

Portrait of a Godly Pastor (Part 2)

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[0:00] Take your Bibles and open them to Romans chapter 15.

! I want to finish this up tonight.

The Bible says, Now I myself, this is Paul of course speaking, I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, speaking to the church at Rome, the believers there.

What was he confident about? That you also are full of goodness, that you are filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.

Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

[1:25] Therefore, I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God, for I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to do what?

To make the Gentiles obedient, in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation. But as it is written, to whom he was not announced, they shall see, and those who have not heard shall understand.

All right? Now, to remind you, last week in my introduction to this portion of Romans, and we are getting close to the end of it, Paul, of course, spent, you know, a good bit of this letter teaching the great doctrines of the faith.

It's hard to imagine not having the book of Romans just for that one reason alone. And then, of course, in the last several chapters we've been looking at, he's been giving us some very practical teaching.

[2:45] And now he's kind of come to the end of that. And now he is, it's more testimonial in a sense, though he's still instructing and still challenging us.

And there are theologies to learn here, but he's being, you know, very, very introspective, very open about himself. And he's sharing with them, I believe, giving us a window, rather, into his pastoral ministry.

His role as a pastor. Not a pastor in the traditional sense, like you have a pastor who lives here and serves here, and this is my only church. But a pastor in the sense that Paul was used of God to plant a number of churches, and he continued, in a sense, to be their pastor.

And he ministered to them, taught them, instructed them, through letters, primarily, and through others that he would send to them to represent him.

And so he still has this, had for a number of years, this pastoral relationship with these churches.

And so these verses are giving us a window into that part of his life.

[4:01] And he was a great pastor. Good, good pastor. And so we can learn a great deal about the pastorate. Although I would be quick to add, and I hope that you got this idea last week, that it's not just pastors who need to learn from his example and what we read about in this text.

For nearly everything, really everything that he tells us about can be applied to you. And the ministry of the laity, that's who you are.

And that would include those who are teachers, and other church leaders, as well as every born-again believer in the church. Alright? Alright, so this is a, as some have called it, a portrait of a godly pastor.

And you know, a good pastor is not always easy to find, is it? And so let me read something to you that I think you might find amusing. And it's rather lengthy, but I want to read it to you nevertheless. And listen to this very closely. It's entitled, How Much Is That Preacher in the Window? Alright, so you can kind of set this, you can imagine a lady walking into this preacher store.

[5:23] Good morning, madam. May I help you? Yes, please. I'd like to buy a minister. For yourself or for your church? Oh, for my church, of course.

I'm already married. Yes. Did you have a particular model in mind? Well, I've got a description from the pastor search team right here.

We want a man about 30. Well-educated, with some experience, good preacher and teacher, balanced personality, serious, but with a sense of humor, efficient but not rigid, good health, able to identify with all age groups, and if possible, sings tenor.

Sings tenor? He said. I don't understand. Well, we're short of tenors in our choir. I see. Well, that's quite a list. How much money did you want to spend?

The committee says 35,000 to 40,000 tops. Hmm. Well, perhaps we'd better start in the bargain basement. Tell me, how much is that model in the window?

[6:38] You mean the one in the three-piece gray suit? Yes, that one. He's a real dream. That's our Princeton model 467.

Has a Ph.D. and sells for 50,000 plus a house. Wow. That's too rich for our blood. What about that model over there? Ah, yes.

An exceptional buy. That's faith model number 502. He's a little older than 30, but has excellent experience. Aggressive. Goodhart has a number of published sermons, two of which have been printed in preaching magazine.

He's not too bad. You know, can you do something about his bald head? Mrs. Penner especially insists that our minister have some hair.

Madam, all of our ministers come in a variety of hairstyles. Keep him in mind, if you will. Now, let me show you Olympia model number 222 four years of varsity sports at OBU.

[7:39] Plays football, basketball, volleyball, and ping pong. Comes complete with sports equipment. What a physique, she said. He must weigh 200 pounds.

Yes, indeed, you get a lot for your money with this one and think what he can do for your young people. Great, but how is his, how is his preaching? Well, I must admit, he's not the Apostle Paul, but you can't expect good sermons and a church-wide athletic program too.

I suppose not still. Well, let me show you our Fresno model 801. Now, here's a preacher. All his sermons are superb, well-researched, copious illustrations, and they always have three points, and he comes with a theological library at no cost to the church.

