

## Romans Chapter 15

The church is to be an opened-door and welcoming place that both shares and demonstrates the reality of life in Christ. It is to be a place where others experience all that the world cannot give them and to have deceptions corrected by the reality of truth. But for this to happen, the church must be one in Christ and given the nature of our differences, this is difficult at best. Jew/Gentile, rich/poor, weak/strong—these are just a sample of the things seeking to bring separation to the Roman church. The desire of Paul’s heart was for his mission to the Gentiles to be both effective and accepted. Allowing the Lord to create a welcoming atmosphere for all people and for the callings given to them by God is essential to our genuinely being church.

**Scripture: Romans 15:1-6**

**Theme: Self-denial and Unity**

- Paul continues the focus on the relationship between the weak and the strong.
  - Weak defined in terms of those who are still bound to ritualistic adherence in an attempt to heighten favor with God.
  - Strong defined as those whose Christian liberty has moved them beyond such aspects of law and religion.
- “It is difficult to imagine a more relevant passage for mature faith.”
- Bear—that which is borne on behalf of another—to support as a burden
  - This indicates something that is not accommodated but supported through love for the purpose of growth and transformation.
  - Bearing a weakness brings with it the responsibility of edifying (building up) and strengthening the weak.
  - Love is more effective than argument and criticism.
  - We edify and strengthen through offering the love of Christ.
  - We encourage because Christ has encouraged us.

- As Jesus gave no thought to self in assuming our sin, we must learn to deny self and minister effectively to the weaknesses of others.
  - Hebrews 12:1-2; Philippians 2:5-8
- Translation: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in all our afflictions, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction, with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God.”
  - In other words, if we are all encouraging each other the way God encourages us through Christ, we will be united through His mind, determined in His purpose, and ceaseless in our praise.

**Scripture: Romans 15:7-13**

**Theme: Welcome to Hope**

- Our foundational goal—do to others as Christ has done to us.
  - Accept them as He has accepted us
  - Love them as He has loved us
  - Forgiven them as He has forgiven us
  - Every reflection of His nature brings praise and glory to our Lord.
- Christ to the Jews was a confirmation and fulfillment of all the promises made to “the fathers.”
  - Their rejection of Jesus in no way nullifies this truth.
- Christ to the Gentiles was the source of God’s fulfilled mercy and grace towards this world.
- The Old Testament passages affirm the truth that God has sent the source of salvation to the entire world so therefore the church must be welcoming to all who make up the world.
- Our hope (experienced certainty) in Christ brings belief that is experienced in joy, peace, and power—all of which is known by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

**Scripture: Romans 15:14-16****Theme: You're Okay**

- For thirty years the Romans church did not have an apostolic presence.
  - It is possible that the church had been started by Pentecostal pilgrims within one year of the resurrection.
  - Through other sources Paul had learned a great deal about the church at Rome.
- He begins this section by complimenting the church—a good way to solidify a bond. These are compliments that every church should aspire to have said of them.
  - Convinced—satisfied—to be won over
  - You are filled with goodness. Spiritual goodness is always seen as a reflection of the loving impact of the nature of God.
  - You are filled with knowledge. It is a church that knows what it stands for even in the face of powerfully changing social standards. They know what is of Christ and are able to avoid deception.
  - You are able to counsel and instruct. What you know—you share. There is an ability to apply what is known to direct the path of others.
- Paul reasserts his ministry to the Gentiles as divinely coming from God.
  - Paul sees himself as a priest who brings the Gentiles to the throne of God as an offering.
  - The Gentiles have been set apart as an acceptable offering of praise and glory to the Lord.

**Scripture: Romans 15:17-21****Theme: Bragging of Jesus**

- Never boast in self. All that we take pride in is a result of what has been done through Christ.
  - Spiritual boasting on the Lord = Praise.
- We boast because of the joy of being used as an instrument by God.

- We are used so that through and by word and deed His will is done.
- Word/Deed—the inseparable necessity of validating faith and ministry.
- God will always provide the continuing power needed to bring about His will.
  - The Holy Spirit enables us to demonstrate the supernatural of living in Christ. We are to live beyond and in freedom from the natural control of this world.
  - Power—the undeniable that points to God as the author of power and authority.
- Verse 21: The theme of Paul’s ministry as an apostle.
  - It is the definition of the gift of apostleship.
  - Each is to do what you are to do.

**Scripture: Romans 15:22-29**

**Theme: Hope to See You**

- Paul had been hindered by the needs of the Gentile mission in the east which now had reached a point of coverage.
- He wanted to use Rome as his base for western work.
  - They were to be a support spiritually, physically, and practically.
  - He genuinely wanted to personally experience the church at Rome before going west.
- Why Spain?
  - “Spain was experiencing a kind of blaze of genius.”
  - “Spain was a commercial and tourist center of much importance. There were many Jewish synagogues in Spain, and Paul’s missionary strategy began in synagogues.”
  - A believer without a strategy will have limited influence at best.
  - Much of our strategy is related to our giftedness.
- Verse 27: When shared with—we are to share
  - Never withhold from a need—remember we are always indebted to the Lord. Sharing is not an option.
  - 1 John 3:17-18

**Scripture: Romans 15:30-33****Theme: Pray for Me**

- Real danger waited for Paul in Jerusalem.
- Pray for:
  - Deliverance from the plans and actions of the disobedient.
  - That the church will accept the validity of his ministry and understand his intent.
  - That he may come to Rome and be refreshed by their faith.
- Consider how these are to be prayed for those serving the Lord today.