# 26-1025sc - Detailed Summary

**26-1025sc - *The Book of Romans, Steve Cain***

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# 26-1025 - The Book of Romans 15:14-33, part2

## Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 44:22), Teacher: Steve Cain

### (0:04-4:23) Paul Reads Romans 15:14-33 Wrap-Up

Steve opens the class by identifying Romans 15 as Paul's wrap-up of his letter to the church in Rome, noting that chapter 16 will contain salutations, well-wishes, and a few additional words of wisdom. He announces that the class will pick up again with verse 14 and read through the end of the chapter, continuing from the previous week's discussion. Reading from the New International Version, he covers Paul's expression of confidence that the Roman believers are full of goodness, filled with knowledge, and competent to instruct one another. Paul explains that he has written boldly on some points to remind them, because of the grace God gave him to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He describes the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Paul glories in Christ Jesus in his service to God and refuses 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, through the power of signs and wonders and the Spirit of God. From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum he has fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. His ambition has been to preach where Christ was not known so as not to build on someone else's foundation, citing the Scripture that those who were not told about him will see and those who have not heard will understand. This is why he has often been hindered from coming to Rome; now there is no more place for him to work in those regions, and he plans to visit them when he goes to Spain, hoping to see them while passing through and to have them assist him on the journey after enjoying their company. At present he is on his way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's people, carrying a contribution from Macedonia and Achaia for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. The Gentiles owe this material sharing because they have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings. After completing the task and ensuring the contribution is received, he will go to Spain and visit Rome on the way. He expects to come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ and urges them, by the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Spirit, to join him in his struggle by praying that he may be kept safe from unbelievers in Judea, that the contribution may be favorably received, and that he may come to them with joy, by God's will, and be refreshed in their company. The section ends with the benediction, "The God of peace be with you all. Amen."

### (4:24-11:45) Roman Church Origins and Gentile Teaching

Steve recalls that Paul is writing to the Romans and observes that no one knows who established the church there. While various apostles were credited with work in assigned regions, Paul's own

ministry focused on Gentiles. He raises the question of how the Roman church was spiritually fed if it was not founded by an apostle or elder. The answer he sees is that the Holy Spirit was inspiring them even without an apostle or elder present to teach. When Paul arrives, he intends to share what he knows and has experienced so that both he and they will be blessed, fulfilling the work God assigned him among a largely Gentile congregation. Returning to the verse about the priestly duty toward the Gentiles, Steve explains that Paul wants readers to appreciate the differences: the Jews had been greatly blessed with the Word, prophets, and direct experiences of God, while the Gentiles lacked that background and could be viewed as uneducated in the knowledge of God. Paul did not shortchange them; he gave them the full benefit of his teaching, much as a professor expounds knowledge to students in a classroom. Gentiles are not second-class citizens; they have been taught everything necessary to become Christians and about God, so that they might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Baptism brings sanctification by God and the Holy Spirit; according to Acts 2:38 they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, who then works within them. Jesus described the Spirit's work in John 16 as reminding believers of all they are to know and providing the mind of God. Early believers had far less to lean on than Christians today: they did not yet have the Gospel writings or the collected New Testament letters, which largely began appearing around A.D. 50–60 as Paul and others wrote to support established churches. Those letters were preserved, passed from church to church, and became the benefit later generations enjoy. Until an apostle came or someone who had heard an apostle taught them, the only other means of spiritual feeding was the Holy Spirit himself. One participant notes that the Spirit provides the most powerful gift, enabling understanding of the Scriptures even without an apostle or pastor present.

## (11:45-15:09) Pentecost Study and Paul's Corinth Reminder

Drawing on the information in Acts 2, Steve points out that those present on the Day of Pentecost did not simply leave after the events of that day. About three thousand were baptized and received both spiritual gifts and prophecy. Evidence that many stayed is seen in the need to collect money to support those who remained to hear the apostles and study; Barnabas sold property to help meet that need, and the believers went from house to house daily. The only Scriptures available for study at that time were the Old Testament books from Genesis to Malachi. When Paul later entered synagogues to convince hearers that Jesus is the Christ and the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, he used those same Old Testament Scriptures. His deep knowledge of them enabled him to persuade listeners that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Paul indicates that when he reaches Rome he will sit down with them, stay for a while, and study with them. Steve directs attention to what Paul wrote the Corinthians in chapter 15, reading the opening verses: he wants to remind them of the gospel he preached, which they received and on which they have taken their stand; by this gospel they are saved if they hold firmly to the word he preached, otherwise they have believed in vain. Although the exact length of Paul's stay in Corinth is not stated, it was long enough for him to share everything they needed to know and to urge them to remain on that foundation. That same desire—to share fully and have them hold fast—is what Paul wants to accomplish with the church in Rome. The class then returns to Romans 15 to continue verse by verse.

