

1. As Paul closes his letter to the church in Rome, he wanted to reassure them of his confidence in their love for Jesus Christ. He also wanted to encourage them to continue to faithfully learn the teachings of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures and to share that knowledge with each other as they grew in their understanding of God’s Word.
2. Even though he was confident about their faithfulness, Paul clarified that there were still some things they needed to learn. The Christian life is often about being reminded of important truths and applying those truths as those who lead you share them with you boldly. Paul was able to do this because of the grace that God had given him to preach the gospel.
3. Paul’s calling as a minister of Christ was more important to him than his personal testimony. His work for the Kingdom of God as the Apostle to the Gentiles was his entire life. His goal was that he might offer the Christian Gentiles to God as an acceptable offering. They would be acceptable to God because of the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying them.
4. The word “proud” here indicates not that Paul took credit for any of the fruit of his work for the gospel, but that this was the only achievement in his life that he could boast about. He could only boast because he was in Christ Jesus and thus, Paul knew that it was Christ who had accomplished His work through him.
5. Paul did not even want to take the time to speak about anything else he might have done in his life. The only work that Paul thought was of any value was what Christ had accomplished through him. Paul was greatly excited about what God had done in his ministry. The work of the Holy Spirit to cause obedience, both in word and deed, in the Christians that Paul was teaching and preaching to, brought Paul great joy.
6. Because Paul was an Apostle, not only did his ministry include preaching and teaching, but God had also given Paul gifts of signs and wonders to prove his authority as an Apostle. These came through the power of the Spirit of God. Paul used his authority to fulfill his ministry by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.
7. Paul’s only ambition in life was to preach the gospel. Paul did not want to preach the gospel only to those who already believed, but desired to preach Christ anywhere and everywhere where people did not know of what Christ had done. While part of Paul’s ministry was indeed to build up those who had already believed, his main focus was to see Christ proclaimed to people who had never heard the gospel.
8. Paul had great confidence that his ministry of the gospel to those who had never heard before would be a great success. This was because he trusted that God would keep His promises. Indeed, even thousands of years later God’s promises to Paul and others who preach the gospel are still being fulfilled.

Application

1. Let us use our knowledge of God’s Word to build each other up so that we might boldly declare the teachings of the Scriptures to one another in the hope that God would work through us to sanctify His people.
2. As God calls each of us to proclaim the gospel to those around us, let us not desire to boast in anything else we are doing except the work that God is doing through us in the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Pray to God that, as Paul did, we would make it our great ambition to share the gospel with those who have not yet believed in Christ.

Romans 15:14-21

¹⁴ I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. ¹⁵ But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷ In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. ¹⁸ For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; ²⁰ and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else’s foundation, ²¹ but as it is written, “Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.”