

Lent Day 37

Wednesday April 12, 2017

Reading: Romans 15:14-21

14 I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another. 15 Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Reflection

I remember once in high school having a teacher I didn't like very much tell me how proud she was of me and how far along I had come in my ability in her class. It didn't sit well with me, so I explained that, in fact, I hadn't developed (in my mind I thought specifically not under her) in my ability, I was simply performing presently at my potential where as before I hadn't. That didn't sit well with her, so she insisted I really had, and I insisted I really hadn't. This went on until, in exasperation, my friend said, "David! Just take the compliment!" It was then I realized I couldn't stomach two things: criticism and compliments.

That struggle didn't end there; for years I struggled with hearing either. However, if you want to be a person who grows and develops you need to be able to receive both. This requires humility to do, so seeking after God for humility is something I've been doing for a long time. One of the truisms I remind myself of is, "You're not as good as you think and you're not as bad as you fear." By reminding myself of this I create space for God to speak, to lead, and to correct often directly, but equally through his people.

Paul is writing to God's people not because they are lacking — they're not — but because everyone needs a reminder about the gospel. We have a tendency to slide off course and we need to be given a course correction. Perhaps, like my old self, you struggle with receiving criticism or correction because you think you are above it. You're not, and if you think you are you probably need it the most. After all, you're not as good as you think and you're not as bad as you fear, so it's safe to hear the truth about yourself. The very worst that will happen is you'll grow in the Lord.

Prayer

Lord, give us the ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to your people. Grant us the humility to be open to your correction and guidance. Amen.