

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

September 27, 2023

Series - The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul

The Letter to the Romans

The Righteousness of God

The Duty Section (Chapters 12 – 16)

Concluding Thoughts

Text – Romans 15

Introduction

In this chapter Paul will sum up the letter. He will begin by strengthening the points made in the previous chapter but will transition into concluding thoughts that sort of wrap up what he was stating throughout. It is interesting that the letter appears to end in v. 35 but will continue into chapter 16 with many “howdies” from Paul’s companions to the believers at Rome.

I. Receive One Another (vs. 1 – 7)

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

(Romans 15:1-7)

This first section in chapter 15 concludes the subject from chapter 14. The phrase, “we then” ties these verses to the previous chapter. We are admonished here that the world does not revolve around us; we are to focus on ministering to others.

Notice the phrase, “we then that are strong” in v. 1:

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Galatians 6:1)

The Christian that is strong in faith must take the higher ground of putting up with weaker Christians. People are basically selfish by nature, but the spiritual Christian must be selfless. Christ is the supreme example of this principle, but the Apostle Paul also modeled these

attributes to the people that he ministered to. He was not asking them to do something that he was not willing to also do.

V. 3 is a reference to Psalm 69:9. Paul states in v. 4 that these Old Testament references were written to encourage us and strengthen us in the will of God.

Vs. 5 – 7 are a final admonition for us to depend on God through prayer to be “likeminded” with “one mind” and “one mouth”.

"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;" (Philippians 1:27)

We have a big job to do fulfilling the Great Commission that was given to us by the Lord. We cannot afford to waste time and energy being distracted by internal squabbles that serve nothing but our own pride. Strong Christians must take the lead in this area.

V. 7 concludes this thought:

The result of this is, of course, glory to God (Romans 15:7). Disunity and disagreement do not glorify God; they rob Him of glory. Abraham’s words to Lot are applicable to today: “Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee ... for we be brethren” (Genesis 13:8). The neighbors were watching! Abraham wanted them to see that he and Lot were different from them because they worshiped the true God. In His prayer in John 17, Jesus prayed for the unity of the church to the glory of God (John 17:20–26).¹

II. A Reminder to Both Jews and Gentiles (vs. 8 – 13)

"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: 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. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. 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. 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." (Romans 15:8-13)

A. To the Jew (v. 8)

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 562). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

As Paul concludes the letter, he addresses each of the groups that represented the church at Rome. The phrase “of the circumcision” in v. 8 indicates that this was addressed to the Jews. His message is that God did not forsake Israel at all, and that He fulfilled all the promises that He made to them through the Person of Jesus Christ.

B. To the Gentiles (vs. 9 – 13)

Paul’s concluding message to the Gentiles is that their lives should glorify God because of the mercy that was granted to them.

There are many Old Testament references in the portion of Scripture. Notice what Wiersbe has to say about the progression of the gospel in the New Testament period from the Jews to the Gentiles:

Was it selfish of God to emphasize the Jews? No, because through the Jews, He would send the Good News of salvation to the Gentiles. The first Christians were Jewish believers! “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). In the Old Testament period, God chose Israel to be a minister to the Gentiles; but instead, Israel copied the idolatrous ways of the Gentiles and had to be chastened. In the New Testament period, God chose Jewish believers to carry the Good News to the Gentiles, and they obeyed Him.

- There is a beautiful progression in the promises that Paul quoted in Romans 15:9–12.
- The Jews glorify God *among* the Gentiles (Rom. 15:9, quoting Psalm 18:49)
- The Gentiles rejoice *with* the Jews (Rom. 15:10, quoting Deuteronomy 32:43)
- All the Jews and Gentiles *together* praise God (Rom. 15:11, quoting Psalm 117:1)
- Christ shall reign over Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 15:12, quoting Isaiah 11:10)²

III. Paul Reflects Upon His Mission (vs. 14 – 22)

"And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 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, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 563). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you." (Romans 15:14-22)

This section reveals the scope of Paul's ministry. Geographically speaking, Paul's ministry extended from Antioch in Syria all the way to Illyricum, which is on the western coast of Macedonia. Though Acts does not mention this stop in Paul's journeys, it is assumed that Paul must have gone there sometime during the third journey. Paul was a pioneer. His mission was to bring the gospel to where it was not named. My missions' director in college, Dr. Bob Bowen, stated that a missionary takes the gospel from where it is preached to where it is preached less. Paul was a missionary.

This section also reveals that Paul's ministry was also extensive in that it reached into the Gentile world. Though Paul was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews" he was also "the apostle to the Gentiles"

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:" (Romans 11:13)

"Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." (1 Timothy 2:7)

"Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." (2 Timothy 1:11)

IV. Paul Reveals His Future Plans (vs. 23 – 33)

"But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this

fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." (Romans 15:23-33)

In this final section of chapter 15, Paul reveals his intentions to travel to Rome immediately after his trip to Jerusalem. Of course, we know from the Book of Acts that things did not go exactly as Paul planned. He did bring the offering to the poor saints in Jerusalem, but he was arrested in the temple and detained in Caesarea for quite a while. He also travelled to Rome, but under guard and upon arrival he was under house arrest while he waited for his trial before Caesar. It does not appear that he ever made it to Spain.