



Holy Boldness Part 2

February 8, 2025

Romans 15:14-21

(Video 1:06:19)

Well, we had a wonderful time looking at the doctrine of repentance and we're still basking in the afterglow of a fabulous baptism service last week by God's wonderful grace. I can't tell you how much response we've gotten from those three testimonies. It's been a real blessing. So now let's go back to Romans chapter 15 and see what God has for us in this portion of his word again today. Romans chapter 15.

Before I get started on this, I made a comment before the baptism service about, I was actually sort of doing a prelude or a lead up as to how we got this broad brush concept of infant baptism within and within the actual literal real church of our Lord as well as in all of the denominations and isms and schisms that are out there that masquerade as Christianity. And in saying that, I slammed Emperor Constantine. I said about Emperor Constantine of Rome didn't do us any favors in about 310 A.D. when he declared Christianity the official state religion of the Roman Empire. That was a misstatement on my part and I'm very much indebted to Cameron Teich. Cameron, are you here this morning at all? Wouldn't you know it, he wouldn't be here when I give him the public acknowledgement. Okay. Well, in any event, Cameron Teich came up to me afterwards and he had a question about that. And basically, Constantine legitimized Christianity as an acceptable religion within the Empire. It was 43 years later, or 43 years after his death, that Theodosius came along as the Roman Emperor and he made Christianity the state religion. And I made a comment about the fact that that was actually a watershed moment that led to a lot of problems because it became fashionable to be a member of the church and people were joining the church at Rome, which is the



biggest church, and that's why the church at Rome just catapulted in terms of numbers and got gigantic and politics got merged with religion and so on and so forth. And Cam had some great questions, I thought. He said, well, wait a minute. You said it was a bad deal to sort of legislate and make Christianity the religion of the Empire. You know, think about it. Wouldn't you rather have that as opposed, and aren't we... Bottom line is this, without getting to, he had some very good things to say. If he, I'll share this with him. I didn't have a chance to text him or email it to him. Maybe he's watching online, but I'll share it with him eventually, but I wanted to share it with you. A good little article to read on that. It's a very short, easy read. It's by Gene Edward Veith, V-E-I-T-H. It's on the Ligonier website. It's called *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly* on Ligonier Ministries' website, and it deals with this floodgates that were opened when Theodosius drew Christianity in as the "official religion" of the Empire. First of all, there was a loss of voluntary faith. People were "coming to faith in Christ" for the wrong reason. They were not real conversions. It became politically expedient, socially acceptable, financially beneficial, etc., to do that. Helped you politically as well. Second of all, the gospel is meant to be spread by the politic of persuasion and by the imitation of Christ. Sometimes that imitation of Christ is bearing up under suffering. Not by the sword, if you will. And that sort of bleeds into a third reason. When you start having government and the church synonymous in ruling over civil society, political aspirations tend to get prioritized over the spiritual truth. And what ultimately happens is that government, which is legitimate and appropriate and right, Romans 13, doesn't function and do what government's supposed to do. And the church doesn't function and do spiritually what the church is supposed to do. Now, well, should we not vote? Well, sure we should. Well, do you mean that Christians shouldn't hold public? Well, obviously not. If there's an office that is appropriate to be filled in any role in society, whether it's prosecutors and defense attorneys or judges or legislatures



or the executive branch or real estate brokers, it doesn't matter. If it's a legitimate role to be filled, praise God, let's fill it with people that know the truth of the word of God. All legislation, I don't care who passes it, is a reflection of the morality of the individuals who are adopting it. So absolutely, but the kingdom of God is not advanced at the point of a sword. Jesus says, my kingdom is not of this world in terms of organized structure, if you will. And there's a lot of other things that lead into that that I won't take the time to get into, such as kingdom theology, the late Pat Robertson. Some of you may be familiar with the United States senator who used to be a quarterback for the Buffalo Bills by the name of Jack Kemp. He was a born-again believer, but he was a kingdom theologian. He was in the United States Senate. Now, don't I want people who are passing laws based on biblical principles? Don't I stand up here and pray, although I didn't this morning, that whatever laws that these people pass, even if they're not believers, they pass laws that are in accord with the word of God? You know, and so, yes, absolutely. But it's one thing to want that, desire that, to pray for that, and have that as a goal and do that, it's something else to start merging the role of the church with the role of civil government. And so, that's why I also made the comment, you need to understand, the United States of America is an unbelievably unique experiment. And we have people in this culture that are trying to take it apart brick by brick because, number one, they're clueless, number two, they don't understand history, or number three, they're just satanic. But either way, I'm not saying we're perfect, I'm not saying things can't be improved, all I'm saying is appreciate the unique experiment this is to have a civil government and to allow a freedom of religion and the two not ordered to be wedded together. Okay, probably more than I needed to share, but if someone as articulate and caring as Cameron had those issues, and I'm still going to unpack some things with him on this, I at least wanted to throw that out and clarify the error for you.



