

Topic	The Gospel And The City
Reference	Romans 15 : 14-33
Date	17 June 2018
Speaker	Ps Massimo Gei

In our text today we have Paul explaining his work that he has been doing. He was showing how he from Judea to Illyricum was doing, the ministry and it is kind of like an apologetic for him to say how the gospel needs to be a global gospel and how it needs to have geographic expansion and it kind of shows all the work that he has accomplished in Acts.

*Gospel needs to be preached globally*  
*Gospel needs to be preached locally*  
*Gospel needs to be preached corporately*  
*Gospel needs to be preached personally*

### **1. GOSPEL NEEDS TO BE PREACHED GLOBALLY**

In verse 22-24 Paul says,

*This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. **23**But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, **24**I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.*

He is saying that he is pretty much probably sitting in Turkey in Ephesus. He is saying that he wants to go to Spain and he wants to pup by Rome before that because he has actually already finished his ministry from Jerusalem to Illyricum. What he is saying is that, his plan, his mission is a global mission. His heart is to see the gospel spread, not just in a particular region but in all regions. His heart is for the people, his heart is for all nations and a bit earlier on in the text we read this, he says, he would like to do ministry to *“Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.”*

So when he says this, he is referring to Isaiah actually. In Isaiah 52, it is talking about the fact that there will be kings who have never heard the message and that he will sprinkle the nations and what Paul is doing by saying this, in applying the Old Testament text to his missionary activity, he is saying that and he is showing that Paul was joining the mission of God as it is understood in the Old Testament. That this is not a new mission, that this mission to reach all nations and all people was a mission of God from the Old Testament already. He is making that reference here to show that his gospel is a global gospel and it is a mission to reach the ends of the world.

Now he had an apostolic calling, so how do we fit into this. Well, we are not apostles but we are supposed to continue the work of the apostle by bringing the gospel to the ends of the earth. The Great Commission in itself says, go therefore and baptize and make disciples of all people by baptizing them in the name of Father, Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them all you have commanded. So it is our call to go therefore and spread the gospel to all nations. In Revelations we read that one day all nations, all

tribes, all tongues will be worshipping God. So our call is to bring the gospel to the ends of the world and continue Paul's work.

So how are we doing? 2000 years of ministry. Statistics taken from the Joshua project says that, we have 7.3 billion individuals, 16,900 people groups, 7,000 languages and 237 countries. Out of all of these, we still have 7,000 people group which are unreached.

*How can we participate in bringing the gospel to the ends of the world?*

We don't have to go far; we can stay right here in Kuala Lumpur because the world is coming to you. In our city we have approximately 2000 Somali people which are 1.8% of global Christians, which is considered as unreached. We have 100,000 Nepalese 0.9% of global Christians. People from Myanmar 0.07% of global Christians, Bangladeshis, 150,000 of them here, 0.4% of global Christians. If we take the time to care for them, share the gospel with them, we are on global missions. We are continuing the apostolic work that Paul has started to bring the gospel to the ends of the world, right here in Kuala Lumpur.

These people in the home countries are considered unreached peoples. We have the opportunity here to share love with them, to give them the hope that we have with Jesus, to welcome them into a family. So when they then accept our Lord Jesus Christ they can go back to their home countries and share the good news with them. We can be on global missions because we live in a global city. The nations are coming to us.

## **2. GOSPEL NEEDS TO BE PREACHED LOCALLY**

We are not only supposed to share the gospel globally, we have to look at what Paul did. Paul in his ministry to reach the ends of the world, to have his global mission, he went from city to city, establishing local churches.

*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,*

So he is saying that he had it all the way from Jerusalem to Illyricum. He has shared the gospel. Paul went from a particular metropolitan city to another particular metropolitan city. Paul was able to speak the gospel to their contextualized situation. He established local churches. The reason that he can say that I have finished my work in this area, it doesn't mean that all people in the area have become Christian. It means that he was able to leave because he has established local congregation, local churches to continue doing the work. It is undoubtedly a certain method, in a selection of these cities that he went to. He concentrated on district or provincial capitals, as they have influence over the whole region. The cities that Paul went to were the main centers as far as for communication, culture, commerce, politics, religions and other things as well. Because he wanted to reach the cities that had influence over the surrounding areas.

So today we must continue the mission that Paul has started. He was devoted and committed to reach cities, we cannot abandon that missional call. If anybody would follow a trend a Malaysia that trend probably started in Kuala Lumpur. People are moving to cities; trends are started here. Culture is created in big cities, all the villages and the suburbs around the big cities will follow what the big cities do. We need people in the big cities to be Christians. We need Christian businessman, we need Christian artists, we need Christian musicians, poets, authors, marketing and branding people. We need Christian people everywhere who impact the culture of the city. Everybody comes to the city, anybody who wants to be somebody comes to the city. In fact, around the world right now 3 million people move into cities each week. That means every three weeks we have people creating a new valley. We have about 427,000 people moving to city every day. We have about 17,000 people moving into a city every hour. The world is becoming an urban world. Even though the Bible started in the garden, our future is an urban future. We will be in the New Jerusalem, in a city as well. The future of the world is an urban future; we need to reach the cities for the gospel.

*What is the work that is required to be done?*

We need rampant evangelism; everybody needs to share the gospel. We need real discipleship, the great commission is therefore we are supposed to baptize people and teach them everything that the lord has commanded them. We have to work on real discipleship. We need to have reproducing churches.

*Why is church planting so important?*

Timothy Keller said this,

The vigorous continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for:

1. The numerical growth of the body of Christ in any city based on world statistics.
2. The continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in the city.

