26-1101sc - Detailed Summary

26-1101sc - *The Book of Romans, Steve Cain*

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26-1101 - The Book of Romans 15:14-33, part 3

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 38:00), Teacher: Steve Cain

(0:04-1:31) Opening and Opening Prayer

Steve begins the class on Romans chapter 15 by noting that they will pick up again at verse 14, as they are near the end of the letter and almost ready to enter the final chapter 16. Before proceeding, he leads the group in prayer to their Heavenly Father. He thanks God for the opportunity to gather on the first day of the week, not only to worship with brothers and sisters and observe the Lord's Supper and communion, but also to study the Word that the Holy Spirit inspired the authors to write. He prays that they may understand what has been written, that God was with the interpreters of the original languages so the translation could be understood, and that He would give them wisdom, understanding, and insight into how Paul wrote and what he wanted them to grasp from the Scriptures. The prayer closes in the name of their Lord and Savior.

(1:40-5:07) Paul's Ministry and Letter Writing

Steve shares that he has just finished reading the book of Acts, which he found inspiring. Even a cursory reading shows that Paul went through a great deal in order to accomplish what he did for God, and what God accomplished through him. Looking at the start of the letter to Rome, he notes that Paul was one of the first to serve the congregations he established by writing letters to them. John, Peter, and Luke later followed this practice, but Paul was the first to encourage his congregations through writing. At the time, they did not yet have his writings, so they relied on the Old Testament Scriptures for inspiration and understanding about God and how God prepared for Jesus to come, die on the cross, and be persecuted. In Acts, Paul first goes into the synagogues to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophets and the promise to Abraham. Many believe, but quite a few refuse, just as Paul himself initially refused to believe that Jesus was the Christ. That is why he was traveling to Damascus—to imprison or punish Jews who had converted to Christianity and accepted Jesus as the promise. Acts also shows Paul as instrumental in building up and fortifying the churches. He would return to give them the inspiration needed to continue worshiping God despite persecution from fellow Jews and from the community. He wrote to bless them with his inspiration and Christianity so they could mutually edify one another. This is the reason the letter was written. He hoped to come in person and be with them for a while, but he was delayed, and they know he arrived late.

(5:11-9:27) Romans 15:14-16 and Acceptability to God

Steve picks up Romans 15 starting at verse 14, reading from the New International Version. He has already discussed much of the passage and is near the end of chapter 15, but he wants to refresh their memory and help them appreciate Paul's final words of instruction in the chapter. Chapter 15 is essentially the end of the letter's teaching content, while chapter 16 contains salutations to various people worshiping in Rome along with a few closing exhortations. He reads verses 14-16: Paul is convinced that the brothers and sisters are full of goodness, filled with knowledge, and competent to instruct one another. Yet he has written quite boldly on some points to remind them again because of the grace God gave him to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. God gave him the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Steve explains that when people become Christians and are baptized into Christ, they become acceptable to God, as this is God extending the right hand of fellowship, and He wants them to come to Him through Jesus. They are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. He asks what that means—set apart, sanctified, dedicated to God. They are given to Him and become part of His worship. They will not do anything for Satan or any other god; they are dedicated completely to God Himself. When they became Christians, according to Acts 2:38, upon baptism they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit becomes their companion and indwells them. According to Paul's letter to the Ephesians, He is given as a sign, token, earnest, or down payment—a guarantee that they are children of God and will be with Him eternally in heaven, and that they are sanctified. They are acceptable to God now, and He has given them His seal of an earnest guarantee that they are His children and part of His inheritance.

(9:27-12:47) Paul's Glory in Christ and Signs of Confirmation

Moving to verse 17, Steve reads that Paul glories in Christ Jesus in his service to God. He will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through him in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what he has said and done—by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, he has fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been his ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that he would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written, those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand. Paul is pointing out that he is not taking credit for the conversions or for the building and uplifting of the churches. He was not relying on his eloquence of speech, showmanship, or appearance. He was relying entirely upon God, and what was accomplished was God accomplishing through him. God enhanced his ability to speak and present the gospel with signs, wonders, and miracles. According to Peter in Acts 2, the purpose of signs, wonders, and miracles was to verify the message and the messenger. That is how people would know that Paul was speaking for God and that God was working through him. Paul wants them to appreciate that he is not taking credit for his eloquence or charismatic presentations. He is giving God credit for what he has accomplished in the name of God by bringing the Gentiles to Christ and to God. Steve invites any other observations and notes that Paul is assuring them he is not trying to build himself up; he is humbling himself.

(12:50-14:21) Divine Direction and Opportunity for the Gospel

Paul says that is why he has been hindered from coming to them. Steve notes that the Holy Spirit and God did direct his steps from time to time. He was denied from going into Asia; they did not want him to go there. Then he sees the sign from Macedonia and knows that God is telling him he

needs to go to Macedonia. He was used and directed by the Holy Spirit in some of the things he did and the directions he went. Paul had one purpose in mind: to make sure that everybody had the opportunity. Steve has heard the phrase that everybody had the opportunity at least once to hear the gospel, so that each person can say they either rejected or accepted Him. Those who were not told about Him will see, and those who have not heard will understand. He asks for any comments along that way, then indicates they will go on, noting that they have at least 20 minutes left.