Okay, now we're in Romans, Romans chapter 15, and what did we say a couple of weeks ago when we left off here? The actual heavy duty, if you will, that's a bad way to say it, but the main, I should say, theological teaching in the book of Romans, it ended in chapter 15 at verse 13. So now we're going into chapter 15, verse 14 to the end, and all of chapter 16. And what he's telling us in verses 14-21 is the reason why Paul spoke so boldly earlier in writing this letter to the Romans, and then in verses 22-33 of chapter 15 here, he talks about his plans for the future, and then in chapter 16, verses 1-23, he greets a bunch of people who are very, very special to him. And so you say, wait a minute, if the main theological teaching is over, what's this all about? I think this is really cool. Think about it. God the Holy Spirit designed and ordained that Paul would write holy, sacred writ for us, even in these more personal bearings of his soul, even as we see when he gets into chapter 16, in his greetings to people, God was even, this is a part of sacred scripture. And what does it say? All scripture. That means Romans 15, the second half, and Romans 16, the last chapter, all scripture is profitable for instruction, for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. So there's something in these verses that God the Holy Spirit wanted recorded so that you and I today would be blessed by them. And I got a few nuggets to share with you that he's got. So get fired up.

We jump in again here in verse, let's just pick it up in verse 14, because he says in John 15, ***And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness*** (We talked about that), ***filled with all knowledge...*** you understand the complete counsel, the word of God. I've been, and so, and remember he, if they get, if they're full of goodness, as they're trying to live right, and if they got all this knowledge, then why this letter? Because remember, he was bringing to their memory. He was reminding them. Remember we said a good teacher always reminds, reminds, reminds. Peter says, I bring to your memory. Paul says, I remind you. And so he says, I bring to your mind. What? And then



he says, look, *...and able also to admonish one another*. The King James, or some translation says, *you are competent to counsel*. You had, and I made a comment about psychiatry and psychology, and the primary contribution those fields have given to us is that they tell us how to better categorize sin, and that's about the extent of it. And you saw a living example of that last week when Nizza Amphlett was in that baptismal. And what did she say? I went back, by the way, and watched those to Philip and Josh and Nizza. I went back and watched those baptisms online with tears in my eyes this week, watching those, your testimonies again on YouTube. It thrilled my soul so much that what did Nizza say at the end of, she says, I started reading the Bible on my own, and I was listening to the preaching of Pastor Mac Arthur on the radio and Pastor John on the radio. And she said, and I was lifted from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. And these medications I was taking for depression and my fears and my anxiety and all the counseling I had and all the stuff I went through for years just went away. Huge. The Word of God is competent to counsel. Believers who understand the Word of God are competent to counsel. And having mature believers who've gone through suffering are competent to counsel. Comfort those with the comfort with which you have been comforted from the Word of God. That's clear, bedrock, concrete. You need to be used by God and be a good steward of your own heartache and your own suffering, physical, emotional, relational, marital, whatever it is, so that you can be used by God to come along and counsel others. And Paul commends this church. He says, I know that you're able also to admonish one another, *But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to*, here's the word, *remind you again...* Again, remind you again, the best teacher I know of is repetition; over and over again. That's exactly why I am more excited than anybody in this congregation about this memorization program that we're all on this year, hiding the Word of God in your heart. You have to meditate on it to memorize it. When you meditate on it to memorize it, things



