

MISSIONARY WORLDVIEW

GOLDEN TEXT

“It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation” (Romans 15:20)

USEFUL PRACTICE

Believers who have been reached by grace and live by faith in Jesus Christ need to have a loving and comprehensive missionary vision.

SCRIPTURE READING

Rom 15:20-29

20 - It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation.

21- Rather, as it is written: “Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.”

22 - This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

23 - But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you,

24 - I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while.

25 - Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord’s people there.

26 - For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord’s people in Jerusalem.

27 - They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.

28 - So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way.

29 - I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To show that those believers who have been reached by grace must have a missionary vision.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- I **To understand** the need for us to have a missionary worldview;
- II. **To point** out the need for missionary planning;
- III. **To list** the spiritual needs of missionary work.

INTRODUCTION

Paul was already coming to the end of the epistle to the Roman church. One of the last issues addressed by him had been about the tolerance that mature believers should demonstrate toward immature ones. The solution to the problem was to know how to balance freedom and Christian love. Now, the apostle wants to expose what was in his heart - the desire to take the gospel of God's grace to unreached lands. Roman Christians, members of a church that made the whole world hear the echoes of their faith (Rom 1:8), should support him in this missionary endeavor. However, for his purpose to be achieved, he feels the need to explain his missionary project in greater detail. That is what we are going to study in this lesson.

I - THE NEED FOR A MISSIONARY WORLDVIEW (Rom 15:14-21)

1. The purpose of the mission. What did the apostle have in mind when he reserved this space in his Epistle to talk about his missionary project? Paul wanted the Roman believers to share in the purpose of his call - the conversion of the Gentile world to the Gospel (Rom 15:16). Some notes are important to help understand the Apostle's words. Firstly, Paul wants the church to see him as someone who was doing a very important job before God. This is the meaning of the Greek term *leitougeo* (minister) used by him here. Secondly, Paul also wanted believers to be aware that this service is a sacrifice that pleases God. This is the meaning of the

Greek word *ierourgounta* *ἱεραουργοῦντα* (ministering as a priest), used to refer to the ceremonies of the Levitical sacrifice. Paul was a priest of God at the service of missionary work and wanted believers to join him.

2. The mission agent. The apostle says that his evangelism ministry was used by the Holy Spirit. Paul's ministry was marked by the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:1-4). There is no missionary movement that can stand without the effective participation of the Lord's Spirit. It is he who brings the power of persuasion into the lost world and proves that Jesus Christ remains alive. In simpler words, the credentials of an authentic ministry are given by the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal movement is a living proof that the Holy Spirit is the most powerful driving force for missions.

3. The sphere of the mission. Paul tells the Romans that he preached the Gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum. A map of that time allows us to see that those were the ends of the world reached by Paul. Now he needed to expand the sphere of his missionary project, because he did not want to preach where others had already preached (Rom 15:20,21). He did not want to work on someone else's foundation. The field was the world and it was white for harvest. Paul's model should still be our model. Unfortunately, what we see today is that many are building on someone else's foundation, invading the sphere of action of other workers, something that Paul never did. They are preaching where there are already established churches, sometimes of the same confession of faith and not where there is really a need for mission. They act moved by the spirit of competitiveness and not of solidarity

II – THE NEED FOR MISSIONARY PLANNING (Rom 15:22-29)

1. To establish bases. One of the basic principles of the implementation of an evangelism project is done primarily with the establishment of a missionary base, a point of support. Paul knew that his project would only be successful if the Roman Church became a point of support: "I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while" (Rom 15:24). The expression "be sent by you" translates the Greek word *propempto*, which occurs nine times in the New Testament. This word according to the Bauer Lexicon means "to assist someone in making a journey, send on one's way with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel" (original text). You cannot do missions without this kind of support.

2. To establish an exchange. Paul was not a freshman in missionary work nor an adventurer in search of human glory. His life was marked by a giving to others. He would soon be opening another missionary front, but before he had to finish another already-started missionary enterprise (Rom 15:26). Paul had already established partnerships among the churches. Here, the exchange occurs between the churches of Macedonia and Achaia and the Jerusalem church. The "mother church" was being helped by the daughters.

III – THE SPIRITUAL NEED IN MISSIONARY WORK (Rom 15:30-33)

1. The need for spiritual covering. The apostle Paul, unlike many who venture in missionary work, knew the need for a "spiritual covering": "I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me" (Rom 15:30). There are two things I want to highlight here. The first is that Paul has the support of the Trinity in his missionary project. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are invoked as support for his mission. The second is that Paul took missionary work very seriously and therefore he prayed that believers fight in prayer with him. The word *fight* translates the Greek ***synagonisasthai*** (συναγωνισασθαι), which means to strive or fight together with someone. The meaning is that of a spiritual struggle in prayer.

2. The need for spiritual refreshing. Missions involve spiritual conflict and often tears. However, missions are also marked by spiritual satisfaction and joy (Ps 126:5,6). No doubt the apostle had this in mind when he wrote to the Romans (Rom 15:31,32). The Greek term ***synanapaufomai***, the biblical scholar William Sanday notes, is used by Paul in the sense of "may I be able to rest and refresh my spirit together with you". Missions, therefore, are refreshment through the power of the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

In this lesson, we have seen one of the reasons that led the apostle to visit the Roman church. It was not just a random visit, but something planned. Its aim was to establish a strong foothold for his missionary enterprise. For this purpose, Paul uses this space in his epistle to inform the believers in Rome about the guidelines adopted for this trip. The Roman church, whose founder was not Paul, would have the opportunity to see how he worked and to support him who was undoubtedly the greatest missionary in history.