

Romans

I. Living Godly In The World & Church

A. Romans 15:1-13... Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. [2] Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. [3] For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You (God) fell on Me (Jesus Christ)" (Psalm 69:9). [4] For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. [5] Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, [6] so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. [7] Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. [8] For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, [9] and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles, and I will sing to Your name." [10] Again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people." [11] And again, "Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise Him." [12] Again Isaiah says, "There shall come the root of Jesse, and He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, in Him shall the gentiles hope." [13] Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

B. Review

1. The message in Romans 14:1-15:13, is that it is acceptable – in the sight of God – for Christians to differ on which non-essential freedoms their conscience will allow them to practice and which ones their conscience won't allow them to practice.
2. In this same section, Paul presents eleven principles which are to guide and direct the relationship between the weaker in faith and the freer in faith. Nine are in Rom. 14, and two are in Rom. 15.
 - a. 1. 14:5 – Our decisions as to which non-essential freedoms we will practice and which ones we won't are to be based on being fully convinced in our own mind.

- b. 2. 14:6 – Whether we observe days and refuse to eat things we are free to eat, or treat all days alike and eat all things, what we do we are to do unto God.
- c. 3. 14:7-9 – This principle includes a supporting truth. Principle: No one lives for himself, and no one dies for himself. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to and therefore are to please our Lord. Supporting truth: The reason we do not live or die for ourselves is because Christ died and lived again so that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.
- d. 4. 14:10-12 – Don't judge others on matters which God forbids us to judge, for we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.
- e. 5. 14:13 – In relation to the non-essential freedoms we have in Christ, do not lead another believer into a situation where he will be tempted to go against his conscience, and do not directly tempt him to go against his conscience.
- f. 6. 14:15 – Out of love for those weaker in faith, and because Christ set the example of loving them enough to die for them, the freer in faith are to follow Christ's example and willingly sacrifice some of their freedoms for them.
- g. 7. 14:19 – Pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
- h. 8. 14:21 – The best way to live out your faith in relation to the freedoms you have in Christ is to refuse to participate in any freedom that is offensive to someone weaker in faith and so causes him to stumble.
- i. 9. 14:22-23 – Live according to the faith you have, because if you don't, you will both commit sin and with your bothered conscience condemn yourself as a sinner.

C. Today, we will look at Paul's last two principles (10, 11).

- 1. 10. 15:1-3 – The freer in faith (stronger, more knowledgeable) are not to please themselves by demanding their rights regarding the freedoms we have in Christ. Rather, just as Christ gave up His rights in order to please God and save us, so the freer in faith are to use their spiritual strength and knowledge to serve and edify (build up) those weaker in faith.
- 2. Second principle: Accept one another as equals in spite of your differences just as Christ accepted Jews and Gentiles, slave and free, male and female, as equals . In this way you will bring praise and glory to God.

D. Prayer

II. Living godly in the church in the face of non-moral differences

A. Romans 15:1 . . . Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.

1. As I said a number of times already, Romans 14:1-15:13 teaches us how the freer in faith and the weaker in faith are to deal with each other in relation to the non-essential freedoms we have in Christ.
 - a. And from the beginning to the end of this section, Paul makes it clear that he, himself, holds the freer in faith position, and that this position is the one the scripture teaches us to hold.
 - b. Here in vs 1, Paul identifies those who hold the freer in faith position as strong Christians, while those who hold the weaker in faith position he identifies as lacking spiritual strength.
 - c. Notice, Paul does not label the weaker in faith as being “weak,” but rather as being without strength. And this choice of words is a good reminder that throughout this section Paul has been exhorting us to accept one another as equals in relation to the differences between us regarding the non-essentials.
2. In vs 1, Paul begins presenting his tenth principle – and this one directs those who are freer in faith to bear (pick up, carry) the weaknesses of those whose conscience won’t allow them to participate in all the non-essential freedoms we have in Christ.
 - a. And though I have already stated this principle, here it is once again.
 - b. Principle: The freer in faith (stronger, more knowledgeable) are not to please themselves by demanding their rights regarding the freedoms we have in Christ. Rather, just as Christ gave up His rights in order to please God and save us, so the freer in faith are to use their spiritual strength and knowledge to serve and edify (build up) those weaker in faith.
3. Jesus taught this same truth. Near the end of what is commonly called the Last Supper, the disciples got into an argument over which one of them was the greatest. Jesus responded to them by saying, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' [26] But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader [must become] like the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table (the one being served) or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I (the greatest of all among you) am among you as the one who serves” (Luke 22:24-27). (The stronger is to serve the weaker)

4. In other words, to be important in God's eyes, to be a worthy leader in the church and in the home, to be a strong Christian, and to be spiritually mature requires willfully being a servant to all.
 - a. Obviously you cannot be a servant and live to please yourself.
 - b. Therefore, you must stop living to please yourself, and that requires putting to death or dying to any kind of thinking or attitude that makes pleasing yourself a priority.
 - c. And let me remind you that God loves a cheerful giver – not the one who serves grudgingly or under compulsion (2 Cor. 9:7).
 5. The next thing Paul does is explain vs 1 – which is the continuation his tenth principle.
- B. Romans 15:2-3 . . . Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. [3] For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You (God) fell on Me (Jesus Christ)" (Psalm 69:9).
1. Rather than living to please ourselves, we are to serve our neighbor by seeking his good and his edification. Within the Christian community, our most pressing work is the work of helping each other grow in the faith and become more godly in daily living.
 2. This does not mean we are to ignore other legitimate needs that others may have, but our primary emphasis is to be on building one another up as Christians so that we together fulfill the will of God, bring glory to God by how we live in the home and in the world, and continue to grow in Christ-likeness (Ephesians 4:11-16).
 3. To drive this truth home, Paul uses Jesus Christ as the supreme example of what we are to do.
 - a. The first thing Paul says about Christ is that He did not please Himself. What makes this statement so worthy of our attention is that Jesus was the Son of God, He was perfectly sinless, He was filled with the Holy Spirit and power, He performed mighty miracles, He cast out powerful demons, He told people what they were thinking, and He did many other things that, from the world's perspective, should give Him every right to please Himself.
 - b. And yet Jesus pleased His Father and sought our good, as proven by the fact that He had to endure immature and sometimes hard-headed disciples. He had to endure a hard and tiring 3 years of ministry – which included disapproval, rejection, hostility, and hatred. And He had to endure a shameful and painful death so that we, unworthy sinners, could gain eternal life.