jump out at you. I'm working on memorizing the first chapter of the book of Ephesians right now. And there's just a couple little words. I've read the first chapter of Ephesians a thousand times, and yet something now jumps out when I go to commit it to memory. Be encouraged. This is so fantastic to remind your soul. **...because of the grace that was given me from God.** He says, look, I told you these things. I reminded you these things because God laid this special grace on me. And we saw in Romans chapter 1, it was an apostolic grace. He was called to be an apostle, all right? He says, verse 14, 15, but I have, verse 16, **to be a minister, leitourgos (G3011),** we get the word liturgy from that, a minister, **of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest.** Interestingly, now we said last time he's not instituting a formal priesthood here. He says he's ministering as a priest. Why is he doing that? Because it's a perfect analogy. These people would be totally, totally familiar with what he's talking about. There's only, 1 Timothy 2:5, there's only **one mediator also between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.** We don't have earthly mediators anymore trying to mediate atonement and so forth to Christ Jesus. And I gave you a bunch of quotes from different pastors, but I thought it was so rich, he refers to the Gentiles that God has worked through him to lead to a saving knowledge of Christ. He refers to them as like an offering to God, a spiritual offering to God. And you remember a couple of weeks ago we left off saying, let me put the question to you. How many people has God used you to share the gospel with? How many people has he used you to maybe lead to a saving knowledge of Christ? How many people or believers has he used you to encourage them in their walk of holiness? Where's your fruit in that regard, your offering to God? And I got into this concept of the fact that we're a spiritual priesthood, you know, a spiritual priesthood. What's he say? I said 1 Timothy 4, it's 1 Timothy 2:5. There's only one mediator between God and man, the man, Christ, Jesus. But you know how Peter refers to us as a holy nation, a chosen people, a royal priesthood? And he says that we are



offering up spiritual sacrifices to God. God, I want you as believers in Christ to have a deeper appreciation for the spiritual dynamic of your life. You need to realize everybody in this room who genuinely knows Christ as their Lord and Savior, you have a royal priestly function. And you're to offer up, what is it, spiritual sacrifices. Now, I didn't develop this as fully as I wanted to on that one Sunday, two or three weeks ago. We started out by saying, well, what are these spiritual sacrifices? Well, obviously, Romans 12:1 and 2 present your bodies a living sacrifice, your whole being. You're all in for Jesus Christ, okay, in that regard. That's certainly one. But I wanted to give you some other things that are considered by the Word of God, spiritual sacrifices, for which, by the way, when God returns and sets up His glorious kingdom, there's going to be a *bēma* (G968) seat judgment at which you will receive eternal rewards for these sacrifices that you have offered. Plus, they're also used in God's economy to fulfill His purposes. Let me give you some more spiritual sacrifices as a part of your priestly service. Praise and worship to God is a spiritual sacrifice. Hebrews 13:15. ***Through Him, then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name.*** Praise and worship. Those songs, those hymns, those are spiritual sacrifices to God done with the right heart attitude. Psalm 50:23 says this, ***He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving offers me.*** Psalm 107:22, ***Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and tell of His works with joyful singing.*** Three people stood in a tank full of water last week and told specifically of God's works in their life. That was not only the ordinance of baptism and a special means of grace for them by taking a public stand for Christ. That was used by God as a part of an offering to God in that worship service. Josh Amphlett sitting there talking about the number of times he was going to go and wreak vengeance on bullies. And Almighty God intervened and stopped him from going out and taking another human life and changing the course of his life forever. Before he came to know Christ, the Holy Spirit of God was working



on him. And his standing there and recounting, Philip's standing there and recounting, Nizza standing there and recounting all of this for us, literally was their own spiritual sacrifice of praise to God. They were declaring the mighty works of God. That is exactly what you do every time you witness for Christ. You're declaring the mighty act of God in your life. People get so fearful for some reason about sharing their faith in Christ. I always try to put people at ease by preface it and say, let me tell you something. I've been practicing law for 50 years. And if you'd ever told me, this happened the other day, I'd be standing in the parking lot of a Fry's grocery store, talking to you, a virtual stranger, and telling you that that ink on paper is the divine inspired word of God. 50 years ago, friend, I'd have said you were smoking dope. I'd never in my life... but I'm telling you. And we went on with a wonderful, what's the point? All a witness does is just tell people what happened to you. I call people to stand, a witness stand in a courtroom. I don't have them make anything up. I don't have them try to convince anybody. I ask them, what did you see? What did you hear? What happened to you? And all they do is talk about what they saw and what they heard and what they read and what happened. All you got to do is say what happened. Look, if you're praying that prayer, oh God, lead your elect children who you've got out there, lead them across my paths and give me the opportunity to just let them know what You did in my life, you'll have more spiritual sacrifices to God because not only will you have given praise and public thanksgiving to what He's done, the works in your life, but you're liable to see God save a human being through you. And there's another fruit, a sacrificial gift, I should say. Let me give you a couple of more. Good works, acts of obedience are spiritual sacrifices to God. Hebrews 13:16, ***And do not neglect to do good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*** By the way, generosity, opening your home. Hone's and Lockard's and Winkler's and so many of you, I'm just looking at faces and grabbing and who do that so wonderfully to people within and without the body



