

XV

Planning Your Future

ROMANS 15:22-33

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.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.

³⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,³¹ that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,³² so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.³³ May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

READ | ROMANS 15:22–33

THINK ABOUT

This isn't the first time we find the apostle Paul *hindered* from reaching his intended destination. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 2:18 we read that Satan *hindered* Paul from visiting the church in Thessalonica. In Acts 16:6–7, Paul is *forbidden* by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel in Asia. Here in Romans 15, Paul was *hindered* from traveling to Rome until he had fulfilled his ministry from Jerusalem to Illyricum. Now that he had finished his course in these regions, Paul includes one last stop in Jerusalem before he is free to embark to Rome.

Paul would indeed arrive in Rome, but not the way he expected. Paul didn't arrive as a missionary on his way to Spain. Rather, he went to Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial before Caesar. Yet, as a prisoner, Paul would boldly proclaim the Gospel *without hindrance* (Acts 28:30–31). Such is the sovereign plan of God!

APPLY

Paul is a great example of motivation, perseverance, and endurance. Not only did he strive to proclaim the Gospel where no one had ever labored, but he also saw each task to completion before moving to the next. However, even the plans of a gifted apostle are subject to change. These tough and unforeseen circumstances presented Paul with new opportunities to proclaim the Gospel.

Praise God that His will and purpose will always prevail. Like Paul, make the best of your circumstances for the Gospel. When sudden changes in your plans take place, trust that God is in control!

ASK

Although Paul was determined to travel to Spain by way of Rome, notice that he went out of his way to care for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Does your schedule allow you to care “for the least of these” in your Jerusalem?

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Paul asks the church in Rome to pray to God on his behalf (v. 30). Do you devote time to pray for missionaries, church planters, preachers, and others proclaiming the Gospel?

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In Jesus, all of the Old Testament prophecies, types, and shadows find their complete fulfillment. What Old Testament prophecies regarding the coming of the Messiah are particularly meaningful for you?

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PRAY

Lord, I trust that You are sovereign. I believe that You are working all things for our good and Your glory. Help me to align my plans and desires with Your will. Continue to sanctify me in truth.

Lord, I pray for wisdom, direction, and protection for missionaries who labor throughout the world for the sake of the Gospel. May each one strive to hear our Lord say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

PROVERBS 19:21

Many are the plans in the mind of a man,
but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

JAMES 4:13–15

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit” — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

ACTS 28:30–31

He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.



SING

“Across the Lands” — *Keith Getty, Stuart Townend*

“PLANNING YOUR FUTURE”

Romans 15:22-33

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

HYMN

“So teach us to number our days

that we may get a heart of wisdom.

Return, O Lord! How long?

Have pity on your servants!

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,

that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,

and for as many years as we have seen evil.

Let your work be shown to your servants,

and your glorious power to their children.

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work

of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!”

— PSALM 90: 12–17

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

1. O God, our Help in ag - es past, our Hope for years to come,
2. Un - der the shad - ow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt se - cure;
3. Be - fore the hills in or - der stood or earth re - ceived its frame,
4. A thou - sand ag - es in Thy sight are like an ev - 'ning gone,
5. Time, like an ev - er - roll - ing stream bears all its sons a - way;
6. O God, our Help in a - ges past, our Hope for years to come,

our Shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal Home.
suf - fi - cient is Thine arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
from ev - er - last - ing Thou art God, to end - less years the same.
short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.
they fly for - got - ten, as a dream dies at the o - p'ning day.
be Thou our Guide while life shall last, and our e - ter - nal Home!

Text: Isaac Watts based on Psalm 90, 1719 🌿 *Tune: William Croft, 1708*