed. Now you'll recall last time, Scott, you'll probably make a wooden coin out of this before it's over with. By word and deed, he isn't talking about the Gentiles' words and deeds, he's talking about his words and deeds. And what's he saying? God used me as a vessel to lead these people to Christ. He says by the word I spoke when I shared the gospel, but by deed. In other words, it's by life and by lip. And what he's saying is, it's the old St. Francis of Assisi line again. Preach the gospel at all times. If necessary, use words. And that's what he's talking about here. And I think I left off last time saying, yes, it's a tragedy, the way the cause of Christ, Christ gets a black eye, the way the cause of Christ is denigrated by preachers. And of course, we highlight preachers because they're public, who've had moral failures. But let me tell you something, Christ takes a black eye every time anybody who claims the name of Christ absolutely lives a sinful, ungodly lifestyle. Absolutely violates the word of God. I've said it before, I'll say it again, you've never been humbled till you've had a non-believer say to you, "Oh, you're a Christian and you do that?" It is unbelievably humbling. And of course, I highlighted some wonderful, good examples about it at all. The bottom line is, Paul is talking about integrity. You have to have an **integrity of your life**. I have to have an integrity of my life as a platform to allow God to use you and me to share the gospel of Christ. That's our platform.



You know, it was interesting. I saw it again the other day. Does anybody know the answer to this trivia question? There's only one man-made object on earth that is visible from outer space. Know what it is? The Great Wall of China. Only man-made object on the planet. Now, in the first 100 years that the Great Wall of China was built, it was breached three times. Nope, they didn't go over it. They didn't tear it down. They didn't even go around it. You know what they did? The people who were attacking the Chinese, they bribed the gatekeeper three different times. While they were building a strong wall, they failed to build character into the gatekeeper. It's the same way with you and me, friends. We need to live lives of personal holiness, personal integrity. The one that always stands out to me has a humorous side to it, but a sad side as well. There's a guy who was a manager of a Kentucky Fried Chicken. Actually, I think it was actually in the state of Kentucky. It was a Kentucky Fried Chicken. I think it was in Louisville. In any event, he's a manager of a Kentucky Fried Chicken store. He comes in the early morning hours. He opens up. They're getting ready for, you know, the patrons to start coming through. He takes the evening receipts, several thousand dollars or more, and he's going to go to the bank when the bank opens up in a couple of hours. And he doesn't have, he takes the evening receipts. He couldn't find the pouch, the bag, and he just put them in an empty Kentucky Fried Chicken carton box. And he, wouldn't you know, somebody comes to the drive-in window and mistakenly, one of the employees grabbing an order takes this box with all the cash in it, hands it out the window to this couple, and they drive off. The manager, about 30, is frantic. He wants to go to the bank. He can't, and he goes, oh my goodness, they realize what they've done. I'm going to get fired. I'm going to lose my job. This is a financial [disaster]. And he's just beside himself, totally panicked. About 15 minutes later, a guy comes walking in the front door of the Kentucky Fried Chicken store with the box of all the cash. He said, when we drove up to the window to get our lunch, we got away to sat over in the park



to start eating our lunch, and we opened it up, and lo and behold, all this cash was in it. We realized it had to be a mistake. Well, this manager is absolutely thrilled to death. He can't imagine how grateful he is. He is so, and to think in this culture that there could be somebody this honest, having this much integrity, to come back with all this money, and give this cash back to us. You know what? Don't go away, sir. I'm calling the local newspaper. I want to get a photographer here. I want to get a picture of this. We've got to publish this in the paper. This will be so encouraging to people. And with that, the guy who brought back the cash says, "Oh no, no, no, no. Please, please, no. Please don't do that. I got to go. Don't do that." He said, "Why? No, come on, stay. We want you to stay." He says, "Oh no. The woman I'm with is not my wife." Man of integrity. What's the point? You can have it all right in some area, and you can really blow it in some other area. God calls upon you and me. Paul says, a faithful minister of the Word of God, He ministers the gospel by word and deed. Word and deed.

