

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.'" (Ps. 69:8)

- 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.

NOTES from Philippians study:

Philippians 2:1-2

- Paul continues to focus on unity in the church.
- Philippians 2:1-4 are a long sentence that is focused on making Paul's "joy complete" by being "like-minded". All the ministry, demonstration and teaching that Paul has provided will not reach the fullness of his goal if the Philippians are NOT unified.
 - First, 2:1, Paul makes an appeal to the church to strive for unity
 - Second, 2:2, Paul describes unity or "the same mind" as having these characteristics:
 - Having the same love
 - Being in full accord
 - Being of one mind
 - Third, 2:3-4, Paul list some of the objectives of unity and describes how a "one-minded" people will think and behave.
- In Rome Paul recognized envy and rivalry within the church (Philippians 1:15) and experienced the opposition from the selfish ambition of some of the Roman church leaders (Philippians 1:17).
- It appears that Epaphroditus had reported, at least, some minor cases of the same envy, rivalry and selfish ambition that destroyed the "like-minded" unity breaking out in the Philippian church (Philippians 4:2, Euodia and Syntyche). It is possible the situation was bigger than just these two women since Paul is spending the focus of his letter on the issue of unity.

Philippians 2:1 - *"So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,*

Philippians 2:2 - *"complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.*

- Paul's "joy" likely refers to the completeness of his work with the Philippians and the full manifestation of his labor as an apostle.
 - See 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20
 - Paul desired to be able to present to the Lord on the Day of the Lord a mature group of believers. The results would include rewards for Paul.
 - **Phronete** is "like-minded" in the phrase in 2:2a that could be translated, "that you set your minds on the same thing"
 - This verb **phronete** is used ten times in Philippians (and, 13 more times in Paul's other letters; a total of 23 times in Paul's writings.)
 - The letter opens in 1:7 referring to Paul's attitude toward the Philippians
 - The letter ends in 4:10 (2x) referring to the Philippians attitude toward Paul.
 - **Phronete** is used again in:
 - 2:5
 - 3:15 (2x)
 - 3:19
 - 4:2
 - Also, note **phronete** is used in Romans 12:3; 12:16 and 15:5
 - **Phronete** does NOT mean "to think about; to meditate; to reflect"
 - **Phronete** DOES mean "to set one's mind on". It is the sharing of a life principle. It includes agreeing on values, people. It is unity of purpose, and in this case, it is unity of a life based on the value of knowing Christ, the Gospel and the Philippian's shared citizenship in heaven.
 - **Phronete** is best defined here by reading 2:6-11.
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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.”

1352 [e]	4355 [e]	240 [e]	2531 [e]	2532 [e]	3588 [e]	5547 [e]	4355 [e]	4771 [e]	1519 [e]	1391 [e]	3588 [e]
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Therefore	receive	one another	as	also	-	Christ	received	you	to	[the] glory	-
Conj	V-PMM-2P	RecPro-AMP	Adv	Conj	Art-NMS	N-NMS	V-AIM-3S	PPro-A2P	Prep	N-AFS	Art-GMS

2316 [e]
Theou
Θεοῦ
of God
N-GMS

- “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”
- Paul began this section with the same advice in 14:1, “Accept one another.”

3588 [e]	1161 [e]	770 [e]	3588 [e]	4102 [e]	4355 [e]	3361 [e]	1519 [e]	1253 [e]	1261 [e]
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the [one]	moreover	being weak	in the	faith	receive	not	for	passing judgment	on [his] reasonings
Art-AMS	Conj	V-PPA-AMS	Art-DFS	N-DFS	V-PMM-2P	Adv	Prep	N-AFP	N-GMP

- 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.’ ”

- This verse continues the absolute doctrinal statement began in 15:8 with “For I tell you.”
- Christ came to:
 - One, fulfill his promises to Israel
 - Two, open the door of the kingdom to Gentiles
- POINT: What is happening in the church (or, kingdom of God) with the coming of the Messiah (Jesus) is exactly what is developing in the Roman church in 57 AD – one, the promises to the Jews is being fulfilled, and, two, the Gentiles are joining the kingdom of God (or, church). The challenge is that the

people (both strong and weak believers) NOT resist this movement, but instead work through it together.

- The Jewish believer should not reject the concept that the kingdom of God is adapting to receive the Gentile believers.
- The Gentile believer should not lose sight of the fact that Jesus came to the Jews to fulfill the promises he made to the Jews.
- These two concepts are not incompatible.
- Paul now supports this concept with not one or two OT verses, but four:
 - 2 Samuel 22:50 (or, Psalm 18:49) – Historical written by David recorded by palace scribes. It is a testimony of the Lord's greatness to the Gentiles. In context David had recently conquered and incorporated Gentiles into his kingdom. David (and, God) welcomed them and considered them part of the people of God.
 - Deuteronomy 32:43 – In the Law written by Moses. The final song of Moses as testimony to God's greatness, his plan, the future (including Israel's rebellion), the avenging of the blood of his servants and the rejoicing of Gentiles with Israel. (Note that Paul has already used quotes from this same Song of Moses in 10:19; 11:11; 12:19 in the book to the Romans.)
 - Psalm 117:1 – From the Psalms a two verse psalm directed to the Gentiles who are called upon to rejoice for God's faithfulness to Israel.
 - Isaiah 11:10 – From the Prophets written by Isaiah concerning the Root of Jesse (Jesus) serving as a rally point for all nations before the rest begins and the scattered remnant of Israel is restored a second time from the lands of the Gentiles. This concept can be found as far back as Jacob's prophecy in Genesis 49:10)
- A potential progress in Paul's choice of OT verses:
 - First, 2 Samuel 22:50, David conquers Gentiles and they are not rejected
 - Second, Deuteronomy 32:43, the Gentiles are participating with Israel in worship
 - Third, Psalm 117:1, the Gentiles are seen rejoicing separately as Gentiles, but for God's faithfulness to Israel.
 - Fourth, Isaiah 11:10, the nations of the world rally to Jesus as Gentiles without being associated with Israel. The Gentiles have hope in the Messiah independent of Israel's relationship with the Messiah.

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.**