

EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #53

Romans 15:7-13

The problem of people getting along with one another is not new. The problem with believers getting along is not new. Let's face it, we are all sinful and we are all finite, and that means sometimes there will not be perfect harmony. When you take a group of finite, sinful people and put them under one roof called the church, there will be at times moments of friction. This was obviously happening in Rome.

BELIEVERS ARE TO BRING GLORY TO GOD BY TREATING OTHERS THE WAY JESUS CHRIST HAS TREATED US.

When we treat one another the way Christ treats us, we truly bring great glory to God. This basic idea comes from **verse 7**. The verb "accept" is an imperative, which means we have been commanded by God to accept to ourselves other people in the same manner that Christ accepted us.

It seems to me that one of the problems we have is that we forget about who we really were when Christ received us. In Romans 5 we see that when Christ received us, we were helpless (5:6a), ungodly (5:6b), sinner (5:8), and we were classified by God as enemies (5:10). This was our status. But when we turned to Jesus Christ, He joyfully, lovingly and forgivingly accepted us and we must do the same. We are certainly not above our Teacher (Matthew 10:24).

The pronoun "another" (ἄλληλους) means another of the same kind. We have the responsibility to minister to the same kind of people Jesus did, and in this text there are two groups of people to whom He ministered:

GROUP #1 – Jesus Christ ministered to the Jews. **15:8**

There is a critical theological fact that we must never forget and that is that Jesus Christ first came to minister to the Jews (Matt. 10:5-6; 15:24). Now the reason He came to minister to the Jews is not because of the fact that they were such a wonderful godly nation, but rather so that He might be a fulfillment of the revealed truth and promises of God.

Notice the text says that Jesus Christ became a "servant" to Israel because of the promises of God. That word "servant" (διακονος) is one that focuses on servant ministry. We get our English word "deacon" from this word. The Son of God came into this world to have a servant-type ministry to Israel.

Primarily Jewish Scriptural writers described the coming Messiah in two ways:

- 1) He would be a suffering Savior ("bruised, beaten and wounded"). Psalm 22; Isaiah 53.
- 2) He would be a reigning King. Psalm 2

Paul's point was this - the reason Jesus Christ came to the nation Israel was not because of her faithfulness, but because of God's faithfulness to His own Word.

Martin Luther said we do not glorify God so much by receiving strong, holy, wise and proud people, but we do glorify God when we receive sinners, those who are broken, those who are hurting, and those who are humble.

In the recent *Israel My Glory* magazine, there was an article written by Elwood McQuaid called "Christians Against Israel." In that article Dr. McQuaid said that there are a group of "Palestinian-Christian church leaders" who have denounced Israel, blaming Israel for a lack of love, hope and faith. Churches who have signed the document include Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican, and Baptist churches. The language coming from these churches is almost identical to the rhetoric of militant Islamists. Apparently these so-called religious leaders haven't carefully read the Bible (*Israel My Glory*, "Christians Against Israel," March/April 2010, pp. 10-12).

No one can honestly read the Bible without realizing that Israel is very special to God and no one can read the Gospels without realizing that Israel is very special to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ ministered to Israel and cared about Israel and we have the responsibility to care for her too, because as Paul says here, we glorify God when we treat Israel like Christ did.

GROUP #2 – Jesus Christ ministered to the Gentiles . 15:9-12

I want you to look at Paul's emphasis on the written Scriptures (v. 9, v. 10 - "again He says", v. 11 - "and again", v. 12 - "again Isaiah says." **Do not overlook this; Christlikeness comes through the written Scriptures, not through one's feelings** . In fact, sometimes Christlikeness demands going against your feelings.

The major reason, clearly stated here in verse 9, why Gentiles glorify God is not because they were so spiritual or because they were seeking to live such God-honoring lives, but because God was so merciful .

Paul goes to the O.T. and pulls out four key passages that refer to how merciful God was to the Gentiles.

There is an interesting Scriptural point that Frederic Godet makes - for the most part, the thing that will draw a Jew to Christ is the fulfillment of prophecy and the thing that will draw a Gentile to Christ is the mercy of God (*Commentary On Romans*, pp. 470-471).

In other words, when witnessing to a Jew, point out how Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of prophecy and when witnessing to a Gentile point out the grace and mercy of God.

Paul gives four main reasons why we are to glorify God and minister to each other:

Reason #1 - Because God had delivered us from our enemies . **15:9b**

Paul is quoting from Psalm 18:48-50, specifically verse 49. David was saying that he will praise God because of the fact that God has made him to rule over all people, both Jews and Gentiles, and delivered him from his enemies.

What Paul is saying is that God has delivered us out of the bondage of sin and that reality should make us praise Him and it should cause us to sing unto His name, and one way we do this is by caring for one another.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you should praise God everywhere you go because you have been delivered from sin.

Reason #2 - God will ultimately destroy our enemies . **15:10**

Paul quotes Moses (Deut. 32:43) in saying, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people.” Moses was encouraging the nations who loved God to join in with the praise song that Israel was singing because God was about to destroy His enemies. The implication is that the enemies of God’s people are the opposers and the enemies of God.

Our big three enemies are the world, our own flesh, and the Devil. Paul is saying, God is going to destroy those enemies one day and knowing that enables us to demonstrate the grace and mercy of God to others.

Reason #3 - God has given us His eternal love . **15:11**

Paul is quoting the shortest chapter in the Bible here, Psalm 117. It is a chapter comprised of two verses and the Psalmist is praising God because of His never-ending love .

Knowing that we are loved by God frees us to love others.

If we ask who is it who loves us to the extent that He would be willing to die for us, plus take away all our sins, there is only one name that will surface, the name of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ loves us forever and nothing can ever separate us from His love. It is this truth that should cause us to minister to others.

Reason #4 - God will deliver us to His Kingdom . **15:12**

Paul is quoting Isaiah in saying that Christ’s reign will be Jewish and it will include Gentiles.

Look at what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. Can’t we minister to each other? Do you want to see what Paul was after? Look at **verse 13**. He wanted a church in which God’s Spirit was powerfully evidenced in a demonstration of joy and peace. In order to have this environment, we need to purpose to treat others as Christ treated us.