Now, he goes on and says several more things we could say about that, but he also says there's a fourth characteristic. When the Holy Spirit is at work, when it's at work in your life, when ministry's taking place in your life, when the fruit of the Spirit is obvious, there's a **divine affirmation**. There's a divine affirmation to one who faithfully lives out and witnesses boldly for Christ, whether it be in a pulpit ministry or just in whatever your individual ministries might be. You say, where are you getting that? He says right here in verse 19, well, ***For I will not presume to speak, verse 18, of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me***, and he's talking about saving the Gentiles, except what Christ has accomplished through me, ***resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit***. In other words, there's a divine affirmation. 2 Corinthians 12:12, he said this to the Corinthians, he says, ***The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance by signs and wonders.*** ~~Matthew~~ [Mark]



16:20, ***and they went out and they preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.*** In other words, there's a divine affirmation. There's a divine affirmation when the word of God is at work and it's properly going on.

Now, you say, is that still a valid accreditation? Signs and wonders and miracles? Well, about 40, 50 years ago, there was a big movement on to have all these evangelical pastors sign a cessationist document saying that the healing gift was no longer in operation anymore. At that point in time, and probably still today, I would not sign that. I do not believe that if all of this stuff that so passes off as a healing gift is not, I think it's totally illegitimate. If they really had the gift of healing, go into the hospital and start healing everybody. But there is a place for it, and what I'm specifically referring to is John Cutts, a missionary that we all support here. John and Joy Cutts with the Moni tribespeople in Irian Jaya, Indonesia. When he was 17 years old, he tells the story in a local nearby village where a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ confronting the local witch doctor, with satanic evil and wickedness, and the people were confused as to who was telling the truth. And a young boy who had a compound fracture of his leg, that missionary prayed all night for that child, and that child's leg, John Cutts said, it was completely healed the next day. He said, "John, I saw it with my own eyes, and the people knew they could trust the word of the missionary." Now, in Paul's day, in the days before, those signs and wonders and miraculous healings were done to confirm the word of God. Now, since that point in time, John, have you seen any more? No. What's the reason? Because the Moni language was ultimately deciphered and put into print, and they were taught to read, and the scriptures were given out in the Moni language. And now, the Monis and other tribespeople around who speak their particularly tribal language have the scriptures. They can compare what is said to the divine-inspired word of God. So, the oral



speaking of the word of God doesn't need to be confirmed by a miraculous miracle anymore. It can be confirmed by simply comparing it to the truth of the word of God. And so, unless there's some aboriginal people group that's still yet to be discovered somewhere, most likely those healings, in that sense, have ceased. Okay, so, well, wait a minute. Are you saying that there's still a place for divine affirmation on the ministry of the word of God today? And the answer is absolutely yes.

As a matter of fact, it was suggested to me by an individual recently that they were fearful that maybe our church had slipped into lethargy, and that maybe the Holy Spirit wasn't operative in Reformed Living Bible Church. I want you to know that that viewpoint comes from, I think, one, a very narrow view of what a church is in ministry, but also from a lack of knowledge of what's going on. I want to encourage the people in this church so greatly. I have thought about that comment a lot for the last several weeks. And let me tell you something. It is unbelievable. I mentioned it even in that Puritan's prayer that I ad-libbed on. I see the Spirit of Almighty God working in the lives of the people in this church for the glory of God constantly more than you can possibly imagine. I realize everybody isn't aware necessarily of all of it. But let me just encourage you, you're a hundred and probably, there's probably really 150 people that regularly come here, 25 or 40 of which are children. But you 110, 120, 130 faithful souls, your giving alone... You support a radio ministry that is reaching 15 to 25,000 people every day, three times a day on average, all across the metropolitan Phoenix area as a result of that because of your faithfulness to the Word of God and being stewards of your financial giving. I'll give you another one. Well, you don't have a Sunday school class. We have the largest Sunday school class in the world. We used to give more. We had to cut back because of some finances. Still, with your giving, you support seven couples in third world countries, child evangelism fellowship, who are ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ to