(14:23-18:10) Plans for Spain and the Collection for Jerusalem

Steve reads that now there is no more place for Paul to work in these regions, and since he has been longing for many years to visit them, he plans to do so when he goes to Spain. He hopes to see them while passing through and to have them assist him on his journey there after he has enjoyed their company for a while. In other words, he wants their help financially or however they can to continue on in his travels, especially the trip to Spain. Turning to verses 25-26, Paul is now on his way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's people there. Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owed it to them. If the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. Steve connects this to what is happening in 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9, where Paul talks about the contribution he was going to take up for the poor Jews in Judea. Achaia decided to do it because Macedonia had generously said they were going to help. This is where the concept comes from of having a contribution collected every Sunday on the first day of the week when partaking of the Lord's Supper. Paul encourages them to lay by in store so that they will not have to take up a collection when he arrives to meet their vow or pledge of money for the poor people in Judea, particularly Jerusalem. According to this letter, he has not gotten there yet; he still has the money and is still headed for Jerusalem to deliver it. They talked about this last week—Paul is concerned about whether they will accept the contribution, which he points out in this letter. He is going to bring money from Macedonia and Achaia and tells the church in Rome that he will see them sometime after he has been to Jerusalem and delivered the money. Obviously, he is waylaid again, as they know from history.

(18:15-21:12) Generosity, Glorifying God, and Divine Providence

If they remember 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, Paul talks about that contribution and what God will do with their generosity, how He will handle it, and the need to have money on hand to help the poor. In the ninth chapter, he points out how the money was readily received, and how not only the Jews were blessed by it, but the people of the community were blessed because they had enough money that it overflowed into the community. The community was so thankful that they glorified God. Steve asks if that is not what they are supposed to do and what God wants. God wants to be glorified and acknowledged. What pleases God? In Hebrews 11, Enoch pleased God because he believed that God was and that he diligently sought Him. That is what pleases God—to believe that He is and to diligently seek Him. God wants His name glorified, and He wants them to glorify Him every time they can. That is part of Steve's prayer almost any time he prays: that they are glorifying Him. He thanks God for the measure of health and safety that allowed them to get there. They are there by virtue of their faith, health, and safety; if it were not for that, they would not be there. He asks if they believe in divine intervention and providence. He does—100 percent—and says he will share that with them in his sermon that day. He believes in it 100 percent. Paul is telling them these things and wants them to understand that.

(21:12-25:14) Collection Debt and Gentile Inclusion

Steve returns to verse 26, reading that Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owed 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. After completing this task and making sure they have received the contribution, Paul will go to Spain and visit the Romans on the way. He knows that when he comes to them, he will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ. In other words, he is there because God has not given him any other job to do; he is there with God's blessing.

Steve then asks what else they see in the text, noting that it is very subtle and requires a theologian to catch it. Why do the people in Macedonia and Achaia owe it to the Jews? Because the Jews rejected the gospel, and because they rejected it, the message is now free to go to the Gentiles. God wanted the Gentiles to receive it in the first place. Abraham is not only the father of the circumcised but also the father of the Gentiles; he is a representation of the Gentiles. At the time God called Abraham, circumcision was not yet practiced, and there was no distinction between Jew and Gentile. Abraham was essentially a Gentile, one of them. God came to Abraham and said that from his seed He would bless the world, and Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise.

When the Jews rejected Christ, it opened the doors to the Gentiles. The middle wall of partition was broken down. When Jesus was crucified, the curtain in the temple was torn in half, which opened it up and was symbolic of opening access to everyone, regardless of who they were. Steve emphasizes that this is what Paul is pointing out. Returning to verse 27, he notes that they were pleased to do it and indeed owed it to them. It is a subtle point that can easily be passed over unless one is theologically inclined to look for it. He rereads the key lines about the Gentiles sharing in the Jews' spiritual blessings and therefore owing material blessings, and about Paul's plan to go to Spain after delivering the contribution, coming in the full measure of the blessing of Christ. He hopes he has sufficiently covered the point.

(25:50-28:20) Prayer Request and Prophetic Warnings

Steve indicates they will continue so they can finish chapter 15 and look ahead to a new Bible study. He reads verse 30: Paul urges the brothers and sisters, by their Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join him in his struggle by praying to God for him. They are to pray that he may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution he takes to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord's people there, so that he may come to them with joy by God's will and in their company be refreshed. The God of peace be with them all. Amen.

Steve asks what Paul is requesting—their prayers. He wants them to pray for his safety. Paul has been receiving signs all along that there will be trouble in Jerusalem. In the book of Acts, as he travels, Philip's daughters, who are prophets, come to him and tell him he is going to have problems in Jerusalem. Another prophet comes down, takes Paul's belt, wraps his hands up with it, and says that the person whose belt this belongs to is going to be bound like this. In other words, the prophet is telling Paul that he is headed for trouble and will get it when he arrives.

