

## Romans – Bible Study – Chapter 15:1-13

As we look into tonight's passage, Paul is concluding his teachings on how the weak and strong are to exist together. What should be noted is the idea of unity is being built up, all the way to the end of the passage (verse 13). Keep that in mind and see how this passage not only relates to the beginning of chapter 14, but how it relates to Paul's letter to the Romans in its entirety.

### **Christ the Hope of Jews and Gentiles**

**(Verses 4-6)** How do the Scriptures encourage us as to produce hope? How are God's gifts of endurance (perseverance) and encouragement to be used? What is the purpose of Paul's prayer? What are some practical evidences of the application of these gifts?

- Hope is the result of perseverance and the encouragement from the Scriptures
- **Note:** You may want to ensure everyone knows what the 'hope' is that we are talking about, especially for any newcomers
  - This includes the promises that God has given when we put our trust in the works of Christ, namely that we will stand justified before the Judge
- This can be shown in two ways
  - **First**, in Scriptures that are historical, we are taught that God never failed to fulfill His promises to his people
  - Scriptures teach us the faithfulness of God and the certainty of His promises
  - **Second**, the Old Testament contains promises and prophecies that have either taken place or will take place in the future
  - This gives us hope because hope is our expectation of that which is to come and yet unseen (Romans 8:23-25)
- It also gives us hope because we see God's approval for those who have endured and persevered while doing God's will (Hebrews 11), in spite of the opposition they face
- We should note that for Christians, the Old Testament has as much value as the New Testament in our daily living as it records all of God's dealings with His people in the past and is preserved for our benefit so that we keep going until we receive all that God has promised when we are resurrected or called to Him
- This should be an encouragement for us as we go through life trying to live what God has intended us to be
- We are to apply them in our interpersonal relationships
- The goal would be to build unity within the church itself, so that we can praise God with a unified voice, giving Him the glory that he deserves
- The unified voice would be evidence the unity between the strong and weak within the church
- But it must be noted, as Paul prays, that the church needs to depend on God for this strength to be unified
- Paul asks God to give the Roman Christians the desire and the ability to be united, as they follow the example of Christ in living for the good of one another
- God is honoured when the entire church is united in its praise and glory of him
- When the church is divided, especially on minor or amoral matters, it brings dishonor to God and to the Gospel itself
- Therefore, we should be mindful on how we are to live, in light of our relationship to God and to others, for the purpose of bringing glory to God

**(Verses 7-12)** Who is Paul directing the command “to accept” to? What is Paul’s reasoning for this? How should that inform us when we meet other Christians who are not like us (Philippians 2:3-4)? How have the actions of Christ directed the actions of the Jew and the Gentile? What were the promises given to the patriarchs (Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 56:3-8)? Paul quotes four passages from the Old Testament (2 Samuel 22:50; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 117:1; Isaiah 11:10). What is Paul’s purpose in using them here? What do you think the significance of this is?

- It is both to the Jews and Gentiles, to the strong and to the weak
- Since God has accepted the fellow brother or sister, who are we to deny them or to reject them? Are we better than God?
- We should be accepting others, despite our differences (on amoral issues), and work towards the unity of the church
- **Philippians 2:3-4** – We are to esteem/value others better than ourselves and to look at their interests more than our own
- Christ came as a Jew to demonstrate the faithfulness of God in keeping the promises of salvation He made to Abraham, and also in order to bring blessing and salvation to the Gentiles, as described in 11:11
- In light of this, how can the Jews condemn those to whom God has shown mercy?
- Likewise, for the Gentiles, they should remember that their salvation stems from a Jewish root (11:18)
- **Note:** Inform the group about the gulf between the relationship between Jews and Gentiles at that time
- **Genesis 12:1-3** – God will make Abram (later Abraham) a great nation, to bless him, and to make his name great so that he will be a blessing and through him, all the families of the earth shall be blessed
- **Isaiah 56:3-8** – Developing the idea that Gentiles were to be included in God’s family
- Verses 9-12 contain four Old Testament quotations. In verse 9, Paul cites from 2 Samuel 22:50 (repeated in Psalm 18:49). Verse 10 comes from Deuteronomy 32:43; verse 11 from Psalm 117:1; and verse 12 from Isaiah 11:10
- Paul uses these verses here to show that the idea of the Gentiles being part of God’s family is not an accident, but rather part of his plan from the beginning
- Also, he uses these four passages to show that they come from different parts of the Old Testament (i.e. The Law, the prophets, and the writings)
- These verses show that the whole of scripture testifies to the inclusion of the Gentiles, and thus to God’s purpose of uniting people of every kind under His rule, in order to bring praise to His name
- If the believers in Rome truly understand that this what God is doing throughout history, they will recognize that their unity as the body of Christ must come before their minor differences in opinion
- The message of righteousness was for both the Jews and Gentiles, therefore, if it is for all, then we need to learn to live together, for the benefit of others

**(Verse 13)** How does the Holy Spirit help us abound in hope? What does this imply about the source of our hope? What are some practical ways to grow in God’s peace, joy, and hope?

- The Holy Spirit reminds of the Scripture that is written in our hearts
- Joy and peace are part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), which implies it comes from God and not from our own selves or through something the world gives
- We are filled with joy and peace in/through believing
- **Romans 8:1-27** – Hope is produced through the Spirit who dwells in us
- The source of hope comes from God, who is the God of hope
- He inspires hope in, and provides hope for, His redeemed ones
- That means we can only achieve true joy, peace, and hope through trusting in God
- Christians can be joyful because of what God has done for them and continues to do
- Christians can be peaceful because of what he is doing now and will also continue into the future
- This is our salvation and eventual glorification

- Begin each morning by spending 20-30 minutes (minimum) in God's presence, reading and meditating on His Word, praying, and singing.
- Memorize some of God's wonderful promises that kindle joy, peace, and hope in your soul so that you can meditate on them throughout the day.
- Romans 15:13, 8:28, 8:32, and many other verses like them will help you to set your mind on the things above rather than on the problems that are getting you down (Col. 3:1-4). The Psalms are loaded with verses of trust in God in the midst of life-threatening situations.
- Immediately confess all grumbling as sin and instead deliberately think each day of things that you can thank God for
- Begin by thanking Him each morning for sending His beloved Son to save you from your sins. Thank Him that you have His Word to guide and sustain you. Thank Him for all your blessings and even for your trials (1 Thess. 5:18), which help you to grow.
- When you feel overwhelmed with despair or depression, talk to yourself: Tell yourself again and again to hope in God.
- Read the biographies of godly saints who have run the race before you as an encouragement

Paul emphasizes that the Church needs to be unified when it comes to praising and worshiping God. It pleases and honours God when the church is unified. When it is not, especially on minor and amoral subjects, it dishonours God because it shows each person lives for themselves and not necessarily for God and for others. Paul uses Scripture to show that the Gospel is meant for everyone and because of that, we need to live in harmony and unity so that we bring glory to God.

This concludes Paul's exposition of the theme of the righteousness of God that constitutes the heart of this epistle (1:18—15:13). Paul showed man's need of God's righteousness (1:18—3:20), how God imputes it to people who trust in His Son (3:21—5:21), and how He imparts it to those to whom He has imputed it (chapters 6—8). Moreover, he demonstrated that God is consistently righteous in doing all these things (chapters 9—11). He ends by urging his readers to practice their righteousness in their most important relationships (12:1—15:13).

**Points to Ponder:**

- Do you live for the well-being and benefit of others so that God may be glorified?