unreached children on this planet. Those seven, (These statistics are absolutely cast in concrete. They're proven out over years.), those seven couples on average in one year will each reach 2,000 children with the gospel of Christ. That's 14,000 children in 2025 alone on average, your faithfulness reached with the gospel of Christ. On average, 30% they've shown of those 14,000 kids will have a genuine saving relationship with Christ. That's 4,200 children last year. That's 350 children a week. That's 75 to 85 children on average every week, 52 weeks a year because of the faithfulness of the saints in this church in your giving. Well, that's just throwing money. Hey, we baptized, three souls two weeks ago, and I, Niza Amphlet, I love your testimony. I loved all of the testimonies, but you used that phrase, God took me out of the kingdom of darkness, and He placed me into the kingdom of light by the preaching of the Word of God. Before the service started today, I told this individual, you have no idea the timeliness of what you just shared with me. Individual shared with me before the service how the Spirit of God had been using the messages over the pulpit at Reformed Living Bible Church to deepen not only her love for the Lord and her love for God's Word, but the emphasis on evangelism. So much so that she's got six, seven, eight family members and friends all engaged now in reading through the Bible chronologically in a year and back and forth, and they're asking questions and commentaries and so forth. I know of just one, this is just one person in our church that I personally know of who in the last six months has started an ongoing relationship with eight individuals, none of whom know Christ, they're as lost as that piano, and yet are open to the gospel. And this individual has once or twice a week with every one of them an engagement, and has had them into their home, and has shared the gospel with them, has given Bibles to two of them, and so on. That is a product of the ministry of the Word of God. There's a man sitting right over here named Bob Merwin who's ministering to unsaved men that he counsels and deals with, as well as disciples, believers in Christ, growing



them in greater holiness. And these are just a smattering of the things we know about. And I also know the personal struggles that many of you have gone through, and how you've persevered in striving to live for the glory of God while hell on earth is going on around you, while you're dealing with a broken heart and dealing with broken bodies. To not see the movement of the Spirit of God in the life of this church is amazing spiritual blindness in and of itself. The widow's ministry, evangelism classes, home fellowships, home Bible studies, not to sit and soak and just go home and live life the way. No! Real ministry is going on. What is the role of the church? It's to train up the saints to go and do the work of the ministry. Now, don't get me wrong. Could we do better? Sure. I don't know a Christian, a church, or a ministry that can't do better than what it's doing. I get that. But to think that God has abandoned us, that actually is just not seeing the Spirit of God working for what it is. So all I got off on that was to say, thank you. Thank you for encouraging my soul with what I see God doing in all of your lives and a lot of the feedback that I get.

Paul gives us yet another characteristic in verse 19 of a faithful preacher of the ministry. Yes, he's humble and Christ-centered. That's exactly what you need to be. Yes, he talks about obedience to the Word of God, encouraging fellow believers as well as non-believers to obedience and holiness. Yes, that's what we need to be doing. Yes, he has personal integrity. He lives out what he preaches. Yes, you can see the Holy Spirit of God and divine affirmation on what's going on. But let me give you a fifth one right here. He says, ***in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit, so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum***, (by the way, Illyricum is probably about 1,400 miles from Jerusalem to Illyricum. It's in western Greece.) ***I have***, get this, ***fully preached the gospel of Christ***. A faithful preacher of the Word of God, a faithful minister of the Word of God, get this, they're **thorough**. You're thorough. What do you mean thorough? I think Paul here means it in two



senses. Geographically thorough, and theologically thorough. What's he say in Acts 20? I did not shrink away from preaching the whole counsel of the Word of God. A faithful minister preaches the whole counsel of the Word of God. Yes, we talk about the joy of heaven, and you also talk about the reality of hell. Yes, you talk about holiness, and you also talk about sin. You talk about it all from A to Z. It's what the cross is all about. He's thorough theologically, but he's also thorough geographically.

What do you mean? Paul says, look, I literally, from here to Illyricum, wherever I was called to go, I went and I did it. And by the way, you might think, well, wait a minute, Paul didn't just hang around Jerusalem. He went 1,400 miles. You just said it, John. But you know, if you look at Paul's three missionary journeys, he really goes to the same place all three times. He goes back strengthening the church, and he goes back strengthening the church. Now, he expands it a little more each time, but the bottom line is he does a lot of repetition, a lot of going back, and he strengthens them and strengthens them. He says, what's why he can say at the end of his life, 2 Timothy 4:7, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have run the race, and now there is laid up for me this crown of glory, he says. It's exactly what I mentioned to the person who shared with me before the service started. In addition to their being so faithful in wanting to evangelize more and share the scriptures more with the people they love and get them engaged in the word of God, the eternal rewards that are being garnered. God is so gracious. He gives you the ability. He gives you the desire. He gives you the means. He gives you the gifts. He gives you the tools. He gives you the faith to live it out, and then after you do it, he rewards you for doing it. It's all to the glory of God.