You get the whole package for \$45,000. He's wearing awfully thick glasses. Well, for \$222 more, we can put contact lenses on him.

I don't know. He might study too much. We don't want a man who's in the office all the time. Of course, of course. How about this minister over here? Comes from a management background, has his MBA from Harvard, adept with committees, gets his work done by 1130 every morning.

[9:03] His tag says he's an IBM 400. Madam, you are, you have a discerning eye. That stands for Innovative Biblical Methods.

This man will positively revitalize your church. I'm not sure our church wants to be revitalized.

Haven't you got something less revolutionary? Well, would you like someone of a social worker type?

We have this inner city model, number 130. You mean the man with the beard? Good gracious. No, Mrs. Penner would never go for that. How about our empathy model, number 41C?

His forte is counseling. Very sympathetic, patient, good with people who have problems. Well, everyone in our church has problems, but he might not get out and visit new people.

We really need a man who does a lot of visitation. You see, all our people are very busy and, well, yes, yes, I understand. You want a minister who can do everything well. That's it.

[10:04] Haven't you got somebody like that? I'm thinking, you know, in our back room we have a minister who was traded in last week. Excellent man, but he broke down after three years.

If you don't mind refurbished models, then we can sell him at a reduced price. Well, we had hoped to have someone brand new. We just redecorated the sanctuary and we wanted a new minister to go with it.

Of course, of course, but with a little extra work and a fresh suit, this man will work, will look like he just came out of the box. No one will ever know. Let me bring him out and you can look him over. All right. Honestly, this minister shopping is exhausting. It's so hard to get your money's worth, you know. Tell me, do you offer any rebates on your purchases? No, we don't. But if there's any dissatisfaction after six months, we send a new congregation for the balance of the years. That usually takes care of most of the problems. Now you're thinking, does that pertain to the sermon?

[11:12] Well, not really. Not really, but I thought it was humorous. But you know, there's a lot expected from a pastor and this sermon is not about that so much.

But to have us consider the Apostle Paul, what kind of pastor he was. And, you know, it's difficult, has been difficult for me to study and prepare for the sermon because all of this speaks to me. but it also speaks to all of us. And so we're looking at a pastor, not that pastor in the window, but a pastor, a godly pastor, an effective pastor and Paul is the model for that, that all pastors ought to emulate and all church members can learn from.

Now last week we looked at Paul's pastoral commendation. That was the first thing about Paul's pastorate. His commendation in verse 14 says, Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness and filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another, teach one another.

And so Paul commended them, didn't he? And that's what a pastor ought to do when there is a reason to commend his congregation and we ought to look for reasons and there are always reasons to be grateful to a congregation, to encourage them and to commend them for the things that they do.

[12:44] Let me quickly remind you that Paul's commendation to the church of Rome is not necessarily a carte blanche commendation to all churches. The commendation must be deserved and so, though I believe you do deserve much of this, let's understand it this way.

Remember, last week I mentioned this to you that Paul's commendation given to the church in Rome naturally, automatically should become for us and for all churches a recommendation. If Paul's going to commend them for this and this and this, then that's a recommendation for us to incorporate, to apply, to live out those things in our church, in our lives and so, the commendation is a recommendation and if we take that seriously, it should lead to a self-examination to see if these things are true.

Alright, so Paul's pastoral commendation, now we're ready for number two. Paul's pastoral determination, his determination, Paul was a determined pastor, determined to accomplish something extremely important.

look again at verse 15. It begins, at least in the New King James version, it begins this way, nevertheless, nevertheless, Paul said, nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points as reminding you because of the grace given to me by God.

[14:27] now, at least it's apparently clear, it really ought to be clear no matter what translation, but at least in that translation, it becomes apparently clear that Paul begins with a caveat to what he's just said.

He said, nevertheless, nevertheless, or some have it, but, but let me tell you something else, or even so, you might even have that in your translation.

That's interesting. And when you put the two together, then this is what you say, if you put them all together and continue reading without detaching one verse from another, he says, I commend you, in essence, I commend you for these things, you're full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, also able to admonish one another, but, or, nevertheless, brethren, I've written more boldly to you on some points.

Now, what's the point here? We're nevertheless, is a caveat. It is, yeah, I commend you, but that does not mean you have no room to improve.