## (15:09-20:21) Glorying in Christ Not Personal Charisma

Beginning at verse 17, Steve notes that Paul glories in Christ Jesus in his service to God and 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. The growth of the church is not the result of Paul's own charismatic presentation; he is not a Joel Osteen or a Billy Graham. In the Corinthian letter Paul likewise stated that he did not come with eloquent speech but determined to know only Jesus Christ and him crucified. The work accomplished is God's work through him, and he is proud to present Jesus Christ crucified. The reason for this attitude is the grace shown to him: on the road to Damascus his eyesight was restored and his thinking was corrected. When he witnessed Stephen's stoning he believed they were doing God's will; Jesus corrected that perception. God's unmerited favor reached out, redirected him, and turned him from beating down Christians to glorifying them and making Jesus the message. He therefore glories in Christ Jesus in his service to God because Jesus corrected him and showed him mercy and grace. Paul is not claiming personal credit for what the Holy Spirit or God has done through him; God and the Spirit verified the message by the power of signs and wonders. From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum he has fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. Signs, wonders, and miracles confirmed both the message and the messenger. Once the message has been confirmed it does not need to be reconfirmed, so such signs are not required today to bring people into the fellowship of God; God will accomplish his purposes, but the church will not rely on miracles for that purpose.

## (20:21-21:11) Scripture as Spirit-Inspired Eyewitness Record

A participant observes that when people understand the inspiration of Scripture is through the Holy Spirit, what we possess is a first-hand account of everything that happened. It functions like a first-hand eyewitness record: the Holy Spirit tells us all that Paul did and all that the church went through. Another voice interjects that two thousand years of eyewitnesses is impossible, to which the reply comes that it is first-hand eyewitness testimony. Steve affirms that this is important and that it explains unbelief. The section closes with the recognition that the Scriptures alone are powerful; an individual simply reading them receives information the Holy Spirit uses to bring thinking into line with God.

## (21:11-23:10) Scripture Power and Spirit-Led Conversion

Steve affirms that the Scriptures alone are powerful and that an individual simply reading them receives information the Holy Spirit wants to use to bring thinking into line with God. He illustrates with an experience the previous day while visiting his son in Michigan, where a trunk-or-treat event was underway with much activity. Sitting with a sister in Christ, he learned she had been raised Catholic; after a gospel preacher showed her what the Bible says about salvation, she responded that she wanted to be baptized that very night. The Bible itself can bring about conversion because that is the nature of its words and because the Holy Spirit is at work through them. Believers can therefore rest in the fact that their task is simply to teach and use the Scriptures; the Spirit will use that teaching to turn a person's thinking, convict them that they are out of step with God, and move them to respond.

## (23:10-25:45) Inspired Writing and Gentile Equality

A participant references 1 Corinthians 13 and the coming of "that which is perfect." Steve notes that Paul's letters are inspired by the Holy Spirit, who permits Paul to use his own language and wording to convey the intended message. This is one reason Peter observes in 2 Peter that Paul writes things hard to understand and that some twist them to their own destruction. Steve therefore prays, as he did that day, for understanding of Paul's message, insight, and wisdom.

Returning to the text, Paul glories in Christ Jesus in his service to God and will speak only of what Christ has accomplished through him in leading the Gentiles to obey God by word and deed, confirmed by signs and wonders through the Spirit. From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum he has fully proclaimed the gospel. A Gentile who has received the Holy Spirit is just as well informed and stands in as good a relationship with God as any Jewish believer. Anyone who walks in claiming to be a brother in Christ, baptized for the remission of sins and reconciled to God, is fully accepted—even if he looks like a bum. This is the point James makes when he warns against telling a poorly dressed person to sit in the back while seating a well-dressed person in a place of honor.

## (25:45-29:47) Ambition to Reach the Unreached

Steve recalls a time in his own early faith when congregations were building buildings, borrowing money, and even selling stock to meet payments; the arrival of a new person was often welcomed primarily for the contribution he might bring. A better motive is required. Turning to verse 20, Paul states that it has always been his ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known so as not to build on someone else's foundation, citing the Scripture that those who had not been told would see and those who had not heard would understand. This is why he had often been hindered from coming to Rome: the gospel was already there. He preferred to go, as in the Macedonian vision, to places no one had yet reached, preaching to new ears and new people so that everyone might have the opportunity to hear. One of Steve's former teachers used to say that everybody has a right to hear the gospel at least once; Paul lived by that principle, going wherever the Spirit led. Steve believes the Spirit still leads believers and may even explain his own presence in the area. After being fired in 1998 he had nowhere else to go; his wife was ill and her insurance kept them from leaving. He does not know why he stayed, but God may have a reason; he is simply going with the flow. Paul was clearly led by the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus, after his baptism, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted forty days and nights.