The interesting thing, you say, well, by the way, take a look in talking about being faithful. Look at verse 20. ***And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation.*** There's nothing wrong with



building on another person's foundation. You got to have evangelists and the apostles and evangelists who lay the framework and get the churches going and then go on, but there's got to be people there who continue to edify and teach the word of God and build on Paul's foundation. It's not that it's wrong. It wasn't his calling. I took this verse in different ways. By the way, you know what the practical application of this for you is? Geographically thorough. Bloom where you're planted. You've heard that phrase. Bloom where you're planted. You work where you work. You go to school where you go to school. You live in the neighborhood you live in. You go to the grocery store. You go to whatever you do. You do that by God's design. Use your giftedness. Bloom where you're planted. You find me somebody who's always thinking, I want to go there. I want to go there. I want to go there. Chances are they're no good where they are. Bloom where you're planted. And so the reason why I wanted to camp on this verse, wait a minute. Paul didn't, this church has been built around a particular paradigm, a particular design, something I had instilled in my own heart when I first came to know Christ. And every church doesn't need to be this way. This church has that M.O. What is it? America, we still, again, we've got a radio ministry, 15,000 to 25,000 people a day. Okay, we have Angela Gurman with Valley of the Sun CEF. We got our own, all these things going on in our community. So don't get me wrong. Bible studies and all the things I just described. But the primary role when it comes to mission work is the foreign mission field. Everybody in America has had a chance to hear the gospel. It's beamed across airways constantly. But we got third world countries where the people don't even own a Bible, don't even have the scriptures in their language yet. And so we've had an emphasis on foreign missions. And so that has always been our M.O. Quite frankly, I think it's a sign of the narcissistic Western culture that we live in, that you have people, I don't think I could ever go overseas. I wouldn't want my son or daughter to be a foreign missionary. Why not? Because it's more important



for you to see them on holidays than it is they might do what Almighty God laid on their heart to save the eternal souls of people in another locale. Well, in any event, Paul lays it out big time for us. And that's why our emphasis at Reform Living Bible Church has always been more on foreign missions when it comes to a missionary thrust. So he lays out those aspects of a faithful preacher.

And then thirdly, and I've already bled into it there in verse 20, Paul says, I'm not only a priest, I'm not only a preacher, a prophet. And he gives these characteristics of a faithful minister of the Word of God. But now, he says, I'm also a pioneer. I'm a pioneer. Look what he says again there in verse 20. ***And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation. But as it is written, they who had no news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand.*** And so his heart's desire as an apostle was to go in that direction. And there should be much of that in us.

Now, Paul is going to do a transition, yet another sea change at this point. And some passages in the Word of God have just explicit truth. You know, pray without ceasing. You know, don't forsake the assembling together of the brethren. Just think of one. There's explicit teaching. It's obvious what they're telling you to do. But now, we get into a passage of Scripture, and this gets to be some of the exciting part of teaching the Bible. We're coming to a passage of Scripture that the truth, the teaching, is not near as explicit. It's more implicit. Take your eyes and read along with me, following here at verse 22. ***For this reason, I've often been hindered from coming to you.*** Here we go. ***But now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I've had for many years a longing to come to you whenever I go to Spain-- , for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I first enjoyed your company for a while-- but now, I'm going to Jerusalem serving the saints. For***



***Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things. Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain. I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.*** Stop right there.

Now, you read that, and you go, well, there's a lot of information there. But he's just sort of giving us data. He's just talking about his future plans, and it's just sort of a data dump, if you will. On the surface, I don't see any profound truth in there. Okay, what's this got to do with anything? How does this affect my life? Now, the Holy Spirit of God saw fit to have Paul the Apostle record those plans as a part of sacred writ. Now, wait a minute. All Scripture is profitable. For what? Instruction, for teaching, for rebuke, for training in righteousness. All Scripture. This is a part of Scripture. This is one of those passages of Scripture where the truth is not explicit. It's implicit. He's talking about his personal ministry. He's previously discussed the fact that he sees himself as a priest. He sort of sees himself as a preacher. He sees himself as a pioneer taking new ground. But now, in sharing his heart, and in sharing his plans, and having the Spirit of God record it for us as a part of sacred writ, he's explaining to it that all service has to be done in a key phrase that's found at the end of what we just read. I emphasized it when I read it. Right there in verse 32. ***So that I may come to you in joy by the will of God.*** You need to underline, underscore, highlight, circle, star, whatever you got to do,