That there's not still need for more instruction. So, nevertheless, that's the first thing you have to notice here. Paul's commending them, but he's not saying you're perfect.

[15:55] There's room to grow. But that's really not the main point here that we need to get from verse 15. Because nevertheless, the word nevertheless, or but, or even so, depending on your translation, is not the first word that appears in the Greek text.

And this is important. The first word to appear, if you were to read it in the Greek language, the first word to appear in the sentence would be an adverb.

The word boldly. Now, it's not written that way in English, and, of course, we would not write it that way, beginning with an adverb. But that's how the Greeks wrote it.

That's how Paul wrote it, boldly. In fact, we could translate it this way literally, boldly, nevertheless, I've written to you. That's the exact word order as it appears in the Greek text.

Now, is that important? It is because word order is important to Greek grammar. Word order is important, and they would quite often begin a sentence with the word that they wanted to emphasize, or the thought they wanted to emphasize.

[17:11] And so, the main thing Paul is wanting to say is that he's bold about something. Boldly. That's the emphasis. Boldly.

The first word gives the emphasis. So, he says, boldly, nevertheless, or but, or whatever, I've written to you. Now, the word boldly means boldly.

Or, we could use the word freely. unapologetically. Or, we could use the word unapologetically. I'm not making any apologies for writing, literally, writing some of the things you already know. I make no apology for writing to you things by way of reminder.

And so, he says, I've written boldly. And it suggests, then, his determination in writing. His pastoral determination.

[18:26] Paul, what did Paul write so boldly to them? Well, he doesn't spell that out. Now, he's referring to this letter that he wrote to them, this letter that we've nearly studied, the entirety of it.

And so, he's referring to what's been written in this letter, but he doesn't specify which of those many things he has written that he had to write boldly or without apology.

But apparently, his point is that some of these things I've written to you in this letter are subjects that you already know. And so, they just come to you by way of reminder, and I don't apologize for that.

In essence, saying, I'm being repetitious, but I don't apologize for that. I think he's even saying that you may think that I am belaboring some of the points in this letter.

belaboring some of the doctrines that I am writing to you, and just kind of going over and over and over these things again and again and again.

[19:39] But I make no apology for that, because that's what you need. And so, he said, I have written more boldly, more freely to you on some points as reminding you.

And so, that's the point. The point is, you've not arrived yet. And you and I, and really, we will never ever fully arrive.

We never become so mature in our faith and in our knowledge of God's Word that there is still not some areas needing instruction. Even some of those areas that we already know, we need to be reminded.

There's more instruction needed. And so, he says, reminding you or by way of reminder, I have written these things to you. And that's why preaching God's Word is so important.

And that's why even the basic fundamentals need to be preached and preached and revisited and preached again. A preacher can never assume that these most basic things of God's Word have been learned.

[20:50] And he knows, a preacher knows, that even those things that have been learned can fade in our minds. These things, these important things, these important truths can lose their potency in our thought process.

They can even be forgotten altogether. Have you ever forgotten something that you've read in Scripture or something you learned maybe as a child or as a teenager or as a young person and then the preacher mentions it again and you think, well, yeah, I remember that now.

And so that's why he's determined to not only give them new revelation, but I think we're to assume that most of what he wrote in Romans is not new to them.

He's taught them and others have taught them and they need to be reminded of these things. So Paul is very determined in his pastoral ministry.

And this was one of Paul's strengths as a minister, as a pastor. One that I should emulate and every preacher should emulate. And if you're a teacher, then you ought to emulate this.

[21:58] Repetition is very important. And Paul's determined, you see, that they get it and not forget it. And so he has to revisit things over and over again. And this is something that Paul

explains about his method of ministry quite a number of times in Scripture, matter of fact.

For example, in 1 Corinthians 15, 1, he says, Now I would remind you, brothers. In 2 Timothy 1, 6, he's writing to Timothy.

He says, For this reason I remind you. Remind you. It's not that he didn't know about it. Not that he had not been taught these things before. But they needed to be reinforced. He needed to be reminded.

He even taught Timothy and Titus, these young preachers, this same method. He said in 2 Timothy 2, 14, remind them, he's speaking to Timothy, remind them of these things.

That is, literally, keep on reminding them. In Titus 3, 1, he said to Titus, that young preacher, remind them to be submissive.

