

Romans 15:8-19—Glorifying God By Spirit Directed Ministry

Memory Verse

Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Introduction

Paul has been spending a lot of time explaining how to have unity in the body of Christ from the perspective of how we *relate to each other*. But now, in the remainder of the letter to the Romans, he moves on to discussing ministry or service—how we are to *work with each other*. What does ministry have to do with unity? Because to be unified, we need both the right attitude towards each other (the inward focus), and, a common goal or vision to work towards (the outward focus). Of course, the unifying goal or vision that should unite every believer, is that we all desire to love God and bring glory to His name, by loving each other and sharing the gospel with a lost a dying world who desperately needs to hear the good news of the Saviour.

Consider that real unity requires both agape love and and a common goal, and that actually these two things go hand in hand with each other to enable true unity. *Having the right attitude towards each other (love and acceptance instead of judgement and contempt) makes working together towards the same goal possible; and having a common vision and goal makes it possible to overlook each other's differences of opinion and preferences.* Put another way, if we don't have a common vision to unite us, then we will be too busy focusing on our differences of opinion, and, if we aren't united in love, then we won't be able to work together to advance the kingdom of God.

Another way of thinking about it is like this—our differences of opinion will always be there, but they will disappear when we focus on the work of God and become fruitful. Consider a farm. When there is no crop, all you see is the fences dividing the paddocks. However, when the crop is fully grown, all you see is the crop—the fences are no longer visible, and the whole farm looks like one big field—the focus is on the fruit that has been produced. This is what is possible in the church, both within individual churches, and between different churches.

What is our common goal or vision?

As believers, we have all been commissioned as ambassadors for Christ. How each believer fulfills that role varies greatly, as there are many different jobs or roles in the body of Christ. Consider how the army works. Everyone has a different role, but the same vision or goal—to serve and protect their country. Believers glorify God by loving each other and each serving God wholeheartedly in their individual role so that the Gospel is proclaimed.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 NKJV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸ Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.

Outline for Romans 15:8-19

1. The ministry of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles (vs 8-12)
2. The supernatural source of unity—it is only possible when we choose to trust God, and so allow the Holy Spirit to produce in us all joy, peace, and overflowing hope (v 13)
3. The need for us to be constantly reminded of Biblical truth (vs 14-15)
4. Paul's mission statement for his life (v 16)
5. Paul's motivation for service—do everything for the glory of God (vs 17-19)

Romans 15:1-19 NKJV

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ² Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, leading to edification. ³ For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, *“The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.”* ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. ⁵ Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶ that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

⁸ Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, ⁹ and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written:

***“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles,
And sing to Your name.”***

¹⁰ And again he says:

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”

¹¹ And again:

***“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles!
Laud Him, all you peoples!”***

¹² And again, Isaiah says:

***“There shall be a root of Jesse;
And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles,
In Him the Gentiles shall hope.”***

¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴ Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

¹⁵ Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, ¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. ¹⁸ For 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—¹⁹ 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.

1. The ministry of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles

Romans 15:8-13 NKJV

Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision [the Jews] for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, ⁹ and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written:

“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.”

¹⁰ And again he says:

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”

¹¹ And again:

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!”

¹² And again, Isaiah says:

“There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope.”

v 8 **Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant:** There is no greater example of a servant than Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:5-8 NLT

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. ⁶ Though he was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷ Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When He appeared in human form, ⁸ He humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

Luke 22:27 NLT

Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves.

v 8 **Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision [Jews] for the truth of God:** Jesus came as a Jew, first and foremost to serve the Jews, by presenting to them the **truth** of the gospel of God. He did this so that, through Israel, He would be able to also communicate the truth of the gospel to the gentiles. This, “to the Jew first” principle is all through the New Testament:

