

Ladies Bible Study

Week 23

(Week 22 in your lessons)



March 23, 2026

In the first seven verses of Romans 15, we have a forceful summary of the great truths taught us in Chapter 14.

Mark well the words “ought to”: it is only reasonable and right that we do this. Also, he does not say that we “ought to” bear with the infirmities of the weak; he says “we ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” We should not merely _____ the weaker brother but help him.

This reminds us of Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 13:5, where he says that love “seeketh not her own,” and in 1 Corinthians 10:24: “Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth [or welfare].”

Again, always bearing in mind the context, “let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification,” not only to his edification, or building up, but to the edification of the assembly, for such thoughtfulness on the part of all is bound to build up the work of the Lord as well as the individuals in it. To break down is generally much easier than to build up, but the latter is more _____. Pride vaunts its liberty and makes a case of its rights, but love thinks of its neighbor and does all it can to help him.



Even Christ, who alone had the right to please Himself, did not do so, but willingly bore, not merely the infirmities of His friends, but the reproaches of His enemies. Surely then, the strong believer “ought to bear the infirmities of his best and closest friends, his brethren in Christ, even if they seem to be weaker in the faith than he.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime,” i.e., in the Scriptures – and Paul quotes many such passages – “were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (verse 4).

The word “comfort” here appears in such passages as John 14:16,26 – where the Holy Spirit is called the “Comforter” or one called to one’s side or to one’s aide. The New Testament has several words for “comfort” but this one appears most frequently and has the sense of consolation or encouragement. The name Barnabas meant “the son of consolation,” the one who consoles, or encourages those who are down in spirit. In the Greek, the words “patience and comfort” are precisely the same as “patience and consolation.” Obviously so, for it is the “God of patience and consolation” who give us the “patience and consolation of the Scriptures,” which He wrote – that by these we “might have hope.”

“The God of patience!” Think of it! “Important” people are apt to be impatient but God is “the God of patience.” What patience He showed in His dealings with the patriarchs, with Israel and now with us! And what little patience we often exercise towards others! Are we, then, more important than He? And with His patience God has repeatedly hastened, as it were, to give us encouragement in any small matter in which we might have pleased Him! Let us the pray with Paul that “the God of patience and consolation” may grant us to be “like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.”



It is important to carefully note the words, "according to Christ Jesus" in verse 5 if we would understand clearly what he means by being "like-minded one toward another."

He does not mean that a _____ believer should have the same mind toward his brother as his brother has towards him. The thought is rather that in their relationship toward each other, both should have the mind of Christ toward each other, and thus should be "like-minded toward another." Paul, pleading for mutual consideration among believers, says in Philippians 2:4-5:

"Look not ever man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

And following these words in Phil. 2, the Apostle lists the seven great downward steps by which our Lord voluntarily descended from His glory in heaven to "the death of the cross" (verses 6-8). How little consideration, in the light of this passage, do the best of us show toward our brethren in Christ!

That the Apostle has the edification of the assembly in view is evident again from verse 6:

"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

How important to God is the _____ of the Spirit in the Body of Christ! To the Philippian believers Paul wrote:

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries..." (Phil. 1:27,28).



Such oneness is bound to glorify God (Rom. 15:6).

God - and God alone - deserves all the glory of our minds and mouths - and hearts. He is not a monster, whom we must look upon as cruel and vindictive. He is "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," that beloved and only Son whom He gave up to judgment and wrath that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). And the Son, being one with the Father, was of the same mind, giving Himself up to suffering, shame and death "that we might live through Him."

How appropriate, then, are the closing words of this searching exhortation: "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Ver. 7).

May God, in His grace, enable us to sing in truth those beloved verses:

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

- John Fawcett



Ministry of Christ to Israel and the ministry of Paul to the Gentiles:

This is an _____ passage in the Epistle to the Romans, a passage in which Paul, by divine inspiration, calls our Lord Jesus Christ "a minister of the Circumcision [the Jew]," and calls himself "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles."

It should be carefully observed that Paul declares here that "Jesus Christ WAS a minister of the Circumcision" (Ver. 8). This not only places the ministry referred to in the past, but implies that a change has since taken place.

When our Lord was on earth, He Himself stated that He had been sent to none "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24), and when He first sent His twelve apostles forth, He commanded them: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles ... but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5,6). It was not until after His ascension to heaven, indeed after Pentecost that He raised up another apostle, Paul, to go to the Gentiles.

