

July 28, 2019 19057-A #43

Romans 15:1-13

Unity and Glory

**I. The hardest thing for the first Christians was to realize that Messiah had changed the approach to God from Jewish to Christian. Acts 10:9-16**

- A. The dietary laws were removed (Mk.7:19)
- B. The barrier between Jew and Gentile was removed.
- C. The Hope was spreading! The gospel was moving into decidedly non-Jewish territory. The wine was breaking the old wineskin and spreading to the Gentiles...

**II. It was excruciating for Jewish background Christians to let go of their traditions.**

- A. They had a hard time consistently thinking within the gospel. **Gal.2:14**
- B. They struggled with a weakness in their faith in Christ: not trusting Him to save them without the added works of Law.

**III. It threatened to split the church over things that didn't matter (Adiaphora). Rom.14-15. Adiaphora still presents a divisive problem today...**

**A. Four mistakes religious people still make.**

- 1. Mistaking the Old Covenant law for New Covenant obedience. Rom. 14-15
  - a) Dangerous heresy: Galatians. Adding Torah works to grace.
  - b) Ignorant sincerity: religious ideas not informed by the gospel.
    - (1) This is what was happening in Roman church
- 2. Mistaking religious tradition for divine commandment. **Matt. 15:1-9** (Mk.7)
  - a) Keeping a canonized tradition is not the same as really knowing the Lord in humility.
  - b) *There are whole branches of Christianity that raise church tradition to the level of scripture. The reformation spoke directly to that issue.*
- 3. Mistaking personal conviction for universal instruction. **Rom.14:22**
  - a) Rookie mistake. I think that's wrong for me, so it must be wrong for you, too.
  - b) Rom.14:22 says to keep your own convictions between you and the Lord. This means in the privacy of your home or life.
- 4. Mistaking micro-ethics for spiritual maturity. **Matt 23:23-24**
  - a) Micro-ethics: high emphasis on tiny things.

**IV. How does the Spirit transform us together? (12:1-2) Romans 15:1-13.**

**A. He Strengthens us: So that we will be patient with each other. 1-2**

- 1. *Are you strong? The purpose of your strength is to be patient...*
- 2. Strength = trusting the Father to love and save us through Christ apart from our works. *Regardless of our spiritual skill package.*
- 3. With Christ as our example. Ps. 69:9
  - a) He took the undeserved reproach without doubting God's love for him.
  - b) *Those who don't like God will not like you..*

**B. He Nourishes us: So that we will grow in Christ: 4**

- 1. Scripture and Spirit overlap and give us...
  - a) Instruction: didaskalian, didasko = teach, instruct, bring knowledge.
  - b) Endurance: hupomene = bear up under, persevere
  - c) Encouragement: parakaleo = to be along side to bring strength
  - d) Hope: elpida = confident expectation of future blessing.
- 2. Learning to think like Jesus: Spiritual growth happens as we: (2 Tim.3:14-17)
  - a) We must take in the Scripture; through the gospel; by the Spirit

**C. He Centers us: So that we will harmonize. 5-6**

- 1. Harmony centered on Jesus. "according to Jesus Christ"
  - a) This is what produces harmony, durable unity without uniformity, One Voice.
- 2. *With One Voice—like when we sing together*
- 3. The Gospel is the message of who Jesus is and what He has done.

**D. He Welcomes us: So that we will welcome one another. 7-13**

1. Welcome: proslambano, receive into friendship, welcome into your life, etc.
2. He welcomes the Jews to reveal His faithfulness. (truthful, Alethia)
  - a) He keeps his promises—based on His promise to Abraham. (Rom.4)
  - b) *I'm doing this for you because I promised your father*
3. He welcomes the Gentiles to reveal His mercy—even to Gentiles!
  - a) The Law, Prophets, and Writings all attest.
    - (1) 2 Sam.22:50/Ps.18:49; Deut.32:43; Ps.117:1; Isa.11:10
  - b) God has always intended to receive Gentiles into His kingdom.
  - c) Any human being who wants to come can come into this Grace!!
4. *If this were all we knew, it would be wonderful news. God's promises are secure and His mercy is universal.*

**V. Spiritual Transformation changes our perspective, from our old religion to God's Glory. Note Three Things that bring Glory to God...**

**A. It glorifies God when we live in freedom and unity. 15:7**

1. Glorifying God = letting people see that God is Good and Gracious and revealed only in Christ, the gospel. Jn.14:6
2. Seeing God's message as the Gospel (believing)
3. Seeing God's promises as secure.
4. Seeing God's mercy as central (in Christ)
5. Seeing ourselves as unified, God's New Covenant People. Love.

**B. It glorifies God when we bring the real gospel to the really lost. 9-12**

1. Mission!! Taking the freeing and unifying message of the gospel to people who haven't heard it.
2. Welcoming into Christ people that are very different from us.
3. Go Loves Gentiles and is reaching them through us (like with Peter)

**C. It glorifies God when we live in confident hope. 15:13. Paul's pastoral prayer.**

1. Joy and Peace:
  - a) Joy and Peace are what we long for at the deepest level of our lives. This is God's inheritance because the Trinitarian reality is permeated with Joy and Peace and Hope forever.
  - b) This comes from believing, trusting, understanding what He has promised, based on His mercy/grace.
2. Believing (in Christ as Lord) is Spirit-inspired knowledge of the gospel coupled with trust resulting in action.
  - a) The Spirit's main job is to enhance our understanding of who Jesus is and what he has done for us.
  - b) Joy and Peace are lacking when "believing" is weakened.
    - (1) We don't know what to believe about the gospel.
    - (2) We don't believe what we know about the gospel.
    - (3) We don't let the Spirit deepen our confidence in God's grace through the gospel.
3. Abound: Perisseuo = more than enough.
  - a) *Like little kids playing in a swimming pool. They are abounding in the cool water. Experiencing the abundance of water. So it is with hope in Christ!*
4. Hope: like the first day of a long vacation...that feeling for all of eternity.

**VI. The Hope is certain because Jesus Christ died for us and secured for us absolute, eternal, tangible forgiveness and reconciliation with God.**