- John the Baptist's ministry was primarily to the Jews to prepare them for the coming of their Messiah (see John 1).
- Jesus's ministry also started out with Him only serving the Jews (though later on at different times He did reach out to some gentiles as well, see Matt. 8:5–13; 15:21–28, John 4 etc).
- Jesus sent out the twelve apostles [for the first time] with these instructions: “Don't go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, ⁶ but only to the people of Israel—God's lost sheep. ⁷ Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. (Matthew 10:5-7 NLT)
- After Jesus resurrected from the dead, He told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem and begin their ministry there (see Luke 24:44-49). Accordingly, Acts chapters 1-7 records the apostles ministry to the Jews alone. Then in Acts chapter 8 the gospel goes to the Samaritans, in Acts chapter 10 to the gentiles, and finally in Acts 13:1-3 Paul is commissioned by the Holy Spirit to take the gospel throughout the Roman empire. Even when Paul was travelling around the Roman empire, he always sought out the Jews first. Also, Romans states that the gospel is firstly for the Jew, and then for the Greek [gentile].

Romans 1:16 NKJV

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Acts 13:4-6 NLT

So Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They went down to the seaport of Seleucia and then sailed for the island of Cyprus. ⁵ There, in the town of Salamis, they went to the Jewish synagogues and preached the word of God. John Mark went with them as their assistant. ⁶ Afterward they traveled from town to town across the entire island.

v 8 Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers: Jesus is quoted as saying in Hebrews 10:7 NLT, *'Look, I have come to do your will, O God—as is written about Me in the Scriptures.'* The Old Testament described Jesus' ministry, and the New Testament is the fulfilment of those Messianic prophecies and promises. Many of those **promises** were **made to the fathers** of the nation of Israel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David etc (see Luke 1:30–33, 46–55, and 67–80). It's also important to remember that there are many promises that relate to Jesus' second coming and the nation of Israel that have not yet been fulfilled; they will only be fulfilled once Jesus returns to establish His kingdom.

vs 8-9 Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God... that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy: *Here is the reason that God gives the gospel to the Jews first—so that the Jews can then give the gospel to the gentiles.*

The context and overtime of unity in the church: This mention of Jews and gentiles is very applicable to the early church, as one of the issues that divided the church in the first century was that of Jew vs gentile (non-Jewish). There were at least two councils or meetings that were held to resolve the significant differences that were causing division between the Jewish and gentile believers (also see Acts 15:1-29).

Acts 21:17-22 NLT

When we arrived, the brothers and sisters in Jerusalem welcomed us warmly.

¹⁸ The next day Paul went with us to meet with James, and all the elders of the Jerusalem church were present. ¹⁹ After greeting them, Paul gave a detailed account of the things God had accomplished among the Gentiles through his ministry.

²⁰ After hearing this, they praised God. And then they said, **“You know, dear brother, how many thousands of Jews have also believed, and they all follow the law of Moses very seriously. ²¹ But the Jewish believers here in Jerusalem have been told that you are teaching all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn their backs on the laws of Moses. They've heard that you teach them not to circumcise their children or follow other Jewish customs. ²² What should we do? They will certainly hear that you have come.**

vs 8-9 Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, ... And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy: The Jews rejoice in the **truth** of God, the many and great promises that God has given them that include both personal and national salvation. The gentiles rejoice in the **mercy** of God, because God decided, as a part of His master plan in ages past, to include them in His beautiful plan of salvation.

vs 9-12 As it is written: Paul now quotes a series of passages from the Old Testament that show that God wants the gentiles to praise Him along with the Jews. This is good reason for the Jews and gentiles to put aside their cultural and prior religious differences and preferences, and live and work together to bring glory to God by serving side by side in ministry as we proclaim the gospel together. Notice the beautiful progression in the Scriptures/promises that Paul quoted in Romans 15:9-12:

- Jesus Himself (also see Revelation 5:6-7) will give praise to the Father *among* the Gentiles (Romans 15:9, quoting Psalm 18:49)
“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.”
- The Gentiles rejoice *with* the Jews (Romans 15:10, quoting Deuteronomy 32:43)
“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people [the Jews]!”
- All the Jews and Gentiles *together* praise God (Romans 15:11, quoting Psalm 117:1)
“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!”
- Christ shall reign over Jews and Gentiles (Romans 15:12, quoting Isaiah 11:10)
“There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope.”