because that is the culmination of those verses that I just read that are seemingly totally disconnected. And the thing is, and obviously we'll unpack this all in detail, Lord willing, next week as we continue on in it. But the thing I want to leave you with in underscoring this is Paul's total commitment to doing everything in the will of God. Well, you know, John, that's pretty obvious. No, I want you to have this concept in your mind. He literally does everything in the will of God. And we are to do as well. When he at Antioch and he comes to know Christ and he spends time with the Lord and he's given all the information and he's sent out in Acts 13, just flip over, if you will, to Acts 13. He's sent out to preach the gospel. The first time he gets over in Acts 13. Let's just take a look at verse 21, Luke recording. It says, ***Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul, the son of Kish.*** And Paul says this, ***And after He had removed him,*** Paul says, ***He, God, raised up David to be their king, concerning whom he also testified and said, I HAVE FOUND DAVID, the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART who will do all My will.***

If you ever said, why was David described as a man after God's own heart? After all the adultery, after the killing of Uriah. I mean, come on. Because in the core of his being, in the essence of his essence, David had a desire to please God. He had a burning desire to do the will of God. And Paul says, look, that desire to do the will of God. Look at verse 36. ***For David, after he had served the purpose of God,*** in other words, after he had done God's will, ***in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay.*** Paul is consumed with this. Romans 1:10, I long to come to you, he says, by the will of God. 1 Corinthians 1, Paul, an apostle, by the will of God. 2 Corinthians 1, Paul, an apostle, by the will of God. Colossians 1:1, Paul, an apostle, by the will of God. We're memorizing the book of Ephesians. Ephesians 1:1, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God. He hits it. It



almost becomes a byword with him. Over and over and over again. The will of God, the will of God, the will of God, the will of God.

And so, let me just say the reason why that's important. You need to know you're living your life in the will of God. There is nothing that will bring you greater comfort. Nothing that will bring you greater assurance in the hard times of life than to know you're directly in the center of the will of God.

This coming May, May the 7th to be exact, it'll be 45 years to the day that Teri and I rolled into the Valley of the Sun in a Jartran rental truck with about \$1,500 to our name and a whole lot of dreams. Left behind a law practice, left behind family, left behind everything we knew, came rolling into Phoenix with eyes wide open and a lot of dreams. Two years later, in 1983, the real estate development company that I came to be in-house counsel for had \$12 million of open-ended construction loans floating at two over Prime. That wouldn't be so bad except Prime hit 21 and a half. They had 23 and a half percent interest every month on \$12 million. If we'd have had all our properties fully leased out at market rates, we'd have still been losing \$25,000 to \$30,000 a month cash every month. So what did they do? They sold everything they owned and sold good old John out of a job. And you know what? God was faithful through every bit of it. And as much as we were concerned, as much as we prayed, as much as we looked at the ceiling fan late at night and said, oh Lord, what are we going to do? One thing was absolutely the most comforting thing of all. We knew we were in the will of God when we came out here. It wasn't flippant. It wasn't frivolous. We were clearly in the will of God. And despite everything that happened, our souls were comforted.



When you know you're in the will of God, there is a supernatural peace that comes that you can't put a price on, you can't buy. The question then becomes, how do I know what I'm doing is in the will of God? The Lord willing, Paul next week is going to show us just that.

Let me close us in prayer as Brian comes. Father, we thank You for these truths in Your word. I pray that You will encourage the dear saints that call Reformed Living Bible Church their home the way they have encouraged my soul for so many years and very recently. Father, I see You and the person of the Holy Spirit at work in lives all around us taking ground for Your glory in terms of spiritually advancing Your kingdom, ministering to hurting souls, encouraging others to live in greater godliness, and giving us this fabulous ministry of prayer and of giving and the unique gifts with which You have given each one of us. Father, thank You for the privilege of being a part of what You are doing. Continue to remind us, Lord, that if we boast, we boast only in what You do, not us. That we are not manufacturers, we're distributors. Thank You for the privilege of passing on Your truth by life and by lip. For we ask it all in the matchless name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, our Christ. Amen and amen.