- c. The point here is that Jesus lived to serve God and to serve us. He set aside His rights for our good and our edification. And though He is of such character and holds such a position as to deserve submissive obedience, honor, and praise – it will not come until the time when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11; Romans 14:11).
 - d. Therefore, Jesus has been and continues to be among us as one who serves. And God is telling those who are freer in faith that this servant mindset is to be their mindset. And I am telling you that this ought to be our mindset – whether we are weaker or freer in faith.
 - e. It is my opinion that whether we are weaker in faith or freer in faith, we all ought to make the servant mindset our mindset and a servant's behavior our behavior. We all ought to be willing and ready to do what is right, righteous, godly, and good to help our brothers and sisters in Christ move forward in the faith, and to build them up spiritually, and to help them grow to maturity, and to urge them to draw ever closer to God.
4. There is one more thing I want to point out about vs 3. Paul uses a quote from the OT to show the extent of Christ living to please God. The quote is: “The reproaches of those who reproached You (God) fell on Me (Jesus).” What this quote is telling us is that Jesus serves God by stepping in between God and the hostility, blasphemy, reviling words, and outright lies that are hurled at God in order to absorb them so that they do not reach God.
- a. Imagine going to that extent of service!
 - b. However, knowing this truth of this example will not change you. If you are going to apply – in life changing and practical ways – the truth of this example to your life, you must ponder and pray over this example for several months, and daily consider how you might apply it (looking forward) or should have applied it (looking back) to your relationships and circumstances each day.
- C. Romans 15:4 . . . For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
- 1. Even though this is a side comment, Paul is still dealing with the first principle, and specifically, he is defending his quote from Psalm 69:9 which says, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.

2. Interestingly, Paul's defense for using this quote is one of the scripture proofs that the disciples, and the early church, believed the OT was written for them – even though it had relevance for OT times.
 - a. Consider – much of the OT is history, and that includes much of what is written in the Prophetic books. And some of the prophetic writings deal with the future. In addition, Job, Psalms and Proverbs are eternal in what they have to teach us.
 - b. And so Paul says that whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction.
3. And to help you see the truth of what Paul said, let me show you from Psalm 69:9 how natural it was for the disciples and early church to use the OT as if it were written for them.
 - a. The full text of Psalm 69:9 is, “For zeal for Your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.”
 - b. In writing to the Christians in Roman, Paul uses the second half of this verse to support his teaching that Christ did not live to please Himself, but God.
 - c. And in recounting the story of Jesus cleansing the Temple, John uses the first half of this verse to support Jesus' actions. We read in John 2:17, “His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house will consume me."
 - d. Therefore, the same OT verse is used by two different disciples to make two different points about Jesus, as if this verse were written just for that purpose.
4. Returning to Romans 15:4, Paul says that the OT was written for our instruction so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
 - a. The words written for our instruction means that the OT was written to teach us what we need to know and apply for living a godly life. Paul says something similar to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture (they only had the OT at that time) is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; [17] so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
 - b. The words through (by means of) perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures means that the path to a settled hope is through persevering in applying and continuing to live up to what the scripture teach us, and in being encouraged to press on by the stories, the Proverbs, and the Psalms that deal

with those who do and those who don't press on in applying and continue living according to the truth they have.

- c. Finally, the words we might have hope speak of having a settled conviction and therefore certainty that living God's way leads to life, while living all other ways leads to some form of death in this life and eternal death in the next.
- D. Romans 15:5-6 . . . Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement (In this sense, God and the scripture are one, what the scripture gives comes from God and is empowered by God) grant you to be of the same mind with one another (grant unity of the Body in spite of the differences) according to (the one who unifies us) Christ Jesus, [6] so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (worship in word and deed, in spirit and in truth).
- E. Romans 15:7 . . . Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.
1. Paul presents his final principle here. And in essence it is: Accept one another as equals in spite of your differences just as Christ accepted Jews and Gentiles, slave and free, male and female, as equals – and this will bring praise and glory to God.
 2. Paul then supports this command with statements and quotes about Jesus Christ accepting into the church this diverse group of believers.
- F. Romans 15:8-12 . . . For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm (make that much more certain) the promises given to the fathers (Abraham, Jacob, David), [9] and [Christ has become a servant] for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy (non-Jews brought into the family of God as if they were God's chosen people); as it is written, "Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles, and I will sing to Your name" (Psalm 17:50 Sept, 18:49 Heb OT) [10] Again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people" (Deut 32:43 Sept). [11] And again, "Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise Him" (Psa 116:1 Sept, 117:1 Heb OT). [12] Again Isaiah says, "There shall come the root of Jesse, and He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles hope" (Isa 11:10 Sept).

III. Conclusion

A. Romans 15:13 . . . Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.