**Romans Chapter 15**

# Now, we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.

* 1. In the context of his previous statements, Paul is speaking of being strong in the faith regarding our freedom in Christ. Therefore, we should help those weak in the faith and who do not understand their freedom. This means teaching them to avoid legalism and bad teachings. It also means to encourage them in Christ and to trust Him with our lives.

# Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

* 1. The other-centeredness of love is evident here.
     1. John 3:16, "God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten son…"
     2. John 15:13, "greater love has no man than this but he laid his life down for his friend."
  2. It deals with seeking what's best for someone else even at the expense of our own freedom.
     1. Lev. 19:18, "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD."
     2. Phil. 2:4, "do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."
     3. 1 Cor. 10:23–30, "All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor. 25 Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience' sake; 26 for the earth is the Lord's, and all it contains. 27 If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience' sake. 28 But if anyone says to you, "This is meat sacrificed to idols," do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience' sake; 29 I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?"

# For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."

* 1. In this verse, Paul references Psalm 69, a messianic psalm.
     1. Psalm 69:9, "For zeal for Your house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me."
  2. Jesus' selflessness is our supreme example of pleasing others. He pleased God the Father by going to the cross.
     1. Luke 22:42, "saying, 'Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.'"
     2. John 4:34, "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.'"
     3. John 6:38, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."
     4. 2 Cor. 8:9, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake, He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."
  3. Paul is referring to the sacrifice of Christ. He is the one who received our reproaches. In other words, the insults against God by various people fell upon Christ.
     1. Matt. 27:41–43, "In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him and saying, 42 'He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. 43 'HE TRUSTS IN GOD; LET GOD RESCUE Him now, IF HE DELIGHTS IN HIM; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.' "
     2. Luke 23:35, "And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One.'"

# For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

* 1. This statement reveals one of the purposes of Scripture: our instruction that leads to hope.
  2. In that purpose, we have perseverance and encouragement.
     1. Rom. 4:23–24, "Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,"
  3. We go through so many difficult things in life. The world is against the Lord Jesus and, therefore, us. We face difficulties, loss of loved ones, financial difficulties, health problems, etc. But when we look at the people of the Old Testament and how they endured such things as slavery, persecution, and doubt, God was faithful to them through it all. He never abandoned his people, even when they abandoned Him.

# Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

* 1. Grant is the aorist, active, optative. This is an uncommon Greek form that occurs 21 times in the NT.
     1. Aorist tense deals with the past. Active voice means performing the action. Optative mood means showing potentiality, expressing a wish or desire of the speaker.
     2. Paul is expressing the idea that God wishes us to be of the same mind according to Jesus.

# so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* 1. With one accord
     1. This means all together. We should all have the same mind of service, other-centeredness, love, intention, etc.
     2. We obtain unity with proper instruction out of God's word. This way, our false ideas are corrected, and our intentions are purified.
        1. Our intellect is just as important as our hearts.
        2. With our intellect, we understand truth.
        3. With our hearts, we express the love of Christ.
  2. Glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
     1. You glorify God when you put others first. You can do this in your daily lives with whomever you come in contact.
     2. Isaiah 43:7, "Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."
     3. Ephesians 2:10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

# Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

* 1. Excepting one another can be difficult because we have our prejudices. But we are called not to be judgmental. We are called to care for others and accept them within Christ's fold. After all, Christ has received us and them to the glory of God. So, our model is Christ Himself. We must emulate Christ because He is the standard of righteousness and holiness.
     1. Christ is the ultimate standard of law-keeping, morality, humility, service, etc., beyond which nothing exists because Christ is God and man.

# For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers,

* 1. A servant to the circumcision
     1. The circumcision refers to the Jews.
     2. This is a remarkable statement. Christ is a servant to them - even though he is the king, God in the flesh. Furthermore, He was a servant to them, knowing they would reject Him and kill Him.
  2. The fathers to look to biblically are those in the Old Testament.