Next it should be noted that our Lord was sent to Israel "for the truth of God," i.e., to _____ His veracity, "to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

While our Lord was on earth, He did not say a single word about the "joint Body" of today, its "one baptism," the "no difference" between Jews and Gentiles, a heavenly calling and position, or salvation by grace through faith apart from religion or works. All this was part of the great "mystery," or secret, later revealed to and through Paul.



Our Lord, during His earthly ministry was, from beginning to end, "confirming the promises made unto the fathers." This was His calling as Israel's Messiah:

- When He was born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:4-6),
- When He was taken into Egypt (Matt. 2:15),
- When He was brought up in Nazareth (Matt. 2:23),
- When He preached good news and healed the sick (Luke 4:17-21),
- When He died on the cross (I Cor. 15:3),
- When He was buried (I Cor. 15:4),
- When He arose from the dead (I Cor. 15:4),
- When He ascended to heaven (Acts 2:34-36),
- When He sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Luke 24:49)
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In all these, from His birth at Bethlehem through the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, He _____ discharged His God-given ministry "to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

Some hold that the present dispensation began at Pentecost, or at the resurrection, or at the Cross - or even with John the Baptist, but all these are grossly mistaken in the light of the above. Even Pentecost did not mark the beginning of a new dispensation, rather it confirmed old promises made to Israel.

Those who hold that the present dispensation of grace began at Pentecost, or before, fail to note that at that time the twelve apostles, like their Master, kept "confirming the promises made unto the fathers" and did not preach salvation by grace, through faith in the finished work of Christ (See Acts 1:16,20-22; 2:14-21,29-31,34-39; 3:19-25; 4:11,25-28, etc.). Thus Paul continues:



"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written..." (verse 9).

Mark it well, "promises" to the fathers, but "mercy" to the Gentiles (verses 8,9). No promises had been made to the Gentiles. It was only because of "the promises made unto the fathers" that the Gentiles were to find mercy. Thus, in the original promise to Abraham, God said, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3).

This was no "mystery," no secret, and it is impressive to observe Paul's _____ on this as he points out that "again ... and again...and again" this blessing of the Gentiles was predicted by the prophets:

- "As it is written ... I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles.
- "And again ... Rejoice ye Gentiles, with His people.
- "And again, Praise the Lord all ye Gentiles; and laud Him, all ye people.
- "And again ... There shall be a root of Jesse ... in Him shall the Gentiles trust"

- Verses 9-12

Thus our Lord's ministry was in confirmation of the promises made to Israel, so that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy. This is a millennial picture. Our Lord "confirmed the promises" made to Israel, and those not self-blinded, recognized Him as their long-promised Messiah.

However, these promises will not be _____ until He returns to earth to reign. Then, and not until then, the Gentiles will "rejoice ... with His people" Israel. As Isa. 60:3 says, with reference to Israel's rise: "... the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."



It is a pity that the New Scofield Reference Bible, which claims to follow the Authorized Version, has changed the word "people" in Ver. 11 to "peoples" and has even changed the passage quoted (Psa. 117:1) to make that read "peoples." In both cases it should read "people," referring to the nation Israel, as in "His people" (Rom. 15:10). See Acts 4:25-27 for the distinction.

The Gentiles, or nations, are most assuredly not rejoicing with Israel today, nor will they do so until Christ _____ to reign over Israel and the world.

But now we come to a strange and wonderful verse:

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Ver. 13).

"Joy and peace in believing" - believing what? Believing the promises made in verses 9-12? In the first place, these were not made to the Gentiles, and in the second, they were not being fulfilled. The Lord Jesus had confirmed them, to be sure, but Israel rejected both Him and them.

What was a spiritually hungry Gentile now to do? Ah, Paul cast them upon "the God of hope" who had made the promises through which Israel would prove a blessing to the Gentiles. He would find a way - He had found a way, long kept secret, but now to be revealed. If there was a "bottleneck," because Israel refused to be the channel of blessing to the Gentiles, He would break the "neck," and let the blessing flow to the Gentiles directly from His heart of love. And this is exactly what He did, sending the blessing to the Gentiles, not through Israel's rise, but through her fall, as we saw in studying Rom. 11:11-15. Thus, He now saves Gentiles apart from the covenants, apart from prophecy, apart from Israel's instrumentality, just by grace, on the basis of the _____ work of Christ at Calvary.



This is why He raised up Paul, the chief of sinners, saved by grace, to engage in "the preaching of the cross," to proclaim "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7), offering reconciliation to even His bitterest enemies (II Cor. 5:14-21).

Little wonder Paul here writes to these Gentiles, left in such a _____ impossible position by Israel's rejection of Christ: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Ver. 13).