## (29:47-33:00) Plans for Spain and the Jerusalem Collection

After a brief reference to signs and wonders used to establish the church in Thessalonica, Steve moves to verse 23. Paul writes that there is now no more place for him to work in those regions; having longed for many years to visit Rome, he plans to do so when he goes to Spain, hoping to see them while passing through and to receive their assistance on the journey after enjoying their company. At present, however, he is 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 saints in Jerusalem; they owed it, for if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings they owe a share of their material blessings. After completing the task and ensuring the gift is received, he will go to Spain and visit Rome on the way. He expects to come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ and urges them, by the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Spirit, to join his struggle by praying that he may be kept safe from unbelievers in Judea, that the contribution may be favorably received, and that he may come to them with joy, by God's will, and be refreshed in their company. The God of peace be with all of them. Steve adds that his own presence here is an instance of divine intervention, providence, and preservation; God is not finished with Paul either.

## (33:00-36:09) Warnings and Reservations about Jerusalem

God does not yet want Paul to go to Rome. Paul has an inkling of trouble awaiting him in Jerusalem

and tells the Romans he hopes to visit them on the way to Spain. In reality he will not reach Spain by his own voluntary decision. He has been warned several times about the Jerusalem trip to deliver the collection: do not go, for this is what will happen to you. Philip's daughters give the same warning. Steve believes those warnings are in the back of Paul's mind when he asks the Romans to pray that he may be kept safe from unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution may be favorably received so he can come to them with joy. Paul has reservations about whether the Jerusalem saints will accept the gift. The class notes that lingering animosity may be involved—some might refuse money from the Macedonians and Achaians or insist it be given only to Jews. Steve presses the implication: what does that attitude reveal?

## (36:09-44:22) Gainful Giving, Lottery, and Trusting God

Steve has often been asked, though never in an actual case, whether a church should accept the proceeds of a winning lottery ticket found and cashed by a well-meaning member. He offers the illustration of the Hell's Angels collecting money through roadblocks and presenting it to the Salvation Army, which rejected the gift because acceptance would imply fellowship with or approval of the means and the people involved. The same question arises with lottery proceeds. What is known about God is that he sustains his work and supplies the necessary funds, but he wants those funds obtained gainfully and properly through industry, not through lottery tickets or casino gambling. Through divine intervention, providence, and preservation he meets needs as people look to him. Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6) not to worry about food, clothing, or shelter, for God already knows what is needed; the call is to trust him. Steve has been waiting for this moment to stress what he calls the principle that God wants money gained through honest work and skill; he will not share his glory with Satan, circumstances, or happenstance. Believers must acknowledge that what they have comes through his blessings. When someone cites a brotherhood article arguing that lottery money should be accepted so good can come from it, or appeals to Joseph's words that what was meant for evil God meant for good, Steve replies that the Joseph parallel does not fit: the Ishmaelites sold him into Egypt, but that was not money gained from "Lady Luck." Accepting such funds is rationalization, and anything can be rationalized. God wants trust. He recalls a woman in Barrington who asked him to pray she would win the lottery; he answered that God is not in the lottery-ticket business. With time expired, the class will resume next week in chapter 16 to finish Romans. Paul wants prayer for God's work; he is asking for divine intervention and providence.

# Verses Steve Covered in this class

Steve covered **Romans 15:14–33**.

He began by reading the entire section (15:14 through the end of the chapter) from the NIV, then worked back through it, with the main discussion focusing on:

- **Romans 15:14–19** — Paul's confidence in the Romans, his ministry to the Gentiles, and his glorying in what Christ accomplished through him (including the mention of signs and wonders and the extent of his work from Jerusalem to Illyricum).
- **Romans 15:20–21** — His ambition to preach where Christ was not known.
- **Romans 15:23–33** — His plans to visit Rome on the way to Spain, the collection from Macedonia and Achaia for the poor in Jerusalem, and his request for prayer.

He also briefly referenced related passages (Acts 2:38, John 16, 1 Corinthians 15:1–2, 1 Corinthians 13, 2 Peter, James on partiality, and the warnings in Acts 21), but the text he was teaching was Romans 15:14–33.