of Christ. Giving of your material things and giving of financially. Those gifts and offerings literally are not just tangible physical gifts, they are spiritual sacrifices that God honors. How so? Philippians 4:18, Paul says, **having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, monetary gift, a fragrant aroma, a**, here it comes, **pleasing sacrifice, acceptable to God.** That Hebrews 13:16 passage comes into play again. He says, **do not neglect doing good**, we read that part, **and sharing**. He's talking about sharing of your material wealth, your material resources, your houses, your cars, your home, your time. Sharing. He says, **for with such sacrifices, God is pleased**. We preached a couple of Sundays ago on repentance and humility. What do we say? Spiritual sacrifices of God are what? *A contrite spirit and a broken heart.* Psalm 51:17. Those are spiritual sacrifices. Thanksgiving, by the way, is not just in worship and praise to God. That specific thanksgiving in and of itself to God is a spiritual sacrifice. Psalm 116:17, **I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving**. By the way, suffering faithfully. Persecution for the cause of Christ. Suffering even physically. Suffering. And going through that ordeal without shaking your fist at God and saying, why me? Why now? Why this? Why my family? But realizing that a sovereign God is in control and asking for the grace and the mercy to live up and to bear up under it. Statini's. I left out our own Dick Grunewald and his daughter Sherry who are watching us online. And I know you, Dick, are struggling with physical issues as well. I'm sorry I left you out when I was greeting people earlier. And so many others in our congregation who have relational issues. Wayward spouses. Wayward children. Financial setbacks. All sorts of things. Suffering through that as a believer in Christ in a God-honoring way is a spiritual sacrifice. I dare say a very special spiritual sacrifice. Just write down Philippians 2:17, 1 Peter 4:13, 2 Corinthians 4:10. In those passages of Scripture, suffering is portrayed as something given to God as a sacrifice. And then, of course, the last one is the one that Paul is underscoring here. Should you be so blessed, should I be so blessed



that God would use us to lead a dear soul to a saving belief in Christ, that itself is offered up as a spiritual sacrifice to God. We have no clue. The eternal rewards that await faithful believers in Christ who persevere in holiness through the vagaries of this life. All of that is your spiritual priesthood. Be encouraged. You're to be living this life with eternity in view. And God says He will honor all of that.

Well, let's continue on. In this passage, he says, verse 17. By the way, Paul explains his boldness by, first of all, saying, look, I was called as an apostle and so on and so forth. And he laid all of that out, and he said, and he describes himself in three ways. He says, you know, I'm a priest. I'm offering up your holiness. I'm offering up the Gentiles that have come to Christ as an offering to God. Now, in verses 19 and 20, he's going to describe himself as a preacher. He says, I was bold because I was a priest. I was bold because of my apostolic calling. But you know what? I was bold because I'm called to be a preacher. And in verses 18 and 19, he gives us five character qualities of a faithful preacher. We won't get through all of them today. But here we go. Verse 18, ***For I will not presume to speak of anything 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; so that from Jerusalem and round about, as far as Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.*** Let's read a little further. ***And thus I aspire 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." For this reason, I have often been hindered from coming to you;*** And that's that section in 15 where that thought concept sort of winds down. But verse 17, he says, ***Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.*** Paul said it's okay to boast, not in yourself, not in what you do, but to boast in what God has and is doing through you. I love this



quote. One commentator said: *No brush ever took credit for painting a masterpiece, and no bow ever took credit for a beautiful violin virtuoso solo, nor does any man take credit for what God does.* It's so true. Paul says, I have reason to boast, but it's only because what's been done through Jesus Christ. He commended the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 2:13. He says, ***We thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectively works also in you that believe. For you, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus.*** He's rejoicing, because when they heard his message, it didn't come as his message. It came not as the word of man, but as the word of God. And so, basically, and he says in other places, I will not boast in anything, but in the cross of Jesus Christ. And so, he's talking about never taking credit for what Christ has done through you yourself. Never taking credit for what Christ has done through others. But all just simply acknowledging whatever God is pleased to minister and to do through you, acknowledge it, and but give the glory to God. He boasts only in the things that God has done through him. You know, it's not humility when people come up and they say, Oh, John, God has really blessed Reformed Living Bible Church, hasn't He? No, no, He really hasn't. You know, building's old and we could always do better. That's not humility. You know what? When, when, when, actually, that is denying. That's robbing God of His glory. God is tremendously blessed in many ways. Reformed Living Bible Church, yes, you're absolutely right. God has done an amazing work here. It is so humbling, which it is, to just be a part of it. That's the proper response.

