

Competent Christianity!

I. Slide#1 Announce:

- A. Slide#2 Soar: Today! Today! Today!
- B. Slide#3 ICA: Welcome home “hosting” program. Filipino children 10-13. Nov.13-Dec.4. Charlotte Paulson in info booth.
- C. Slide#4 CARE: **What:** See List. **When:** Any Sunday. **Where:** Under Blue EZ-Up.
- D. Slide#5 Title of Message: *Competent Christianity!*

II. Intro:

- A. One pastor said, “On my first pastorate, I had requested \$20 per month from the board to pay someone to mow the lawn and care for the flowers on the church's property.”
“The former pastor did that himself,” the oldest board member quickly pointed out.
“I know,” I replied, *“But he doesn't want to do it any more!”*
 1. That reminded me of **Paul’s boldness** in dealing with *church situations* he ran into.
- B. Verse 15:14 marks *“the beginning of the end”* of Paul’s letter to the Roman Christians.

III. Slide#6 COMPETENT CHRISTIANITY! (14-21)

- A. Slide#7a Three Areas of Competence! (14)
 1. **Full of Goodness** – Not just an occasional virtuous act. But “goodness in plentiful supply.”
 - a) It means: moral excellence, purity, kindness, uprightness, honesty, & good deeds.
 - b) **How will you know if you are “full” of goodness?** – Well, as believers we are all like **sponges**. [As soon as you press on a sponge...you know exactly what it is **full of!**]
 - (1) Let’s watch what comes out of **your life** when you get placed under a little pressure!!!
 2. **Slide#7a Filled w/all Knowledge** – A little hyperbole. Of course they didn’t know **all things**.
 - a) **Filled w/all knowledge** = “the whole range of”, or “every kind of”.
 - (1) “The implication is that the Romans had a firm grasp on the teachings required to skillfully fulfill their Christian duties.” Swindoll Romans pg.76
 - (2) When it comes to biblical knowledge...it isn’t supposed to be just to **gain information**; but to **grow** in our **love & understanding** of God & our fellow man.
 3. **Slide#7a Able to Admonish one another** – “to set things right”.
 - a) Ever try to tell someone *they were wrong*, or that they *needed to change*? (one wrong word & KaBoom!)

(1) In this situation we need to “*correct the mind, to put right what is wrong, & to improve the spiritual attitude.*” Theological Dict. of the NT, pg.1019

b) *Still how do we do this?* – To effect & influence fellow believers toward growth & change...we must engage in a loving relationship w/them!!!

(1) Prov.27:6 **Faithful are the wounds of a friend.**

c) Haven't our most painful experiences been when we've had a problem, and no one loved us enough to tell us about it?

B. **Slide#8a More Areas of Competence!** (15,16)

C. **We are all ministers!** (servants)

1. **Some are called to a Vocation** as a missionary, pastor, para-church org., or on staff at a Church or Christian School.

2. **Others** He calls as a **Tentmaker**, to witness for him as you make a living in a “non-religious” profession.

a) **No vocation is more sacred than another!**

(1) **A missionary is no more pleasing to God than a maid;
A pastor no more spiritual than a plumber.**

3. What pleases God is **obedience to His call**, to serve **wherever** He places us.

D. **Slide#8b The offering** – The figure is that of the OT sacrifices.

1. Here, Paul uses it in reference to his own work in bringing the Gentiles to God as an **offering**, sanctified by the H.S.

E. **So, if we Yield to the Spirit's power** - we become morally **good**.

By **studying & applying the Scriptures** – we can raise our level of **knowledge**.

By **admonishing one another** – we can **preserve** the integrity of the body of Christ.

By **obeying & following our callings** – we can participate in God's plan, & thus it becomes an **offering** unto God.

F. **Slide#8c Are you fulfilling God's calling on your life? (Simple test)**

1. Are you having a **positive influence** for God in the lives of others?

2. Does your service give you **pleasure**?

3. Are you **passionate** about your area of service?

4. Are you **making a difference** with your life?

5. Do you **feel** discontented, drained, & ineffective?

G. **Slide#9a Preaching Plans!** (17-21)

H. (17-19a) **Glory in God's doing**...not my own, says Paul!

1. He takes no credit for the extent of his ministry; the obedience of the Gentiles to Christ; the signs & wonders that accompanied his ministry; nor the power of the Spirit upon him!
 2. It wasn't what he had done, but what God had done, through him!
 3. Paul could say, "God's grace was my source; Jesus Christ my motivation; & the H.S. my power to accomplish it."
- I. Slide#9b Round about (19) – To travel in a complete circle. The circle of nations Paul evangelized around the Mediterranean.
1. Wow, what takes less than 10 seconds to say, actually took 10 yrs of strenuous labor to accomplish (his 3 missionary journeys).
- J. (20) To go where no man has gone before!
1. It was Paul's ambition to preach the gospel in pioneer areas that had never heard it.
 2. In Missions, it is our heart to do the same! (i.e. "un-reached people groups")
 - a) The Need is everywhere; but something else to consider is Availability or Access!
 - b) In some areas the Word of God is readily accessible; for others there is no Church, no Scriptures, no voice!
- K. (21) This vs. from Is.25:15 lends credibility to his pioneering work.