Jon Courson summarises this section well: “Paul quoted from the Psalms in verse 9, from Deuteronomy in verse 10, and from Isaiah in verse 12. Thus, the three categories of the Jewish Bible—the Psalms, the law, and the prophets—are all represented in this brief section *as Paul continues to drive home the fact that Jesus came for the Gentiles as well as the Jews.*

The Lord is so big. Yet we can be so provincial [territorial, sectorial] and so narrow. “Well, if they worship in this manner or with that intensity, or with that kind of liturgy, they’re wrong,” we say. Not necessarily. If they love Jesus Christ and desire to walk with Him, give them space. Don’t be critical of them or divided from them. Just rejoice with them.”

2. The supernatural source of unity—it is only possible when we choose to trust God, and so allow the Holy Spirit to produce in us all joy, peace, and overflowing hope

Romans 15:13 NKJV

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13 NLT

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13 AMP

May the God of your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in believing [through the experience of your faith] that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound and be overflowing (bubbling over) with hope.

The Scriptures make it clear that we can only walk with God as we are submitted to God. “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:7-8a NKJV). We can only be submitted to God if we trust both His power (that God is in control), and His love (that God works everything for the good of the believer).

If we try to achieve unity through any man made process or program, it will fail. Man tries to create uniformity (where everyone is the same), but *true unity is where vastly different people are able to work together in harmony.*

So it all comes down to the believer's trust or faith (**in believing**) in God. When a group of people are all trusting God, and are therefore submitted to God, then and only then will they experience genuine unity, as the Holy Spirit produces joy, peace, and confident hope in each of them. Consider that the opposite of joy is sorrow, the opposite of peace is disharmony, enmity, and jealousy, and the opposite of hope is hopelessness and despair. *Therefore, true fellowship with each other—where there is real trust, openness, and vulnerability—is only possible if we are in fellowship with God first. Only then will we be able to experience both God's presence and power in our lives, as He produces His fruit in us.*

1 John 1:7 NKJV

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Romans 8:5-6 NLT

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. ⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. **But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.**

Ephesians 5:8-9 AMP

For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of Light [lead the lives of those native-born to the Light]. ⁹ **For the fruit (the effect, the product) of the Light or the Spirit [consists] in every form of kindly goodness, uprightness of heart, and trueness of life.**

This is why this is such an important prayer for us to pray for our church, and the church at large, because true unity is only possible as a work of God in us, and a lack of prayer is indicative of a lack of dependence on and submission to God—genuine unity always starts with persistent prayer and a proper understanding of the word of God.

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

“The prayer and blessing concluding the section is appropriate. As God fills us with the blessings of His **joy and peace in believing**, we are equipped to live in this common bond of unity God calls us to.” (David Guzik)

v 13 **Abound in hope:** “What is hope? Hope is the absolute expectation of coming good. Hope is the antidote for divisiveness and defensiveness. And throughout Scripture, hope is most often referred to in conjunction with the coming of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is pointless for us to argue and debate here on earth, for soon we'll be in heaven with Jesus, where all questions will be answered, all divisions will cease.” (Jon Courson)

3. The need for us to be constantly reminded of Biblical truth

Romans 15:14-15 NKJV

Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish [instruct, advise] one another. ¹⁵ Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God.

v 14 **Full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another:** Here Paul points out three characteristics of a mature believer. May every believer aim to attain to the following basic level of maturity in their Christian walk.

- To be **full of goodness**, one must be submitted to God, as **goodness** is a fruit of the Spirit.
- To be **filled with all knowledge** means that they were well taught, and that they personally read and studied the Scriptures regularly.
- To be **able to admonish one another** requires the previous two points plus the maturity, humility, and wisdom gained from walking with the Lord over time.

