

ROMANS 15:1-13

Introduction:

*In Chapter 14 of Romans, Paul has been dealing with the Roman believers about having trouble with some other believers concerning some of their dubious practices: eating meat offered to idols, or eating meat at all, or drinking alcoholic beverages, or observing certain days of the week to God.

*Starting here in Chapter 15, Paul uses the first 13 verses to continue this same subject dealing with matters of moral differences. Paul shows how the strong mature believer has the responsibility and obligation to help the weaker brother who is lacking in spiritual knowledge.

Romans 15:1 - We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

1. Tensions had risen between the converts from Judaism and those of the Gentile Christians. So, Paul is pleading for harmony and peace between these two groups.
2. The term, "the infirmities of the weak", is talking about the person who does not know what to do. Paul is saying the strong mature believer is to tolerate and be sympathetic to help the weaker brother and not to please themselves by selfishly asserting their rights.

*The strong brother should treat their weaker brother with kindness and consideration, making a full allowance for their excessive moral principles.

Romans 15:2 - Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

1. The principle here is this: Don't lean on always pleasing yourself, but live to please other believers and build them up. Selfishness has no part in the Christian life.
2. Paul is not saying here that we continually give in to the weaker brother's desires, but act in a way which will be to his lasting benefit.

Ephesians 4:15 - But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

**In verse 3, Paul gives the best example of not pleasing ourselves - Christ Himself.

Romans 15:3 - For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

1. Christ lived to please His Father and not Himself. Christ came to earth to help men and to bear our weaknesses. He took our sins upon Himself.
2. Paul quotes part of Psalm 69:9, saying "the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." This means Christ died for all, going out of His way to bear someone else's burden.
3. Christ was so completely taken up with honoring and pleasing His Father, that when men insulted God, Christ took it as a personal insult. But, He endured it all for us.

Romans 15:4 - For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

1. Paul is saying that the truths of the O.T. scriptures are to be for our learning as believers. All of the Bible is for us, being God's inspired Word. But, not all of it is to us specifically as Gentiles.

Note: We can make application from the O.T. scriptures, the four Gospels, and even early Acts. But, we can't obey many of their commands in this Dispensation of Grace period because they are not to us today.

2. Through the Old Testament scriptures, we see how God gave His truths in past dispensations. It was God's distinct message for them to know and obey.
3. As we go through life with problems, conflicts, tribulations and troubles, the Scriptures teach us to be steadfast instead of facing failure.
4. We are sustained by the hope that the Lord will see us through.

Romans 15:5 - Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

1. Paul is expressing that it is the God of patience and comfort Who gives us the patience and comfort of scriptures. What God does for the strong believer, we are to do for the weaker brethren.
2. We are to have the same thinking, same mindset, and the same heart toward others.

*Having unity of mind towards each other in the faith comes from growing together in the same truths - by reading and studying the Word of God dispensationally together.

Philippians 2:4-5 - Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.
Php. 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

**In the following two verses (6 & 7), we see our edification with each other.

Romans 15:6 - That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. This is about our worship time with all of the saints, thinking alike as the unity of the Spirit controls the believers in the church. When we are in one accord and truthfully worship God.
2. This leads to rejoicing with other believers and as a result brings happiness in the local church. If we would just concentrate on glorifying God, then there would be no room for discord among others.

Romans 15:7 - Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

1. Paul is talking about the assembly (the church) and Paul challenges all believers to be receiving and accepting one another.
2. Remember in this context, some were believing Gentiles while others were believing Jews and there were differences.

*We are not to receive on the basis of spiritual maturity or some social status - the standard is Christ.

3. If we follow the pattern of Christ, there is no room for bias against any believer.

**In the next few verses (8-12), we will see God's two programs: Christ's ministries to Israel and to the Body Church.

Romans 15:8 - Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:

1. This verse is probably the most important verse in Romans because we see a change in God's program. When Jesus Christ was on earth, He ministered only to the Jewish people - with only a couple exceptions.

Matthew 10:5-6 - These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not: Matt. 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matthew 15:24 - But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

2. Notice the word "was" a minister of the circumcision. This shows where the Jewish ministry is placed in the past and implies that a change has taken place now (Israel - Body).

*When Christ came, His purpose for Israel was to get them a heart belief and faith in order to be blessed by God. Christ could then set up His Kingdom on earth. Time and again, Israel would not believe in Him and they even murdered/crucified Jesus Christ.

3. While on earth, Christ mentions and confirms "the promises made unto the fathers". We know from Scripture that God made promises and unconditional covenants to the forefathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David) with Israel.

*God promised the Jewish people the land, the throne, a Messiah, and that they would be a kingdom of priests. But, of course, Israel failed miserably by disobedience and lack of faith.

4. Throughout Christ's earthly ministry, He did not mention one word about the Body Church of today. He taught nothing about salvation by grace through faith in the gospel (the D.B.R. of Christ) apart from works.

*All this was part of the mystery, kept secret until later revealed to Paul.

Ephesians 3:2-5 - If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: Eph. 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Eph. 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Eph. 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Romans 15:9 - And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

1. No promises had been made to the Gentiles. It was only because of the promises made to the Jewish fathers that the Gentiles were to find mercy.

*In God's original promise to Abraham, it was through the Jews that Gentiles could be saved and blessed.

Genesis 12:3 - And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

2. God entered into no formal contracts with the Gentiles as He did with the Jews. God's dealings with the Gentiles became a special expression of His mercy to them.

3. Paul now selects several passages from the O.T., describing these blessings of the Gentiles.
 - a. In verse 9, Paul quotes Psalm 18:49 - "...For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name."
 *Here, the Lord Himself gives praise to God among the Gentiles.
 - b. In verse 10, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:43 - "And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people."
 *Here, the Gentiles praise God in harmony with the Jews.
 - c. In verse 11, Paul quotes Psalm 117:1 - "Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people."
 *Here the Gentiles praise the Lord without any direct connection with Israel."
4. So in these verses, even though God favored Israel, He did not forget the Gentiles.

Romans 15:12 - And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

1. Here, Isaiah is speaking of the Prophetic Program's Millennial (1000 year) reign in the Kingdom. Many Gentiles will go with Israel's God at this time. These are the ones that missed the Rapture.
2. Paul uses these quotations to primarily refer to the part that the Gentiles will have in Christ's worldwide earthly kingdom.

Romans 15:13 - 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.

1. Paul closes this section with a graceful benediction for the Roman believers.
2. Paul gives them great encouragement by their trust and belief in the God of hope. Now, as believers, they have hope, peace, and joy from their relationship with our great God and Savior.

Titus 2:13 - Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

3. Paul has tried to make the point that he has upheld the rights of the strong brother and of the weaker one. Paul has shown that the stronger one should give way to the weaker one when it comes to nonessentials.
4. Paul prays that the Jew and the Gentile, in Christ, will get along despite differences in their practices. People are different in many ways: different ages, temperaments, abilities, and drives of nature. It cannot be done by nature, but it can be done through grace.
5. The things that unite us are far stronger than the things that divide us. We are united in Christ!

Philippians 2:13 - For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

**Next week, we will see Paul speaking about the ministry given to him from Christ to the Gentiles.