

## Romans 15

### Verses 1-3:

--Paul concludes his exhortations to strong and weak believers with the example of Christ Jesus. This being a capstone to all that he has taught about the Christian life from **12:1** on.

--To the strong **(1)** and weak **(2)** Paul is instructing them to deal with people as they *are* and not simply as they *should be*. \*We need more Great-Hearts in our families, workplaces, and churches!\*

--Paul used Christ's example for his own conduct.

**\*1 Corinthians 10:32-11:1: Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offence, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.\***

--Now, it is possible to seek to do this but please people the wrong way. So how do we see Christ doing this?

--**(3)** We see Paul quoting from **Ps. 69** which is one of the most quoted psalms in the NT. It is also clearly a Messianic psalm.

--Christ dealt with reproaches on our behalf all while doing His Father's will.

\*Morgan (The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans): *"Instead of pleasing Himself, He devoted Himself to please His neighbors. This He did however, by pleasing God, and setting Himself to bring men to that same level of life. He did not please His neighbors by accommodating His conduct to false ideals of life, but by setting Himself, in spite of opposition and misunderstanding, to bring them to the true ideal."*\*

--Praise the Lord, He went much further than we ever will! We will face the reproaches of *men* but Christ faced the wrath of *God*.

--If we are not doing this, then what is left? Only to please ourselves.

**\*Galatians 1:10: For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.\***

--There was once a life lived, a life of awful and beautiful selflessness, so loving and other's centered that it can be seen truly, seen in clarity, only as divine. How did this Son of Man so live this holy and incomparable life? In communion with His Father, in prayer in the early morning and late evening, in surrender in the daily interruptions and tasks of life, and in His own words:

***And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him (John 8:29).***

--So this Jesus' life becomes our example and His very Spirit has become our law of life.

**Verse 4:**

--Here Paul reminds these believers that it is only as we patiently endure in the Word of God that we will find God's encouragement. It is a living message—a living Word!

--Who is the teacher here for *our learning*? The Holy Spirit who inspired the Word. Holy men of God wrote the message for their own day but God inspired the message for the family of God for all of eternity! \*We see David in the history and Christ in the mystery!\*

**Verses 5-6:**

--Paul desires that the strong and weak believers of Rome will find unity in following Christ's example. That the glory of God will be what we are unified in. \*All tuned to Him—not one another.\*

**Verse 7:**

--Here Paul repeats his heart and ties his instruction back to **14:1**.

--Received in the body of Christ as His sons and daughters. Received by one another because we are received of Him. \*Denominations are fine as modes of clarity but not as exclusive\*

**Verses 8-12:**

--Here Paul is making the point that Jesus Christ was the servant of God toward Jews and Gentiles just as the OT prophesied.

--He confirmed the promises toward Israel (**Ps. 148:6; Isa. 54:9-10; Jer. 31:35-37**) and extended mercy to the Gentiles who didn't have the law of God to rest on as the Jews did.

--To prove this Paul quotes Scripture from the law, the prophets, and the psalms to prove his point. There is progression in his quotes as the Gentiles: hear, join, independently praise, and then hope in the Messiah.

**Verse 13:**

--There is one God of hope—one source of all hope, in all the world.

--He gives His hope in abounding measure through the Holy Spirit.

--This hope abounds in us, overflowing with joy and peace as we believe—as simple children—the Word of God.

**Verses 14-16:**

--Here Paul has concluded his instructional aspect of the epistle and is now going to finish with a few personal notes that the Holy Spirit has also given us for our learning.

--**(14)** Paul does not want these Roman believers to misunderstand his present effort in writing this epistle. He knows that there are many able and mature believers in this fellowship. He admits that is not flattery.

--(15-16) Paul says the reason that he writes so boldly to them is because it was his duty before God to address the central things of the gospel—specifically to the Gentile church.

--Paul was given to the Gentiles in a similar way that Moses was given to Israel—to lead them and guide them in a unique dispensation of God’s work.

--Notice that the language of **16** is full of worship! Paul, as a ministering priest, is serving in the gospel of God, and offering up the fruit of the Gentile believers as an offering back to God.

#### **Verses 17-21:**

--Here Paul gives us a little insight into how he viewed the ministry God had given him.

--First, he glories in Christ Jesus and only in those things that Christ has accomplished through him *in word or deed*. Paul sees Jesus Christ as the true Worker in all his words or acts that were of any worth. He was simply the instrument and therefore Christ gets all the glory.

--There is no boasting in himself or comparing of himself with other men. How opposite of so many today who boast directly or indirectly with their “secret” formulas of ministry. Paul speaks of what *Christ* has accomplished through him by the *Holy Spirit* and not a secret ministry sauce.

--Second, Paul felt his personal call from God was to be a committed pioneer and frontline soldier. He wanted to cross boundaries to where the gospel had not gone. This was part of the very will of God as seen in Scripture.

--Where he had preached the gospel—all over the Mediterranean—Paul saw himself as one laying the foundation and he allowed others to build upon it. He was not possessive or micromanaging after the fact. \*One man plants and another waters.\*

#### **Verses 22-24:**

--It was because of this ministry that Paul had not yet been able to make it to Rome. Yet now his plan was to travel to Spain but stop at Rome along the way.

--Paul always wanted to strengthen disciples and make new ones along the way. Also, he wanted to get his fill of their enjoyable company and fellowship. I think it is understated how much Paul truly loved and enjoyed and treasured edifying Christian fellowship—particularly that between Jew and Gentile!

#### **Verses 25-29:**

--Paul tells them of the task he is on. He was bringing an offering from the Gentile churches to the poor saints in Jerusalem. It was an offering of gift and gratitude in the Lord. \*This had never happened in Israel’s history! That Gentiles would send such a gift back to the people of Israel in the name of their own God!\*

--Paul saw this fruit as a sealing of the reality of their confession.

--We know the story and things didn't quite happen as Paul may have imagined. He arrives in Rome years later as a prisoner. \*Hiding something in our hearts + Plans in Christ may change but our purposes in Christ do not!\*

--**(29)** Paul was sure of one thing though—that when he did arrive it would be *in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ!*

--This is why Paul always made Christ central! Men have been following, studying, reading, learning, living, and dying for Jesus Christ for 2000 years and His fullness and blessings are still not exhausted.

--This is the *news* that people need today! The *good news* of the gospel of Christ! His blessings fill every nook and cranny of our lives: our hearts, our minds, our bodies, our marriages, our homes, our churches, our pasts and presents and futures—and they bring *fullness*.

--Not something half-hearted and dripping with a few stingy drops. But torrents of living water from our innermost being. So many today are not full. They are so empty!

### **Verses 30-33:**

--What a beautiful example Paul sets in his desire for prayer. Every servant of God needs prayer. Paul asks for prayer from every Church save the Galatians.

--Prayer matters. God has instituted prayer as a law in the universe as much as gravity is a law in the universe. But it is in fact the greatest law in existence.

--Thank you for praying for me. Please be praying for me and the other pastors at CCPhilly!

--Peace is more than the absence of war. Peace is also more than tranquility of heart. Peace is the presence of God. No God. No peace.

\*Saphir (The Hidden Life): *"The peace of the Christian is perfect, because he possesses a perfect Christ."*\*