IV. Slide#10 TRAVELCITY! (22-29)

- A. Slide#11 Travelocity.com is that web site for planning your next travel plans.
1. Here Paul reveals to us his travel plans!
 2. Oh, that we would be just as sensitive to the H.S. as Paul, when we are putting our itineraries & travel plans together!
 3. Slide#12 But let's not romanticize his journeys too much.
 - a) Yes, he's sailing from Corinth soon (where he dictated this letter) to get down to Jerusalem. Then he planned to travel to Rome, then to Spain!
 4. Travel was risky: If all these travels were by ship the 1st leg would be 800 miles, the next leg 1,500, the next 700. So, a minimum of 3000 miles travel.
 - a) Then add the uncertainties of travel because of weather. The uncomfortable travel conditions on board (no all night buffets). And other hazards of ancient travel.
- B. It's all about relationships (22-24) - Never forget that!
- C. Slide#13 (24) Only here does Paul disclose his desire for the evangelization of España/Spain. [hints to Spain in 2 Cor.10:16 "the regions beyond you"]
1. We are actually not sure if he made it there. Some non-canonical sources indicate that he did.

- a) **Slide#14** Clement of Rome, writing to the Corinth Church in “1 Clement”, The oldest non-canonical book to have **not** made it in the NT(written around 96ad) said regarding Paul, “and having preached righteousness to the whole world, and having come to *the extremity of the West*, and having borne witness before rulers, he departed at length out of the world, and went to the holy place, having become the greatest example of patience.”
- b) **Slide#15blank** The book of Acts leaves him in Rome...where he would have had to have been released for a time, & then re-arrested, incarcerated, then beheaded by Nero.

- D. (24b) Here is biblical backup for writing a *letter of support*. Paul writes for his mission West.
 1. Hmm I guess it is ok to *let your need be known* for the furtherance of the gospel!
 2. **Helped** = “*help on one’s journey w/food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc.*”

- E. (25-27) Here is biblical backup for raising funds for *international missions needs*.
 1. **Macedonia & Achaia** were 2 whole regions (not just 2 churches). And the believers there **gave generously & joyfully!**
 - a) Prov.3:9,10 **Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, & your vats will overflow w/new wine.**

V. **Slide#16 PRAYERS SINCERITY! (30-33)**

- A. **Slide#17a** The importance of intercessory prayer! (30)
- B. Why is asking for prayer so difficult?
 1. Often times Pride keeps us from asking for prayer.
 2. Our upbringing taught some of us to, “handle your own problems”!
 3. Paul wasn’t afraid to let others know he had needs.
 4. Of course Jesus wasn’t either, when he asked his disciples to pray for him in the garden!
- C. **To reap the benefits of prayer we need to:** *open our hearts, admit our needs, & trust that others are more than willing to share our burdens in prayer.*

D. **Slide#17b** Prayer for Paul was serious business!

- E. **Strive**...in prayers – to fight or contend along w/someone.
 1. **The Greeks used this word to describe Athletes** who were pushing themselves to the limits of physical exhaustion.
 2. **They also used it for Soldiers.** Probably what Paul had in mind here.
 3. Kittel describes it this way, “**In prayer...there is fulfilled the fellowship of conflict & destiny between man & man. In prayer one man becomes the representative of the**

other, so that there is here opened up the possibility of **one standing in the breach for all & all for one.**"

a) That reminded me of the black & white TV series in the 60's, the 3 Musketeers & the motto they used as they sought to protect the throne of France...*One for all & all for one.*

F. **Slide#17c** Paul wasn't looking for *a quickie prayer!*...He was asking the Roman Christians to grab a weapon, to stand post, to put themselves in the spiritual line of fire, & to push themselves to the limit for his sake...& the furtherance of the Kingdom of God!

1. We need to "get involved" in prayer!
2. And be willing to pay the price for that involvement!

G. **3 Prayer Requests:**

1. **Slide#18a Delivered** from unbelievers in Judea.

a) Remember when Paul was at Philip the Evangelist's house, Agabus took Paul's belt & tied his own hands & feet & said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." (Acts 21:11)

b) So he had good reason to be concerned.

c) But he didn't go w/o help!

2. **Slide#18b** That the **contribution** for the poor would be received.

a) Some of them in Jerusalem thought Paul had a disregard for the Jewish Law now.

b) If the gift was rejected, the Gentile church would take offense, which would cause a further rift between the Jews & Gentiles.

3. **Slide#18c** That it would be God's will for him to get to **Rome**.

a) Acts 21-28 describes how God answered his prayers.

H. **Slide#19 Prayer #1 Answer?** [**Delivered** from unbelievers in Judea]

1. **Slide#19a** "Yes" & "No"! - "No" he was arrested, tried, imprisoned. "Yes" he was rescued from 3 mobs, a flogging, & an attempted assassination.

I. **Prayer #2 Answer?** [That the **contribution** for the poor would be received]

1. **Slide#19b** "?" **we don't know for sure.** Luke never tells us in Acts.

J. **Prayer #3 Answer?** [That it would be God's will for him to get to **Rome**]

1. **Slide#19c** "Yes" - Just as Jesus promised him in Acts 23:11 **Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.**

a) It just didn't happen according to his plans.

b) It was 3 years later...as a prisoner...& after an almost fatal shipwreck!

K. **Slide#20 Paul seals this chapter with a kiss!** (33)

1. **Slide#20a** English word **good-bye** is a contraction of the phrase “*God be with you.*”
2. **Slide#20b** The French **adieu**(a-dyoo) is a contraction of *I commend you to God* (until God)
3. **Slide#20c** Similarly, the Spanish **adios** “*to God*”.
4. **Slide#20d Aloha** in Hawaiian means *affection, peace, compassion, & mercy*.
 - a) **Slide#21blank** Wouldn't all our partings be easier if we used **the full expression**?

L. Communion:

1. Bread -
2. Cup -