

ROMANS 15

Paul concludes his admonition for love and fellowship to remain between all brethren Jew and Gentile, whether they be strong or weak in conscientious scruples. He then speaks of his ministry and aim in preaching the gospel, and reveals his future plans of travel as he begins the conclusion to his epistle.

I) Receiving One Another to the Glory of God (15:1-13)

- A) The strong ought to bear with the scruples [opinions, personal convictions] of the weak
 - 1) “Bear” (Gk. *bastazo*) – to bear, carry; help the weak by bearing their burden (Gal. 6:2)
 - 2) Not seek to please ourselves (1 Cor. 10:33)
 - 3) Seek to please neighbor for his good (Phil. 2:3-4; Rom. 13:10), leading to edification (building up in Christ)
 - a) Christ did not please Himself (Psa. 69:9 – bore our sins)
 - i) Things written before (OT) were written for our learning (1 Cor. 10:11), that through patience and comfort of the scriptures we might have hope (2 Tim. 3:15-16)
 - 4) May the God of patience and comfort [who provides such through the scriptures] grant that [the strong and weak] be like-minded toward one another (unity, harmony – Phil. 1:27; 2:2, 5; 1 Cor. 1:10)
 - a) With one mind and one mouth glorify God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
- B) Receive one another (strong and weak; Jew and Gentile), just as Christ received each one to the glory of God – healing of all unnecessary divisions (v. 7; cf. Philemon 12)
 - 1) Jesus has become a servant [minister] to the circumcision [Jews] to confirm the promises made to the fathers
 - 2) And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy
 - 3) Jew and Gentile coming together confirmed by Scripture
 - a) 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43
 - b) Psalm 117:1; Isaiah 11:10
 - c) Prophecies concerning the Gentiles quoted from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms
 - 4) By the God of hope they are to be filled with all joy and peace in believing, that they may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit – what delightful blessings and hope for all who are united together with Christ in God!
 - a) What a wonderful reversal of the problem of sin that plagued both Jew and Gentile with separation from God and division among men (ch. 1-3)

Ignoring the chapter break, Paul continues admonishing the strong to bear with the conscientious scruples of the weak according to the principle of seeking to please our neighbor for his good. Christ did not please Himself in that He unselfishly bore our sins on the cross.

Unity and like-mindedness are the goals of receiving one another (Jew and Gentile). There need be no division in Christ, who became a servant to the Jews to confirm the promises made to the fathers and made it possible for the Gentiles to glory God for His mercy. This coming together is confirmed by the quoted prophetic scriptures as God’s purpose in Christ. These things written aforetime were written to give hope from the God of hope who saves all who believe.

II) Paul’s Apostolic Ministry and Aim in Preaching the Gospel (15:14-21)

- A) Paul is confident [persuaded] about them

- 1) They are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to admonish one another
- B) He had written more boldly on some points in order to remind them [of truths they knew]
 - 1) Had done so because he was a minister of Christ to the Gentiles, that the “offering” of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit
 - a) Paul’s ministry was to bring men to Christ that they might be offered up as living sacrifices to the service of God (cf. 12:1)
- C) Paul had reason to glory, but only in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God
 - 1) Would not speak of anything that Christ had not accomplished in him in word or deed, in mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God (2 Cor. 12:12), to make the Gentiles obedient (Acts 26:17-18)
 - 2) Fully preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum (north of Macedonia)
 - 3) Made it his aim to preach where Christ was not named lest he build on another man’s foundation (Isa. 52:15; 1 Cor. 3:6-10; cf. 2 Cor. 10:13-18)

Paul now begins the final section of his epistle. He expresses his confidence in them and explains his bold writing as one who is a minister to the Gentiles to remind them of the truth. Paul’s work gave him reason to glory in Christ in what he accomplished for his Gentile ministry as he preached in the areas where Christ had not been named (from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum).

III) Paul’s Future Plans of Travel (15:22-33)

- A) Had a great desire to come to them at Rome
 - 1) Had previously been hindered by his busy working, but now had no more plans in areas he has worked
 - 2) Would come to them at Rome whenever he journeyed to Spain, and was hoping to be helped by them [support, assistance]
- B) Now going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints (Gal. 2:10; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8-9; Acts 24:17)
 - 1) Brethren from Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8-9)
 - 2) Since the Gentile brethren are debtors, having been partakers of their spiritual things, it is their pleasure and duty to minister to them in material things (2 Cor. 8:1-5)
 - 3) After this is done, he will come to them on the way to Spain in the fullness of the blessings of the gospel
- C) Paul begs them to strive together [be intense] with him in their prayers to God for him, for it seems he has concerns about what awaits him as he completes his journey
 - 1) That he may be delivered from unbelievers in Judea (Acts 20:22-24; 21:10-14; 23:10-35)
 - 2) And that his service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints (Acts 21:17)
 - 3) So that he may come to them with joy and be refreshed together with them
- D) Benediction that the God of peace be with them; “amen” = let it be true
 - 1) Peace with God and brethren is provided by God in Christ through the gospel

Having completed his work in the area of the world from Jerusalem to Illyricum, Paul’s desire is to come to the brethren at Rome, be refreshed, and assisted by them on his way to Spain. Before that can happen, though, he must go to Jerusalem to carry the benevolence from brethren in Macedonia and Achaia to the poor among the saints there. Paul makes sure to mention how this is an extension of fellowship from the Gentile saints to the Jewish saints. He greatly desires their prayers for a successful and safe journey.