Hebrews 5:12-14 NLT

You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. ¹³ For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. ¹⁴ **Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.**

v 15 **Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you:** We all need to be *constantly* reminded of what is important in the Christian life. Why? *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17 NKJV). We may know something to be true, but in order for it to become real, we must read or hear it again and again. I know for myself that the memory verses that I have taken the time to memorize are the ones that are the most effectual in my life.

Peter, like Paul, also went to great lengths to remind his readers of the main truths of the gospel.

2 Peter 1:12-15 NKJV

For this reason **I will not be negligent to remind you** always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. ¹³ Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, **to stir you up by reminding you,** ¹⁴ knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. ¹⁵ Moreover **I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things** after my decease.

The writer of Hebrews also encourages his readers to encourage each other to continue in the faith. May we also make a conscious effort to talk about spiritual things amongst each other so we are reminded and encouraged to continue following the Lord—God knows that the devil is reminding and encouraging us to go the opposite direction.

Hebrews 10:24-25 NLT

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. ²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

4. Paul's mission statement for his life

Romans 15:16 NKJV

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.

We could say that this Paul's mission statement. It defines who he is, what he does, and why he does it.

v 16 **That I might be a minister [servant]:** Every believer is a servant.

v 16 **Of Jesus Christ:** Jesus is our master, our authority or head (see 1 Corinthians 11:3), the one we serve.

v 16 **To the Gentiles:** Paul's primary focus was the gentiles, though he also served the Jews as well. Each of us will have our own ministry or sphere of influence to which God has called us to serve. It often includes our families, school, work, friends, and especially other believers in the local church.

v 16 **Ministering the Gospel of God:** This is the focus or content of what Paul taught and lived. Every believer should live and breath the gospel.

"When he defines his ministry as *ministering the gospel of God* the apostle uses a word occurring nowhere else in the New Testament which may properly be rendered 'acting as a priest.' So the ministry of the gospel is conceived of after the pattern of priestly offering." (Murray)

v 16 **That the offering of the Gentiles:** This is priestly language. The offering that Paul is giving to God are the gentile converts.

"Romans 15:16 is filled with the language of priesthood. Paul says he serves as a "ministering priest" of Jesus Christ presenting the gospel as a "priestly service" so Gentile converts would be an acceptable sacrifice to God." (David Guzik)

v 16 **Might be acceptable:** Paul desires that the fruit of his service be acceptable to God. What defines it as being acceptable? Only if their lives glorify God. This is why Paul spent so much time and effort teaching and modelling what Christian living is all about—this is called discipleship. Remember that the Old Testament sacrifices had to be without blemish. In the same way, we should desire that, not only our lives, but also the lives of those believers around us, be pure, holy, and dedicated to God.

v 16 **Sanctified by the Holy Spirit:** Paul can work as hard as he wants to, but unless the Holy Spirit is the one working in people's lives to bring real and lasting internal transformation, then it is all in vain. Man's programs may look good, they may be exciting and may attract many people, but they have no eternal value. We must remember that without God, we can do nothing; our work must be done in partnership with God—we *join or help God in His work, and not the other way around.*

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 NLT

After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. ⁶ I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. ⁷ **It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow.** ⁸ The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. ⁹ **For we are both God's workers.** And you are God's field. You are God's building.

1 Corinthians 15:10 NKJV

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; **but I laboured more abundantly [worked harder] than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.**

Jon Courson uses D. L. Moody as an example of a believer who lived out Romans 15:16. “D. L. Moody, a shoe salesman captured by Christ, who became one of the most effective soul-winners of all time, purposed in his heart as a young man that he would never let a day go by wherein he didn’t talk to at least one person about Jesus Christ. One night it was approaching midnight and, because of the events of the day, he had not shared the gospel with an unbeliever that particular day. So he went out onto the streets of Chicago, found a man, and said, “Sir, are you ready for heaven?”

“Mind your own business,” said the startled man.

“This is my business,” Moody answered.