[23:05] Peter also used this same method. In 1 Peter 1, 12, I always intend to remind you. In 2 Peter 1, 13, it is only right that I should keep you, keep on reminding you as long as I live.

That's a pretty strong statement. 2 Peter 3, 1, I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder. And on and on it goes.

Alright, so I'm saying all of that to say this, if you think that your preacher is too repetitious sometimes, and sometimes, a lot of times it's deliberate, sometimes it's just because I'm repetitious. But if you think that, then just remember that the first law of teaching is repetition. It is repetition. And it's extremely important.

Paul was determined. He wanted his readers to get it. And his readers were believers. They were followers of Christ, members of the church in Rome.

[24:10] And he wrote to all of those churches. and Corinth and Galatia and all those places. And he wanted them to get it. And so repetition was one of his, I think, very effective methods.

And it's a method that I need to use as well. We are all forgetful. I know I am. I don't know about you. Are you forgetful?

Can I get a witness? You can't remember. How does that work? Can't remember that I'm forgetful. I think that proves it, doesn't it?

And not only just forgetful, we're easily distracted. We're kind of distracted by things in life, good things, important things, and we kind of get away and have to come back to it, you know, and be reacquainted with some of those things that we know, and so repetition is very important.

And also, I would add this, we all think we know more than we do. Can I get a witness for that?

[25:27] Okay. Spurgeon wrote in his lectures to students, he said, repetition is more than a preaching method.

repetition is God's plan for spiritual growth. He said, we must tell people the great truths of Scripture and then we must tell them again.

Once is never enough. We must tell them who God is, then we must tell them again. We must proclaim the truth about Jesus, then we must tell them again. We must show men their sin, then we must show them again.

We must tell them that they are hopelessly lost, then we must tell them again. We must let them know that God loves them, then we must say that many times again.

We must proclaim the wondrous news that God sent His Son to save us from our sins and tell it again and again and again. We must call men to faith and repentance and call them again.

[26:26] We must show them how they can be saved and find assurance of forgiveness and then we must show them again. We must proclaim the great truths over and over again in many different ways from many different texts proclaiming all the doctrines of grace with all the power and strength and wisdom and winsome courage that God gives us and then we must do it again.

Repetition. So Paul's very determined in his desire to teach the believers at Rome to instruct them in the Word of God. That was the ministry God had called him to and that's why he said because of the grace given to me by God.

Not saving grace but his apostolic grace, his calling and the authority that goes with that, his call to the ministry and his authority for ministry and his approach was not only to proclaim the great truths of Scripture but to continue to remind people of those great truths.

That leads to the third feature of Paul's pastoral ministry and that is what I would call Paul's pastoral occupation. His occupation.

Verse 16 he said that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. That's his calling. Alright. Then notice what he says or the word that comes next.

[27:50] Ministering. That I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles ministering. That sounds redundant, does it? Well, in English it is.

Minister, ministering, but in the Greek it's a different word. And the word ministering is a unique word, Greek language.

And if you have a new American standard it gives a I think a fuller translation, it uses four words to translate the one word and it goes like this, ministering as a priest.

Alright, so Paul is saying that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles ministering as a priest. And the idea literally is this, to minister as a priest in the sense of an Old Testament priest. So, are pastors priests? I've had some people call me a priest. I'm not one. not in the Old Testament sense, and yet that seems to be what Paul is saying.

[29:00] Ministering as a priest. Now, this is interesting. If Paul means this, that he's a ministering as a priest in the Old Testament sense of priest, if he means that, then the question is, in what sense did Paul's pastoral occupation resemble an Old Testament priest?

What was it that he did that was the same as an Old Testament priest? In what sense did he resemble an Old Testament priest?

In the Old Covenant sense of worship? That is in the sense of the Old Testament sacrificial system?

You know, all that the priest did in the Old Testament? No, that's not what he means. So, in what sense? Well, Paul tells us. Look at it. Priests offer something, and what did Paul offer?

Offering of the Gentiles. You say, well, that's just even more confusing. So, here he is. He's saying, my pastoral occupation is this.

[30:18] I serve and perform the function of a priest offering up sacrifices.

And those sacrifices are the Gentiles. The Gentiles. That, yet he goes on to say, this offering might be acceptable and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Now, what does all this mean? how is it that Paul could be saying that a pastor, that this is his occupation, to offer up people, certain people, as an offering, as a sacrifice to the Lord, acceptable and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

How does that work? well, way back there in Romans 12, but really not all that far back. Romans 12, verses 1 and 2, I think will help us understand what Paul is talking about here.

