INTRODUCTION:

Paul has given us a full explanation of what it means to be a Christian.
In Chapter 1 he introduces us to "the gospel" … the good news of Jesus Christ.
The good news is that Jesus has come to rescue us from our brokenness as we respond to Him by faith.
But it doesn't stop at a rescue mission.
God's plan is to build us into a strong faith community, called the Church.
This Church is God's plan to reach a broken world.
The church, then, needs to be a living expression of the love & power of God.
We need to be "good news" to the world around us.
In Romans 12 onwards Paul begins to address how we can become "good news".

Now we come to the end of our series.
In Chapter 15 & 16 Paul concludes his letter with some personal remarks to key individuals in the Roman church and a bit of a summary of his message to them all.

What does he say in these concluding remarks?

**Romans 15:13-16:27**

**1.      Romans 15:13 <u>WE MUST LIVE HOW WE STARTED</u>**

**"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace AS YOU TRUST IN HIM, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit".**

**Proverbs 3:5, 6 "Trust in the Lord … and he will make your paths straight"**

Total trust is the pathway to inner well-being.
Trust = joy & peace.
There is no other way.
We start the Christian life by simple faith in Jesus Christ.
We must live it the same way … Every day.
Trust is in WHO GOD IS … not what He does or does not do!
We lean on HIM, no matter what circumstances come our way.

**2.      Romans 15:23-33 <u>THIS MEANS OUR PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED GOD'S WAY NOT OURS.</u>**

**Vs. 32 "so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed."**

Paul got to go to Rome BUT not the way he planned or wanted.
He didn't get there with joy & did not receive refreshing when he arrived.
He arrived in chains!
Living by faith does not mean we get everything we want the way we want it.
Our life is God's. We live to serve Him.
Christianity is a life of total commitment to God's purposes.

**3.      Romans 16:17-18 <u>THE REAL SOURCE OF INTERNAL DIVISION</u>**

Divisions & obstacles in church life are the result of people **"serving their own appetites".**
When we get our eyes off the real goal we tend to drift back to self-centred behaviour.
The result? DAMAGE!

Human brokenness started when mankind chose to go their own way instead of God's.
If we return to going our own way, brokenness will return.
Broken relationships. Broken hearts. Broken lives. Broken witness.
The only pathway to wholeness is to live life God's way.

**4.      Romans 16:19, 20 <u>HOW DO WE LIVE GOD'S WAY?</u>**

The formula is simple:
**1. "Be wise about what is good".** Make "good" our focus.
How do you become wise about something?
You study it. You focus on it. You speak it. You live it out. You make it your everything.
**Be a life-long student of God's ways!**

**2. "and innocent about what is evil".** Don't give darkness ANY ROOM TO GROW.
Innocent = have no experience of … have nothing to do with
Cut out of our everyday experience everything that brings damage & brokenness to ourselves & others.
Cut it out of our thinking … speaking … actions!

**3. "The God of peace will soon CRUSH SATAN UNDER YOUR FEET"**
When we choose to focus on the truth & light & turn away from the darkness THE DEVIL IS DEFEATED!
Real spiritual warfare is won as we live God's way daily.

**5.      Romans 16:25-27 <u>THE REASON FOR IT ALL</u>**

"the good news" … the gospel!
Believing in Him & trusting in Him & obeying Him.
The result?
We are saved … changed … empowered … released into service … **so that all nations might believe and obey Him!**
It is not about us.

We are called for a high purpose.
That all nations might believe & obey Him!
There is no higher calling.

What are we living for?
What are we doing with what we have been given.
We are blessed to be a blessing.
**The blessing and call of Abraham: "That all peoples on earth will be blessed through you"**