# and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles, And I will sing to Your name."

* 1. Jesus is the servant also to the Gentiles.
  2. From here, Paul begins several quotes from the Old Testament to demonstrate that God's plan had included the Gentiles all along.
     1. 2 Sam. 22:50, "Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the nations, And I will sing praises to Your name."
     2. Gen. 12:3, "And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."
     3. Gal. 3:8, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you."

# Again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people."

* 1. Deut. 32:43, "Rejoice, O nations, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And will render vengeance on His adversaries, And will atone for His land and His people."

# And again, "Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, And let all the peoples praise Him."

* 1. Psalm 117:1, "Praise the LORD, all nations; Laud Him, all peoples!"

# Again, Isaiah says, "There shall come the root of Jesse, And He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, In Him shall the Gentiles hope."

* 1. Isaiah 11:10, "Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious."

# Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

* 1. This verse serves as a concluding thought, a kind of summary.
  2. Our God is the God of hope.
  3. Our God is the one who fills us with joy and peace.
  4. Our God is the one who causes us to hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.
  5. These truths mean that we live by faith. We are to keep our eyes upon Jesus at all times, whether through sickness, health, poverty, or whatever difficulty might come upon us. In so doing, we choose to believe. We choose to continue to trust in Christ even beyond our ability to understand.

# And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

* 1. Clearly, from the text, we see that Paul is persuaded that the people he's addressing are full of goodness, filled with knowledge, and are able to admonish.
  2. The Romans were good people, at least the ones that he's addressing here.
  3. … There's a 'but'…

# But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,

* 1. Notice that the best way to communicate the truth of Paul's words is not through oral tradition but the written word.
  2. Paul is often seen as a bold writer, telling people things that were difficult to understand. He would rebuke people as well as comfort them.

# to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

* 1. ministering as a priest
     1. The phrase "ministering as a priest" is a single Greek word, ἱερουργέω *hierourgéō. It means, "*To perform or be employed in a sacred office." (Zodhiates, Spiros. 2000. In *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.)
  2. A priest stands between God and man and ministers from man to God. Typically, a priest would offer a sacrifice on behalf of people that was aimed at pleasing God. So, what kind of priesthood is Paul talking about?
  3. Both the Jews and Gentiles had priests who would minister on behalf of their people to their respective deities. Paul is doing the same thing in that he is a priest, ministering on behalf of the true followers of Christ with respect to the true God.
  4. Furthermore, Paul told people to be living sacrifices. "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Rom. 12:1). So we can say that Paul was offering up people to be holy sacrifices to God through his work of ministry and the preaching of the gospel.

# Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.

* 1. Things pertaining to God
     1. It appears that Paul is continuing to reference aspects from the Levitical priesthood regarding ministering as a priest (verse 16), being a living and holy sacrifice (Romans 12:1), along with the offering of the Gentiles (verse 16). So, the things pertaining to God are probably in reference to those Old Testament aspects.

# For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,

* 1. Paul knows his place before God. He knows he is saved by grace (Acts 9:15ff) and that the Lord Jesus Christ was exceedingly merciful to him. So, he only wants to speak of those things that come from God.
  2. Paul desires to bring glory to God in all things and not take credit for that which God is doing through him.
  3. Christ's works through him resulted in the Gentiles becoming Christians.

# in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

* 1. Power of signs and wonders
     1. 2 Cor. 12:12, "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles."
  2. In the power of the Spirit
     1. the Holy Spirit came upon Christ at his baptism and work through Him.
     2. Perhaps this is why blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is unforgivable (Matt. 12:22-32).
     3. Paul is attesting to the work of this third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit who has worked signs and wonders.
     4. Some of the miracles of Paul
        1. The prophecy of Elymas the magician being blinded for a season (Acts 13:9-11)
        2. Healing the lame man (Acts 14:8-10)
        3. Casting out the spirit of divination from a girl (Acts 16:16–18)
        4. Handkerchiefs brought from his body to others would heal the sick  and wicked spirits would leave (Acts 19:11-12)
        5. Raising up Eutychus, who fell from the wall and died (Acts 20:9-10)
        6. Poisoness snake bite rendered harmless (Acts 28:3–6)
        7. Healed Publius' father on Malta (Acts 28:8)
        8. Heald many others on Malta  (Acts 28:9)
        9. Various, non-discript miracles (2 Cor. 12:12)

