
Sermon Notes

August 14, 2016

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Instruct Another

Romans 15:14

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. .

Advice From a Stranger

- ❖ How much attention would you give someone whom you had never met who wanted to tell you how to live your life?
- ❖ Paul never met the Christians in Rome, yet he sent them a long doctrinal treatise wrapped in a letter
 - the letter is filled with all sorts of exhortations, commands and demands about how their belief in God must impact and effect their everyday living
 - "since Jesus did this, then you must do that"
- ❖ Paul's words to the Romans convey universal truths that we still need to be encouraged and exhorted by
- ❖ Paul offers strong words of instruction, exhortation and admonition throughout the letter as compliments, not criticism
- ❖ "Since I see how seriously you take your faith, I want to help you get to the next level."

A 3 Part Diagnostic Tool

- ❖ *Full of goodness*
 - moral or ethical goodness
 - kind, thoughtful, those who show care and compassion for the poor
 - in Romans 3:12, Paul says there is no one who does good, not even one
 - if that is true, how can we ever be *full of goodness*?
 - ♦ turn from sin and, in faith, embrace the righteousness Jesus gives us through the power of the Holy Spirit
 - ♦ Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 2:10
 - how does our congregation let God's goodness drip out of us onto others?
- ❖ *Filled with all knowledge*
 - this is not academic achievement, head knowledge, or book learning
 - a sound, practical understanding of the Christian faith that changes how we live and what we live for
 - words in action (we think **AND** act Christianly)
 - for the church to stay alive and vibrant, we must remain committed to truth not just in our heads, but in our hearts
 - as a congregation, how are we doing at being *filled with all knowledge*?

❖ ***Able to instruct one another***

- ***able*** (*dynamis*) might be better translated with a word like "powerful" or "effective"
- ***instruct*** may make us think of a classroom setting, but that is not what Paul has in mind here
 - *cf.* Acts 20:31 (admonish)
 - a constellation of God honoring, truth-seeking, humility infused ideas
 - a comprehensive term for counseling
- Paul was always encouraging others, always nudging, sometimes pushing and prodding them as necessary to go forward and keep stepping it up in the Christian life
- do we care for one another as much as Paul cared for those whom he served?
- can it be said of our congregation that we are able/powerful/effective to instruct one another?
- the importance of bringing the Lord into the course of normal conversation with one another

Now What?

- ❖ The Holy Spirit intends for these words to encourage and exhort us to grow in our faith
 - to not grow complacent
 - to not coast
 - to never think for a moment that we have “arrived”

- ❖ Where we see strength or movement in the right direction, we should thank God for enabling and empowering that
- ❖ In whatever way any of these things cannot rightly be said of us
 - they serve as goals the Lord sets in front of us
 - these are goals about which we must pray and then seek to grab hold of God's power to achieve them

Personal Application

1. What is your attitude toward constructive criticism? How does the process of carefully and thoughtfully evaluating where you've been, where you are, and where you are going help you grow and make progress in life?
2. Think about the 3 part diagnostic tool Paul gives in Romans 15:14. How do you assess yourself when it comes to being a) full of all goodness, b) filled with all knowledge, and c) able to instruct one another? How do you think our congregation measures up to each of these standards? What do you/we need to do to experience growth in each of these areas?
3. Spend time praying about your answers to the question above. What goals do you think God is leading you to set for yourself about any of this? What goals do you think He is setting before us as a church family when it comes to these three areas?
4. How often do you find yourself talking about the Lord with other believers? Do you think it would encourage others if you shared with them some of the things God is teaching you in your personal Bible Study or small group? Think of something you have to share and then share it!