It's that very well-known passage where Paul writes, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you do what? Present.

[31:35] Present your bodies a living sacrifice. That sounds very much like Old Testament imagery. Old Testament language describing the role of a priest.

Because that's what a priest did. Offered the sacrifice. Offered it up to God. Presented the sacrifice. And indeed, this is Old Testament language. So Paul says, again, I beseech you, urge you, by the mercies of God, that you present, you offer up your bodies as what?

a living sacrifice. Holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service or your reasonable act of worship. Now, again, Paul uses the Old Testament imagery here, doesn't he, to put his point across.

And in a sense, we then, not just pastors, but we are to act as priests in some function. function. Some very important function.

In what sense? In the sense of offering up to God a holy sacrifice. So what are we to do? Go out and get a lamb and slit that lamb's throat and shed its blood and offer it as a sacrifice?

[32:56] Are we to go back to the Old Testament sacrificial system? No, you know that's not what he's talking about. So what is it this sacrifice we're to offer ourselves? And so in this sense, in Romans 12, 1, we are acting as priest and sacrifice.

We are laying on the altar as a sacrifice acceptable to God. We're offering ourselves to him in that function.

Alright, so he's talking about you offering yourself to God. Do you see? That's Romans 12, 1.

Alright, so we go up here to Romans 15 and verse 16 and Paul is saying here, in a sense, if we put the two together, he's saying, Paul is saying, I, as a believer, I am a priest and my life is the sacrifice that I offer to God.

That's Romans 12, 1. But the lives, now listen to this, the lives of those that I help to bring to a saving knowledge of Christ, likewise, I offer them as a sacrifice.

I'm giving them over to God just like the priest gives a sacrifice to God. Have you ever thought of, quote, soul winning in that sense?

[34 : 20] that when God uses you, speaks through you, to share the gospel with someone who's lost, and graciously God applies that gospel to the heart and saves that soul, God used you in that whole process that you, in effect, are offering that soul to the Lord as your sacrifice to Him.

That's what Paul is saying. Now, for him, it's specifically the Gentiles. Not the whole nation of Gentiles or all people who would come under that category, but those who believe.

He's the apostle to the Gentiles and he preached and shared the gospel and saw many, many Gentiles come to faith in Christ. And so Paul is saying, I serve in that way as a priest.

I offer them to the Lord. This is his occupation. We might even call it preoccupation. But it's really more than that, by the way. Because what he says next, he says that the offering of the Gentiles, that is those Paul was privileged to lead to Christ, might be what?

Acceptable. And sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Now what's he talking about there? He's talking about the work of God in their hearts and lives, but he is still talking about his participation in that.

[35 : 59] And so, just like the sacrifices of the Old Testament had to be acceptable and sanctified, Paul longed, always longed, longed to offer to the Lord Gentiles who were sanctified to God.

That means that Paul's pastoral occupation was more than just winning souls for Christ. It also included discipleship.

I believe that's his point here. That his responsibility, he felt, his calling, did not end with the conversion.

At conversion. He, his pastoral occupation was to see to it that those who were converted to Christ would grow in their faith.

Be discipled. I think that further explains verse 15. I mean, why was Paul so bold in writing to the Romans things they already knew? To continue to remind them.

[37 : 09] Why did he do that? To teach them and to remind them of the doctrine of the faith. Why? Because he wanted to see them grow in grace. This is part of that offering.

And how do you grow in grace, by the way? One theologian put it this way. He said, you grow in grace through the means of grace. And what are the means of grace?

The truth of God applied to our hearts. this is what Paul was doing. This was his pastoral ministry. Now he did it through letters.

Pastors do it from their pulpits and in other venues in their ministry. That was Paul's pastoral occupation. Again, we might call it a preoccupation to win Gentiles to faith in Christ, to offer them up to God, to disciple them, to grow in the grace by means of grace, to be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

So, Paul's pastoral commendation, his determination, his occupation, and number four, Paul's pastoral motivation. What motivated him?

[38 : 21] Verse 18, Therefore, I have reason to glory. To glory in Christ Jesus. And to glory in what?

