

“Through his death and resurrection, Gentiles who had not known the righteous rule of the Lord can now be brought into submission to him, glorifying him for his mercy to them.” ~ Doug Moo

- **Deuteronomy 32:43** [Greek OT]
 - In this song, Moses “calls upon the nations to rejoice with Israel that God has delivered them.”
- **Psalm 117:1**
 - Again the Gentiles [*all nations... all peoples*] are asked to praise God, specifically for his mercy and truth (per the OT Greek) [*both terms emphasized in Rom. 15:8-9*].
- **Isaiah 11:10** [Greek OT]
 - In this passage, Isaiah speaks of the messianic “root of Jesse” who “arises” (alludes to Jesus’ resurrection) to rule nations – even as he delivers the remnant of his people.
 - In the Messiah – the Gentiles will hope.
- “Hope” looks back to 15:4 what the Scriptures bring – and it looks forward to the prayer- where the God of Hope is asked to cause them to abound in hope.
- d) **Concluding Prayer-wish: (15:13)**
 - “Peace and joy refer to the internal harmony and joyous spirit that come to the church through the Holy Spirit in 14:17.” (Osborne, 384)
 - This harmony comes “as you trust him” – “in believing” – only through faith is this possible.

Schedule:

- Two final weeks for Romans (7/13 and 7/20).

Previous Handouts

- Online: www.theheightschurchmn.org/adult-sunday-school

Credits:

Main sources for outline and shared quotes are:

- *Epistle to The Romans (NICNT)* by Douglas Moo [Eerdmans, 1996]
- *Romans (IVPNTC)* by Grant Osborne [IVP, 2004]
- *Teaching Romans, Volume Two: Unlocking Romans 9-16 for the Bible Teacher* by Christopher Ash [Christian Focus, 2009]

V. Transforming Power of Gospel: Christian Conduct (12:1-15:13)

A. Exhortation to Live the Christian Life (12:1-13:14)

B. Love and Unity in the Community (14:1-15:13)

1. Do Not Condemn One Another – 14:1-12

2. Do Not Cause Your Brother to Stumble – 14:13-23

- a) **Exhortation to the Strong in Faith: Do Not Cause the Weak to Stumble (14:13-16)**
- b) **Theological Rationale for the Exhortation: The Kingdom of God is More than Food and Drink (14:17-18)**
 - The reason Paul can be so pointed on his call to accept and to not see these matters of dispute as reasons to judge or despise others, is his understanding of their relative importance.
 - They are trivial compared to what God’s Kingdom is all about.
 - **Righteousness** – “right behavior within the community of believers”.
 - **Peace** – lack of strife/dissension and a harmony and support of one another.
 - **Joy** – is the result of a community where each accepts the other and withholds judgment.

“...the kingdom of God is about joy. It does not consist of a company of sourpusses. We should be happy people... Why should we be glum and fuss over who eats meat and drinks wine?” ~ R.C. Sproul

- **Holy Spirit** – it is only through the Holy Spirit and His work in the Church that brings this (see also Rom. 15:5-6, 13).

“[Legalism] binds the freedom grace gives. Legalism makes minor matters the test of true spirituality. We have all encountered Christians who say the essence of spirituality is to refrain from dancing and lipstick and going to movies. The creed becomes ‘touch not, taste not, handle not.’ People substitute minor matters for the fruit of the Spirit and use adherence to those minor matters as the test of righteousness.” ~ R.C. Sproul

- *See also Colossians 2:16-23.*
- Pursuing peace and edification (v. 19), living out right behavior – is **serving Christ** (v. 18).
- This is doing what is acceptable or pleasing to God – what Paul calls all Christians to do in Rom. 12:1-2.

c) Further Exhortation to the Strong in Faith: Do Not Cause the Weak to Stumble (14:19-23)

- Paul echoes the commands he gave earlier (in a chiasm).
- Pursue peace and edification (v. 19); do not destroy the work of God (v. 20, similar to v. 15).
- V. 21 sums up Paul's call – to abstain from all practices which would cause others to stumble.
- V. 22 “the faith you have” goes back to the idea of being strong or weak in faith (pertaining to their understanding of the implications of their faith in Christ)
- They shouldn't be proud of having “strong faith” in front of others – they should keep that between them and God.
- Again, there is a blessing in understanding that we have liberty from the law (22b), but there is real harm for those whose conscience prevents them from partaking.
- This is based on a general principle: “Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” (23b).

3. Bear with the Failings of the Weak – 15:1-6

a) Exhortation to the Strong: Do Not Please Yourself but Help Your Neighbor for Their Good (15:1-2)

- “bear with” – same word as in Gal. 6:2 – it is how we “fulfill the law of Christ.”
- “failings” is literally “weaknesses” [weakness, frailty, sickness] / “weak” is literally those “without strength”

“[The strong] are sympathetically to ‘enter into’ [the weak’s] attitudes, refrain from criticizing and judging them, and do what love would require toward them” ~ Doug Moo

- “neighbor” points us back to Lev. 19:18 and 13:9 – our obligation to love our neighbor.
- “build him up” is opposite of “destroy” (14:15, 20)

b) Reasons for the Exhortation: Christ's example & the Scripture's encouragement (15:3-4)

- (1) Christ's Example (15:3)
 - Ps. 69:9 – Paul sees Jesus prophetically in David's Psalm
- (2) Scripture's Encouragement (15:4)
 - Scripture brings encouragement and stimulates endurance.

c) Concluding Prayer-wish: May God Grant Harmony Leading to Unity and God's Glory (15:5-6)

- Paul's prayer here is an “indirect means of exhortation”
- “God of endurance and encouragement” looks back at v. 4 – where God's Word brings encouragement and endurance.
- Call for unity
 - Literally “think the same [thing] among yourselves”— pointing back to 12:3.
 - In accord with Christ Jesus – see also Phil. 2:3-11
- Results in Unified Praise of God

“The glory of God is the supreme goal, and the Romans were endangering this purpose through their disunity. Moreover, if the church is truly praising and glorifying God, dissension will not occur.” ~ Osborne

4. Accept One Another - 15:7-13

a) Exhortation to All: Welcome One Another (15:7a)

- “Therefore” – Connecting the call to welcome others, is our desire that God be glorified.
- “Welcome” again means more than just “tolerate” – it is to welcome into your home, an intimate, familial reception.

b) Reasons for the Exhortation: Christ Has Welcomed All of You, and Christ Confirms God's Covenant Promises to Both Jews and Gentiles (15:7b-9a)

- (1) Christ Welcomed them first (15:7b)
- (2) Christ's Ongoing Work Is Especially Devoted to their Unity (15:7b)
 - Servant/Minister of the Jews to show God's faithfulness – “God keeps his covenant promises.”
 - In 2 specific ways:
 - (a) To confirm (or guarantee) the promises to the patriarchs.
 - (b) So that the Gentiles will glorify God for His mercy.

“All over the world there will be those who ‘glorify God for his mercy’ brought to them in Jesus Christ... and this proves that through Jesus Christ, God is doing what he had always said he would do.” ~ Christopher Ash

c) OT Proofs: God has All Along Intended Mercy for the Gentiles Who Shall Praise and Hope in Him (15:9b-12)

- **Psalm 18:49** [2 Sam. 22:50]
 - In this psalm, David praises God after defeating his enemies. – From among them, he praises God.
 - David is a type of Christ here as “head of the nations”.