Well, what are the five characteristics of a faithful preacher that He says there? The first one is just that. A faithful minister of the Word of God, and by the way, that would be every one of you because all of us, remember, are ministers of the Word of God, ministers of reconciliation



to those outside the family of God. Ministers stimulating to love and good deeds, those who are inside the Word of God. So what's the first characteristic? It is a Christ-centered humility. This is so 180 degrees opposite from almost anything you see clicking on the television set with so-called evangelists. It's just unbelievable to me how totally contrary it is. You know, if anybody had a reason to boast, I think Paul more than Peter and John, humanly speaking, here's a guy who was used to write most of the New Testament. Here's a guy who literally founded churches. Here's a guy whose ministry dominates, for the most part, most of the book of Acts. And yet he says, I'm scum. I am nothing. I consider all of my earthly accomplishments absolute rubbish. I am the chief of sinners. But Christ is all in all. And he gives glory to what Christ did through him. And whether you're sizing up this pulpit or whether you're relocated somewhere else and you're looking for a home church or whatever, if the people in the pulpit don't have, and you know in your soul when you hear them preach, and you see them act, if they don't have at least a striving, none of us are perfect, but if they don't at least have a striving of a Christ-centered humility, go to another church. You're in the wrong place. And so he emphasizes that; a Christ-centered humility.

But then he goes on with a second aspect. He says, ***I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me***, look at this next phrase, ***resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles***. The key word there is *obedience*. A faithful preacher of the word of God not only has a Christ-centered humility, but the essence, the main drive of whatever they do is to preach and teach and instruct obedience to the word of God. There's another way of saying that. Holiness of life. Personal holiness. And it's so absolutely critical that that be done, really. He humbly boasts of nothing other than what Christ has done and he preaches obedience to the word of God. What did he say in Romans 1:5 when he started out? We have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of the faith among the Gentiles.



Romans 6:16 and 17. He says, ***Know you not that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are whom you obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness. But God be thanked that whereas you were the servants of sin, you have obeyed from the heart***, that's a euphemism for being born again, ***you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.*** The reason why I'm hitting this so hard, you will recall, I talked about that free grace movement. I talked about a seminary professor who spent nine hours of seminary excoriating lordship salvation because repentance, in his view, had nothing to do with a salvific transaction and he was totally dead wrong. You go, the very first public ministry words out of the mouth of Christ was a command, repent and believe. John the Baptist said, repent and believe. Peter stood up on Pentecost, preached the first sermon and said, what do we do? Repent and believe. It's critical because obedience is the essence of it all. What's it say? ***There's no other name given under heaven whereby men must be saved.*** Salvation in Christ is a command. All men are commanded to repent and believe. That's why He says, I desire that none should perish. I desire that none be lost. No, not one. That's God's desire. Repent and believe. But man rejects that truth. And there's a bare, slender remnant but by the grace of God comes into that salvific relationship. By the way, the great commission, we call it the great privilege around here. Matthew 28:19 and 20. Go ye therefore into all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Okay, wait a minute. I'm to go out and teach... that's a command. We're to go out and teach others to obey, observe, all, that word by observe there by the way means to pay attention to carefully. Instructing them, teaching them to observe all the things that I, Christ, have commanded you. Obedience to Christ, obedience to the word of God is integral in your relationship to Christ. The right heart attitude, how many times have we said this? Do it one