And then the Apostle proceeds to show how God worked out the problem (as we now know - before it ever developed!)

But why, in this context, does the Apostle insert a paragraph about his readers' "goodness" and "knowledge," and their ability to "admonish one another" (Ver. 14)? We believe that the "Nevertheless" of Ver. 15 explains. He says, as it were, "This is no reflection on you, but I have something to tell you that you probably do not yet know, or haven't fully appreciated."

"Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles... (verses 15,16)."

At the great Jerusalem council, Peter and the other leaders of the Judaeen church, had recognized the special grace given to Paul as the Apostle of the Gentiles (Gal. 2:7,9). Indeed, James, Peter and John had shaken hands with him in a public, official agreement, recognizing Paul as the Apostle of God to the Gentiles, while they were henceforth to confine their ministry to "the Circumcision" (Gal. 2:9).



Here the "great commission" to the twelve to go "into all the world" gave way, by the Spirit's direction, to the greater commission to Paul (II Cor. 5:18,19). How regrettable that most of our great _____ have not yet seen this simple fact, and that many even resist it!

The Apostle now reminds his readers of "the grace ... given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" (Rom. 15:15,16).

As "Jesus Christ was a minister of the Circumcision" Paul, by grace, had now been appointed "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" and this was a self-evident fact (verses 16-19).

"The offering up of the Gentiles" to God in this way was certainly not the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the Gentiles; it was rather what Paul calls "this mystery among the Gentiles" (Col. 1:27) and not only was this "offering ... acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit," but God says that He would have His saints know "what is the riches of the glory of this mystery." How disappointing that most of the leaders of Christendom themselves have little knowledge or understanding of this great truth, so precious to the heart of God and to those of His children who have entered into it!

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing...." If this applied to these Gentiles, who were seemingly placed in an utterly hopeless position by Israel's rejection of Christ, then how much more does it apply to us who have seen His plan for them _____ so beautifully in the raising up of Paul! When the situation seems hopeless, then, trust in "the God of hope" and He will "fill you with all joy and peace," and cause you to "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.



Paul's Apostolic Objective:

"In those things which pertain to God," Paul did indeed have much to boast about, "through Jesus Christ," as he says in Ver. 17. Would that we all were enthused enough with the wonders of "the mystery" to boast about it! Would that we, like Paul, could find reason to boast only in the accomplishments of Christ at Calvary!

Note the striking statement: "I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me..." (Ver. 18).

Paul's example in this is a rebuke to most of us. How prone many of us are to accept credit that is not justly our due, and to exaggerate what God has done through us! It should be our earnest prayer to be delivered from this sin.

He had indeed been used "to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed" (Ver. 18). Before him, however, the twelve apostles of the kingdom had been mightily used in Judaea, and the Church there had multiplied greatly in numbers. It was not his desire to cast their mighty ministry into the shade. His purpose was rather to _____ the grace of God in saving Gentiles even apart from Israel's instrumentality or any promise previously made.

It was to authenticate this ministry of Paul that God gave him "mighty signs and wonders" and the evident "power of the Spirit of God" (Ver. 19). Indeed, the miracles of Paul's early ministry were such as to be widely recognized. According to the record of Acts, the signs wrought by Peter were more than matched by Paul. Thus Acts 19:11 declares that "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul."



Think of this Spirit-empowered man, used of God to fully proclaim the gospel in widening circles all the way from Jerusalem to Illyricum, far to the north and west, above Macedonia. We know from the Acts record that this included Syria, Cyprus, Galatia, Cilicia, Pisidia, Phrygia, Mysia, Greece, Macedonia and most of the populous area that lay between, including numerous great cities.

In our day of fast and easy travel, it is hard to visualize all that the Apostle must have endured in his unremitting efforts to reach the Gentiles with "the gospel of the grace of God." We know that by this time he had already suffered stripes and imprisonment, beatings, stonings and shipwreck, perils of all kinds, weariness and pain, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness - and much more (See II Cor. 11:21-30). Christian believers today should ask God for the heart of love that motivated the Apostle Paul to accomplish all this.

Surely he does not mean to imply in verse 20 that it would be wrong to preach Christ where He has previously been proclaimed. Else why all the churches he established? Surely he expected his co-workers to build upon the foundation he laid at Corinth (I Cor. 3:10). Besides laying the foundations of local churches, however, he had also laid the foundation for the Church of this present _____, so that it was his desire to reach as many as possible first, in the spirit of Isa. 52:15 (verse 21).

All this was what had so long hindered him much from reaching Rome.