5. Paul’s motivation for service—do everything for the glory of God

Romans 15:17-19 NKJV

Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. ¹⁸ For 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—¹⁹ 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.

v 17 (NKJV) **Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God**

v 17 (NLT) **So I have reason to be enthusiastic about all Christ Jesus has done through me in my service to God**

v 17 (AMP) **In Christ Jesus, then, I have legitimate reason to glory (exult) in my work for God [in what through Christ Jesus I have accomplished concerning the things of God].**

There is nothing wrong with boasting or being excited about what God has accomplished through us. Speaking of what God has done, and then giving Him the credit for doing it, can only bring glory to God and cause others to praise Him. Paul’s visit to the church in Jerusalem is a good example of this.

Acts 21:17-20 AMP

When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received and welcomed us gladly. ¹⁸ On the next day Paul went in with us to [see] James, and all the elders of the church were present [also]. ¹⁹ After saluting [greeting] them, **Paul gave a detailed account of the things God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.** ²⁰ **And upon hearing it, they adored and exalted and praised and thanked God.**

Warren W. Wiersbe comments: “The word translated “glory” carries the idea of “boast, take pride in.” Paul used it before in Romans 2:17, 23; 5:2–3, 11 (“joy”); 3:27; and 4:2. Paul was not bragging about his ministry. He was boasting in what the Lord had done. The apostle did not serve and suffer as he did just to make a name for himself, for he had a much higher purpose in mind. He wanted to bring glory to Jesus Christ. “That in all things He might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18).

“Paul will glory only in what Christ has done through him. He is sure that Christ has done great things through him, and he is glad that he can draw attention to those things. But he is not trying to attract adulation. **It is what Christ has done that is his theme.”** (Morris)

v 18 (NKJV) **For 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.**

v 18 (NLT) **Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them.**

v 18 **For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me:** Paul will not take credit for things that God has not accomplished through him—he will not take the credit for something that someone else has done. In contrast, our human nature loves to take the credit for what others have accomplished.

v 18 **In word and deed:** If what we do doesn't match what we say, then we shouldn't say anything. The world will see us as hypocrites, and we will end up turning people away from God instead of God working in us to draw them to Himself.

v 18 **To make the Gentiles obedient:** This was Paul's goal, not only to bring the gentiles (non-Jewish people) to faith in Christ, but also to disciple them, to **make** them **obedient** to Christ.

v 19 **In mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God:** We come back to one of the main themes in this section—we cannot do anything but by the Spirit of God. The greatest sign that we can give the world is not a healing or a miracle, but a changed life. Consider John the Baptist. He performed no miracle, but everything he said was true, and what he did agreed with what he said. Also, consider that the signs and wonders accompanied evangelism.

John 15:5 NKJV

I am the vine, you are the branches. *He who abides in [is in fellowship with] Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*

“The Holy Spirit empowered Paul to minister, and enabled him to perform mighty signs and wonders. The miracles God gave Paul to do were “signs” in that they came from God and revealed Him to others. And they were “wonders” in that they aroused the wonder of the people. But their purpose was always to open the way for the preaching of the Gospel. Miracles were given to authenticate the messenger and the message (Hebrews 2:1–4). Miracles *by themselves* can never save the lost.” (Warren W. Wiersbe)

v 19 **So that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum:** “Illyricum is modern Yugoslavia and Albania. This means that Paul's ministry spread from Illyricum in the west to Jerusalem in the east.” (David Guzik)

v 19 **I have fully preached the gospel of Christ:** Paul testified in Acts 20:26-27 (NKJV), “*Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.*” May we not be afraid to speak the truth in love to those who need to hear it. *A watered down gospel is no gospel at all.*

Summary and Conclusion

If we are to experience unity in the body of Christ, we need to have both the right attitude towards each other, and the same direction or goal in ministry (though often not the same method). We must be willing to yield to the Holy Spirit, walking in submission and obedience to Him, so that He can direct our lives and produce His beautiful fruit in our lives. Then and only then, will we have something to boast about, as we give the glory and credit to God for what He has accomplished in and through us.