Now how do new churches revive existing churches. New churches have the liberty and have the guts very often to innovate. As people progresses, as we develop as an urban nation, contextualize ministry changes. People's hearts, minds, their problems, their solutions, the way we do church changes. The Bible is always constant. The same truth might look very different in different cities. Planting of churches in different cities is also different. Different kinds of people have different needs and as we are looking and planting churches, the new churches are going to the new area and thinking how are these people going to hear the gospel. How can we contextualize this ministry for these people. They are going to try new ways, new things, they will be innovative as they have nothing to lose. Existing churches are a bit more hesitant to change their ways because when they change their ways people might dislike. New churches have the advantage of trying new things and as they do something which is terrible and fail, the old churches don't have to copy that, but if they do something which is great and brings more people, the old churches can copy that. Therefore, they have been revitalized and renewed and that's how new churches revitalize existing churches.

We need to plant more churches, we need to have a mission for the city, we need to share the gospel locally because the local churches will advance the gospel globally eventually and you cannot do this alone, we got to do this together.

### **3. GOSPEL NEEDS TO BE PREACHED CORPORATELY**

It is by networking together different churches, working together to be on mission for the city. Let's read what Paul writes,

***25** At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. **26** For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. **27** For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. **28** When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. **29** I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.*

He is saying, here are two churches in Greece, who have contributions to support the church in Jerusalem. It means that we can do a lot more collectively, we can do so much more collectively. If you just think as a single church, you will not be able to reach the whole city. Different kind of churches are needed to reach different kinds of people.

God has called the city to be a gospel forest. We don't need one big tree, we need a forest, we need an ecosystem of different types of trees, but they are all who are bearing fruit for the gospel. We need churches that reach the young, churches that reach the old, churches that reach the rich, churches that reach the poor, and we need to work together for the gospel. Somebody said this,

***We are not called to be keepers of the aquarium; we are called to be fishers of man.***

We are supposed to be the best tree we can be. We want to see churches that flourish amongst every people group, language and neighborhood. As these churches grow in number and Christ likeness, we long for the city to look less like Babylon and more like the new Jerusalem. The gospel as it spread through different types of churches will affect the city. You can see in this text here where it is talking about supporting and social needs and financial needs, yes these are all effects of the gospel but they are not the gospel, but they are results of the gospel.

One church cannot reach all people. Church is not the building; it is the people. So as churches connects together, we mean people connecting together. It means you working together. We have to share the gospel

### **4. THE GOSPEL NEEDS TO BE SHARED PERSONALLY**

Paul said this

***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.*

Paul was happy with the Roman church. Can we say this about ourselves?

That is the goal, we share the gospel, we go out, we do discipleship program that people are full of goodness, that they are filled with the fullness of God. So that they are out of the fullness are able to instruct one another. Are we able to instruct one another? Are you able to share the gospel, are you able to tell people that there is son of God who came and died on the cross. Paul says

15 *But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder,*

Paul has reminded them the whole book of Romans. In chapter 1 and 2, he says that everybody is full of sin and everybody needs the gospel. Everybody needs the gospel because everybody has sinned against the God most high. In Romans 3 it says no one is righteous, no not one. In Romans 5 comes the good news of God demonstrating his love for us that while we were sinners he sent his son to die for us. Does it mean that we can continue sinning, Roman 6 absolutely not. In fact, we are going to struggle with our sin in Roman 7. Romans 8, by the power of the Holy Spirit that God who began the good work in us is going to bring it to completion that he who choose us will deliver us. Romans 9, God is sovereign. Romans 10 and 11, God has a plan. Romans 12, live your life as a living sacrifice.

If gospel is only good news for us and not worth sharing with others, maybe we just don't care, maybe we have no mercy, maybe we don't care that our neighbors who don't know Jesus, maybe we have no mercy understanding that they will face the wrath of God and we don't want to show mercy on them by sharing the gospel with them. Maybe we think that somebody will do it sometime or maybe it is uncomfortable for us to share the gospel, maybe we are afraid of the persecution that comes with it.

Jesus had everything and he emptied himself, came to earth and humbled himself. In the scriptures we read that he had no place to lay his head, but he had compassion, he loves. All of us at one day, at one point of time were gentiles without hope, because Jesus had compassion. He came to this world; he was willing to take any kind of persecution. He had mercy on us and he came and he died for us. In the book of Hebrews, it says that he died outside the gate of the great city of Jerusalem that we may be able to enter the greater new Jerusalem. We think on the gospel, the gospel itself should unlock our hearts. If the gospel doesn't move us, if it doesn't consume us, if it doesn't fill our hearts that the God most high so loved us, if that doesn't move us or change us, nothing will. But if it does and it fills our hearts, we must go out and we must share the good news with other people.

Somebody said it best, *"the wrath of God will cost somebody their lives. It will either cost the unreached peoples their life for eternity or it will cost us Christians our earthly lives in missionary service."*

So here is the question that we must consider today, dare we be so in love with our lives in this city, in this world at this time that we will stand back like 8 million people in Kuala Lumpur lose their souls and their lives in the world and in the city to come.

Dare we love our lives. It was Adrian Rogers who use to say, *the gospel is only good news if it gets there in time.*

The wrath of God upon the world means we need to be urgent in getting the gospel there in time. We have to go out and share the gospel. We have to go out and share the gospel. We have to do it personally. We have to do it in our workplaces. We don't have to do it from the pulpit. We don't have to wait for experts.

*The question is dare we not do, dare we stand by and see 8 million people lose their lives forever.*