(28:24-31:26) Paul's Determination Like Jesus

The prophet is telling Paul that he is determined to go anyway. Steve draws a parallel with Jesus, who knew he would be crucified and handed over. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem and was purposely going there for their sake. People kept telling him not to go, but what did Jesus do? The Gospels say he set his face to Jerusalem. That means he was going regardless of what anyone said; he was determined. The letter to the Hebrews points out that he welcomed the opportunity to become flesh and dwell among them for the purpose of going to the cross to die for them. Philippians 2:5 shows that he did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but took on the form of a man with the purpose of dying on the cross to provide the sacrifice necessary to pay their penalty and debt. He had that purpose in mind.

Paul is doing the same thing. He has one purpose in mind: to set the world straight about who Christ is. That is his whole purpose. At one time he did not believe it. It took Jesus appearing to him on the road to Damascus to convince him that Jesus was really the Christ. Up until then he was persecuting people because he was dead set on the fact that Jesus was a fraud and a fake. He had no intentions of becoming a Christian. Anyone trying to convert Paul at that time would have been flogged. That is when Jesus told Ananias that Saul was waiting for him and had been told that Ananias would come, help him get his sight back, and tell him what he must do. Ananias balked at that, pointing out that Saul had letters allowing him to commit them to jail and had come with the purpose of persecuting them. Ananias did not want to go, but Jesus assured him that Saul was waiting and was a changed man. Paul is now a changed man with his whole purpose set on going to Jerusalem.

(31:26-34:40) Concern over Acceptance of the Offering

Steve asks what Paul's concern is at this point, noting that they discussed it the previous week before reaching this passage. Paul was concerned about whether they would accept the contribution. He rereads verse 30: Paul urges them by the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Spirit to join him in his struggle by praying to God for him. Pray that he may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution he takes to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord's people there. What is he saying? There is a possibility that they will reject it.

Why would they reject it? They are rejecting Paul, but not only that—they are rejecting the Gentiles, because the contribution is coming from the Gentiles. It does not matter how large the sum is; there is a possibility they will reject it. If they accepted it, that would mean they were saying the Gentiles were in their brotherhood and fellowship, that they were favorably received. What did the average Jew believe about the Gentile who was not a Christian? Exactly what Paul himself thought about them when he was persecuting them.

(35:02-37:35) Lottery Ticket and Glorifying God

Steve shares that people have approached him many times about the possibility of finding a lottery ticket worth a lot of money and giving it to the church. The question is whether the church should receive it or reject it. He has pointed out that God wants people to get their money through labor and industry. God does not want to share His glory with lady luck. That is one of the reasons they do not gamble. He asks whether they buy lottery tickets, go to casinos, or put money in gambling. They do not, because it is gambling. Not only that, they are pressing their luck. If they get the money, are

they going to glorify God, or are they going to glorify Satan or lady luck? The person standing next to them is more likely to say they got lucky than to say God just blessed them. That forces God to share the credit with lady luck, and He does not want to share. He wants people to get their money through industry, honestly, without lady luck. If He is going to bless them, He will bless them through industry, through their skills and ability. He is not going to bless them with lady luck. Steve asks for any comments.

(37:40-38:00) Closing and Looking Ahead

Steve concludes that, as far as he is concerned, they have worked through chapter 15 and will go into chapter 16 next week. He asks them to think in terms of what they would like to study afterwards—perhaps the book of Acts. He thanks them for their attention.

Verses Steve Covered in this class

Steve covered **Romans 15:14–33** in this class (the latter half of the chapter, through the end of Romans 15).

He began by saying they would pick up again at verse 14, read from the NIV, and worked through the passage to the close of the chapter. The main sections he treated were:

- **Romans 15:14–16** — Paul's confidence in the Romans, his bold writing, and his priestly ministry to the Gentiles so they might become an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
- **Romans 15:17–21** — Paul's glorying only in what Christ accomplished through him, the role of signs and wonders, his ambition to preach where Christ was not known, and the Isaiah quotation.
- **Romans 15:22–24** — Why he had been hindered from coming to them, and his plans to visit Rome on the way to Spain.
- **Romans 15:25–27** — His current journey to Jerusalem with the contribution from Macedonia and Achaia, and the "they owed it to them" point about Gentiles sharing spiritual blessings and therefore sharing material ones.
- **Romans 15:28–29** — After delivering the gift he will go to Spain and come to them in the full measure of Christ's blessing.
- **Romans 15:30–33** — His urgent request for prayer for safety from unbelievers in Judea and for the offering to be favorably received, followed by the benediction "The God of peace be with you all. Amen."

He also drew supporting references from Acts (especially the warnings in Acts 21), 2 Corinthians 8–9 (the collection), Ephesians (the Spirit as earnest/seal), Hebrews 11, and Philippians 2, but the primary text he was teaching was **Romans 15:14–33**.