The things which pertain to God. Eternal things. Things that are a part of God's work. I have reason to glory in Christ in those things.

For, he says, I will not dare to speak. Now, pay attention to what he says. I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me in word and deed to make the Gentiles obedient.

I'm not going to speak of those things. Now, what's he saying? Well, he's not just merely saying, I will not speak except of what I accomplished for Christ. That might be okay, but Paul goes further than that.

He says, I won't speak except of what Christ has done through me. You know, there are a lot of preachers who need to be reminded of that.

[39 : 24] It's been a number of years since I've been to the Southern Baptist Convention, but you would not believe the boasting that goes on at the convention.

I remember my first one. I had just come out of a career with Walmart and I felt like I was at a Walmart convention talking about, you know, pastors talk about their big churches and this and that and the other, and, you know, just sitting there in that convention hall and listening to all the various conversations around you, I was just amazed.

Paul would never do that. He said, I will not speak except of what Christ has done through me.

He was very careful of no boasting, no, you know, jawing with other missionaries and pastors if there were any, you know, there were in his life, you know, about numbers and this and that. he only spoke of the things, very careful to speak of those things that Christ had done through him. And if he wasn't sure about that, that it was of God, he just wouldn't speak of it.

[40:43] Wouldn't speak of it. And I think he was even very careful to speak of those things he thought was definitely the hand of God. That we, as pastors and really as members of the church, when God does great things and wondrous things, we need to be on guard lest we begin to speak of and boast about things that maybe we did on our own by our own ingenuity or by some point of persuasion or some great program or, you know, things like that.

I mean, we're very good at those things. So we need to be very careful. See, this describes Paul's motivation. motivation. He was motivated by the things Christ had done.

He was motivated by those things that always brought Christ's glory. Motivated to speak only of those things Christ was doing.

And I think motivated, you could add, motivated to see results that only Christ could bring about. And for him, it was the obedience of the Gentiles to the gospel that is their salvation.

Alright, we're coming to the end of it here. Pastoral commendation, determination, occupation, motivation, and then one more. Paul's pastoral ambition, his great aim in his ministry.

[42:22] And it's really pretty clear to see, though we could spend a lot of time kind of picking apart what he says in these last few verses, but look at verses 19 following again.

He's just talked about the Gentiles being obedient to the gospel in mighty signs, he says, and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

I mean, everywhere he's been preaching the gospel, and he covered a large territory, and then he says this about his kind of ministry field, and so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation.

But as it is written, to whom he was not announced, proclaimed, they shall see, and those who have not heard shall understand. Alright, so his desire, his aim was to preach the gospel, that's first and foremost, he puts that first, and not to build on another's foundation.

Now, when I read that, I ask myself, is that possible? For me? Here in America, an American pastor.

[43:45] You know, a land that from its, almost from its origin, has had freely preached the gospel of Christ.

And even right now as I speak, the gospel is being proclaimed all around this country. Is it possible to go anywhere here and not build on another's foundation?

Well, in that sense, no. I don't think so. And so, what's the application of these verses for us? Or for me?

Here's the application, I believe. To have this ambition, as a pastor, as a church, to have this ambition, to see the gospel proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

faith. And to be directly involved in that where possible, indirectly involved in that in a hundred different ways, as a pastor leads his church.

[44:59] And as his church, the members of his church, become involved in that great aim. Paul said, I've preached all around here, to literally, in his day, the ends of the earth.

And that is my aim, too. Our aim, as well. Be it China, Ukraine, even Colorado.

There are people in Colorado who have not heard the gospel. even Bartlesville, believe it or not. Believe it or not.

All you have to do is ask some of these Awana workers who relate to the young people that come to our Awana program who have absolutely no knowledge whatsoever of the gospel.

Now, they may know the name Jesus, might know some things about him, but have never really had articulated to them in simple form the gospel.

[46:11] Now, hopefully, by now, in the year, they have. I know our workers are committed to doing that. And we need to be more committed to doing that. Don't ever think that just because they live in America and in Oklahoma, where there's a church on nearly every corner.

Don't ever think that they've been introduced to the gospel. And so, this is our aim, to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth, to literally go eventually to places where there is no foundation, where you're not building on another person's work.

America. That would certainly include China, in many parts of that country, even Ukraine. That's a pastor's true ambition, or ought to be, and it ought to be the ambition of our church.