more time. And about a thousand more till the day I die. There's no such thing as you're coming to Jesus Christ and truly entering into a salvation relationship, if at the point you give your heart to Christ you don't have the concept, the mindset, the heart attitude, the will, if you will, He's Lord. Whatever He says, whatever He wants my life, so I give my heart, my soul, my life to you. Please, Jesus, forgive me of my sins. Save me. Please remember me. Please come into my life. I repent of my sins. Use me for whatever you want. Whatever terminology you want to put on that heart attitude, that's the right heart attitude. That's why I said I had chills when that 70-some-year-old lady sat on the front row of this church and said to me, I have never felt the need to repent. Then you have never come to a saving knowledge of Christ. What are you being saved from? And if you're being saved from hell, why are you going to hell? And if you don't understand that, you've never come to know Christ. Why? Come on. We get it. Go on to something else. No! There's people within the sound of my voice that still don't get it. It's amazing how you can sit in Bible teaching churches for 60-some years and not know you need to repent of your sins to come into a right relationship with Christ. We're taking no chances, friends. And there's no other reason for me to be up here other than to talk about the need for saving in Christ and then talk about the need to obey Christ. That's it. And that's the reason why we gather. And by the way, this is a part of my spiritual sacrifice to Almighty God right now. Praising Him for His wonderful works and explaining His glorious gospel. A faithful pastor, preacher, minister, you, me, whoever, number one, they have a Christ-centered humility. It's what Christ is. And by the way, it takes all the pressure off. Remember the guy who left our church because I don't close the deal. I never give altar calls. God closes the deals. God does the saving. Not you and me. We don't have to manufacture anything. Remember, we're not in the manufacturing business. We're distributors. We're just hungry people who have found the bread of life telling other hungry people where they can find



bread. And that's all we're called upon to do. But the platform that gives you credence, that God uses to give you that audience, so often is your obedience. You're suffering persecution. You're obedience to the word of God.

Let me give you a third one because, and we'll end with this one, the third one. Here at the end of verse 18, he said, I'll ***not presume to speak of anything except that which Christ has accomplished through me***, Christ-centered humility. It's Christ doing this. This is, please don't ever say I go to John Politan's church. I cringe. Please don't say that. You go to Reformed Living Bible Church and I'm just like you. I'm a spectator just watching what God is doing through all of us. But he says, Christ is accomplished through you, ***resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles***. Look at this. By word and deed, until I exegeted this passage, I thought it was the word and the deed of the Gentiles. No! He's talking about how the gospel came to them. And the third key, critical aspect of a faithful pastor is personal integrity. In other words, Christ accomplished through me, leave out the next phrase and just read, by word and deed. It was Paul's words bringing the gospel of Christ and Paul's deeds, the way he conducted himself when he was with them. That personal integrity. I mean, think about how, look at the black eye the cause of Christ and the name of Christ has taken just in the last two years, let alone the last 40 years, just say the last two years, by pastors who have had moral failures, pastors who have run into all sorts of issues. Steve Lawson of all people just, and it goes on and it can happen to anyone. When I was going through this, I thought about maybe you can do the same in your own lives. Look back though on the faithful ones. I'm thinking of a guy who went to be with the Lord a long time ago and I still get tears in my eyes when I think of him because I was so caught up in doing my life, I never found a time to pick up a phone and call him. Don Cowie, one of the first men to ever unpack the scriptures for me. I think of men who finished faithful like that. The late John MacArthur. To go all those years in ministry with



everything that was thrown at him. Not one time is there an alcoholism, financial fraud, moral failure, living an opulent lifestyle off the back of his congregants. None of that. And others, and I'm not saying these people are perfect, none of us are. Alistair Begg, David Jeremiah, Sinclair Ferguson, J.C. Ryle, Erwin Lutzer, D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Spurgeon, etc. And those are the big names. How many hundreds, maybe thousands, of pastors are there? In one of my favorite towns, Possum Trot, Kentucky. And all of these little bergs around the country, around the world, that are faithfully ministering to 30, 40, 60, 100, 200, 40, whatever, congregations. And they're faithful. They're Christ-centered. And they're striving to live godly, humble lives before the Lord as they minister to their flock. And this is exactly what Paul was. In word and deed, he had a personal integrity. Don't talk to your neighbor about Jesus Christ ever if you've been a bad neighbor to your neighbor. But I trust that the people in your neighborhood know you as the greatest neighbor in the world. That guy would go out of his way. That woman, I saw that woman when she took her garbage pail on Wednesday and put it behind her gate. Do you know that she knew that my husband wasn't home yet and she walked across the street and took my garbage pail and put it behind my gate? Just love your neighbors around you and watch what God can do, but live a life of personal integrity of obedience to the word of God and He gives us platforms to share it.

As Brian, would you come and lead us in this closing hymn? We'll unpack some more of this next week, Lord willing. and then when we get to Romans 16 get excited. Paul is saying things like hey greet Gaius and greet so and so how could that be inspired scripture? Oh man, there's teaching stuff in all of that.

Let me close this in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for this time in Your word. We thank You for these blessed truths and we pray now that You would seal them all to each one of us. May we have a Christ centered humility, a desire and a striving to be obedient to the word of



God by living lives of personal integrity before a lost world. We ask it all in the matchless name of Jesus our Christ. Amen and amen.