# And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation;

* 1. This help supports the idea of different ministries and callings from different people.
  2. The implication here is that there were others going out preaching Christ taught the Mediterranean area.
  3. 2 Cor. 10:14–16, "For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ; 15 not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you, 16 so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another."

# but as it is written, "They who had no news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand."

* 1. This is a reference to Isaiah 52:15, "Thus He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand."

# For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;

* 1. Paul is often very busy in the Mediterranean area and so his plans are often altered. As can be seen in verses 20-21, Paul went to those areas where Christ had not yet been preached. This very well may have been to smaller cities.

# but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you

* 1. Paul viewed his evangelistic work in the Northeastern Mediterranean, to have been completed.

# whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—

* 1. "Clement, an elder in the church in Rome, writing about AD 96 (only three decades after the death of Paul), observed that Paul eventually traveled "to the furthest limits of the west"—which to a Roman would surely mean Spain (1 Clement 5). The Muratorian Canon (lines 34–39) asserts explicitly that Paul went to Spain from Rome. The implication is that, after spending two years in prison in Judea and two years under house arrest in Rome (Acts 21–28), Paul was eventually released and then continued his missionary work in the western end of the Mediterranean, as he had originally planned. Later, Paul was rearrested and executed by the Romans around AD 65." (Mohrlang, Roger, Gerald L. Borchert. 2007. *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 14: Romans and Galatians*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.)

# but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

# For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

* 1. It appears that the Gentile churches had contributed to the poor believers in Jerusalem. So, the Gentile churches were helping the Jewish saints.
  2. This speaks against anti-Semitism that has so unfortunately reared its ugly head against the original covenant people of God.
  3. Macedonia is Μακεδονία Makedonía. It occurs 22 times in the New Testament. Macedonia lies north of Greece in the ancient times and had at one time its capital being Thessalonica.
  4. Achaia is Ἀχαΐα Achaı̈́a. It occurs 10 times in the New Testament. It was a Roman province in the southern part of modern-day Greece. Corinth was located in this area. "Paul visited the churches in Achaia (Acts 18:12, 27; 19:21; Rom. 15:26; 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:15; 2 Cor. 1:1; 9:2; 11:10; 1 Thess. 1:7." (Zodhiates, Spiros. 2000. In The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament, electronic ed. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.)

# Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.

* 1. The saints who are in the Gentile cities oh a debt to the people of Israel, in particular Jerusalem, through whom the Messiah came. The Gentiles were made partakers of the spiritual blessings that began in Jerusalem.

# Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

# I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

* 1. It appears that the blessing of Christ is the fullness of the gospel, the work of the Spirit through the people, etc.

# Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

* 1. Verse 30 begins the conclusion of the book of Romans. Paul's thought shifts away from doctrine and correction, into gentle admonition.
  2. He commends himself to their prayers. He does this frequently when he requests others to pray: Eph. 6:18–20; Col. 4:3; 2 Thess. 3:1; Heb. 13:18.

# that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;

* 1. The prayer is specifically dealing with rescue from the Jews who are rebellious against the Messiah and His people
  2. Acts 20:23, "except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me."
  3. Acts 21:31, "While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the Roman cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion."

# so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.

* 1. Paul hopes that, by the will of God, he can come to the Romans.
     1. Rom. 1:10, "always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you."

# Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

* 1. Paul uses this common blessing of the peace of God in many places: Rom. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 3:16; Heb. 13:20.