

Romans 15:1-13

Romans 15:1 - "We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

- Addressing the Strong
- Galatians 6:2

Romans 15:2 - "Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up."

- This is not compliance or compromise, but more of a missionary effort.

Romans 15:3 - "For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.' "

- Christ's entire ministry was this
- We are all considered "weak" (lacking understanding, misapplying "truth", not yet fully developed, etc.) in comparison with Jesus Christ.
- Psalm 69, which was also used by Jesus in John 2:17, "Zeal for your house will consume me."
- Christ was misunderstood by the religious crowd, yet Christ only did what pleased God (John 8:29)

Romans 15:4 - "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

- Here Paul preps his readers for his movement toward Old Testament text to prove his point and secure their confidence in the future of the church (Jews and Gentiles) by pointing out that what was happening in their time was already revealed in the OT.
- Note the use of Old Testament text.
 - The OT was foundational for the early church
 - The OT would help unite the Jews with the Jesus, believers in Jesus, the church, etc.
 - The OT was not a separate issue with dead topics when compared with the Gentile church. In fact, the OT predicted the Messiah, the church and the ministry to the Gentiles.
 - The OT foresaw this day in 57 AD when Jews and Gentiles would worship together
- What "was written" in the OT was for the church's:
 - "Instruction" – The instruction of Scripture (here the OT text) provides the believer and the church with endurance (to keep growing and working through the conflicts), encouragement (to recognize the people of God are making progress) and hope (to understand the ultimate goal will be reached)
 - "Endurance" – without this we would give up and never reach the point of seeing progress or having hope for what is yet unseen.
 - "Encouragement" – Greek means "comfort" or "exhortation"
 - "Hope" – when the "strong" have hope they will continue to reach out and work with the "weak" so there may ultimately be one unified people of God.
- The above were accomplished by the:
 - Examples of God and his people in the OT historical accounts
 - Predictions, prophecy and the revealing of God's plans (ways, intentions) concerning the past and future

Romans 15:5 - "May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,"

- Paul's prayer is for "harmony" or "unity"
- The phrase here is *to auto phronein* means "to think the same thing" just as it does in Philippians 2:2 and 4:2.

Romans 15:6 - "that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

- The point here is that there is only one church, only one people of God and that they should focus on unity.
- The day will come where the people of God will mature in knowledge and be unified. See Ephesians 4:11-17

Romans 15:7 - "Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

- "Therefore" indicates that Paul is now connecting the last few verses (15:1-6) to his point: You were welcomed by Christ in your "weak" state, so now that you are "strong" likewise welcome the "weak"
- This is the only path to unity and the victory Christ is seeking in his people

Romans 15:8 - "For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,"

- "For I tell you" is Paul setting the stage to present a doctrinal point that cannot be refuted. This is the Apostle throwing down the gauntlet that you must accept or you will be rejected.
- This point is foundational and all of history (past, 57 AD and the distant future) pivot on this doctrinal point.
- Note also that 15:9 continues this doctrinal statement:

Romans 15:9 - "and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, 'Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.' "

Romans 15:10 - "And again it is said, 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.' "

Romans 15:11 - "And again, 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him.' "

Romans 15:12 - "And again Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope.' "

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

1. **We need to meet believers at the level of understanding where they are at.**
2. **We cannot let other believers' lack of understanding limit our experience or force compromise.**
3. **The unity of the believers in the body of Christ (church) is the goal that will be attained.**