

Rom 245 - **Our Source & Example of Unity - Rom 15:1-13**

This is our 4th & Final message on **Unity in the Church**

the 3 previous msgs on this subject - weren't enuf

The Holy Spirit wants to drive home
the Critical Importance of our **UNITY**

& more importantly - He wants to make it clear
Who our **SOURCE & EXAMPLE of UNITY** is

We're going to actually start
with yet another review of **Jn Ch 17**

But before we do - **LET'S PRAY**

We've referred to **Jn 17** many times during these msg's

Because when Jesus Christ knew -
He was only hours away from the Cross

He prayed this prayer - that's been called
"the greatest prayer in all of Scripture"
& "the Holy of Holies" of the Gospels

Because In this prayer, we have the privilege of listening
as Jesus prays to His Father,
just before giving His life for us

He begins by **praying for Himself**,
to prepare Himself - for what He will go thru

Then He prays **for His Disciples**,
to prepare them - for what they will go thru

& then He **prays for Us**,
to prepare us - for what we will go thru

& when He prays for us,
His clear & overwhelming burden - is for our **Unity**

In **3 Vs's** Jesus prays *for our unity* **4 times**

& when the omniscient Christ prays for the church

& He **knows** what we need most,
& He prays for it here;

John 17:20-23 - NLT (turn ?)

20 "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.

21 I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

22 "I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one.

23 I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

& So – **again** listening in on that prayer - **again** let me ask you

How important do you think

Unity in the church is to Jesus Christ ?

In Jesus' Prayer for our Unity

We see 3 great truths that we're going to take INTO our study of ROM 15 today

#1) The POWER for our unity – John 17:22

22 “I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one.

#2) The PURPOSE of our unity - John 17:21

21 I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

#3) The PERFECTION of our unity – John 17:23

23 I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

This is; 1) where the Power for our unity comes from
2) what the Purpose of our unity is for
3) what the Perfection of our unity looks like

Now let's turn to Rom 15 - & watch how this unfolds

We'll start in V.1 - but we'll see these 3 major truths starting in V.5 (*but don't read ahead*)

Paul starts in V.1 with the same definition he's used before of those **STRONG** & **WEAK** in faith

Rom 15:1 - ESV

1 We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Remember - **STRONG & WEAK**

Do Not have to do with the *faith of Salvation*

but with *Faith in LIBERTY* - in the *Non-Essential* issues

& **the obligation** is for those

who are *Strong in this faith of Liberty*

to “***bear with***” - which means **LIT** - **TO CARRY**,

to **BEAR THE BURDEN OF**

the “***short-comings***” of those who don’t have the same

Faith in Liberty

to **BEAR WITH** - is **NOT** just to “*put up with*” other believers

The idea is to **CARRY** they're short comings

Let's read **Vs's 1 & 2** together

Rom 15:1-2 - ESV

1 We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

Remember - the **CONTEXT** is **still** the **NON-ESSENTIALS**

& **V.2** says - Let us **TAKE CARE** of one another

to **build one** another **UP**

One of the clearest signs you can see

of the *Lordship* of Jesus Christ in a person's life

is when they genuinely set aside their own interest

and truly strive for the **OTHER** person's good

When **one Christian** sacrifices his own good (his SELF) in order to build up (*edify*) another

It's a **Pretty God Sign** that Jesus is actually LORD in that believers life

F.F. Bruce says:

*It is so easy for a Christian whose conscience is quite clear about some course of action to snap his fingers at his critics and say, "I will do as I please." & though He has every right to do so, that **is not** the way of Christ.*

& in order to **make sure** we understand exactly **HOW** we are to do this

in **V.3** - Paul uses **Christ** as our example to follow

Rom 15:3 - ESV

3 For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."

Jesus Christ **left His place** of Indescribable Glory & He "**CAME DOWN**" for us

in Jn 6:38 Jesus says - ESV

38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

& instead of the **Eternal Glory** & **Honor** that Jesus **rightfully & justly deserved**

Isa 53:3 says of Him - ESV

3 He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Jesus **set aside** His Eternal *Glory & Honor*

& He **willingly** became **despised** and **rejected** by men
even **taking OUR SIN** upon Himself

So that He could **accept YOU & I** *to Himself*

& now today, He calls us
to a **MINUTELY comparable** sacrifice

He calls us to *Sacrifice* our **SELF interest**
& to *Sacrifice* our **SELF focus**

in order to **accept other believers** to ourselves

Compared to *His Sacrifice*
it **doesn't** seem like **much** to ask - - *does it?*

Now - **In V.4** - **Because** Paul just quoted the O.T. in **V.3**

He pauses to write a **1 Vs GEM**
about the *Power of the Scriptures*

Rom 15:4 - ESV

4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

THIS is a **GREAT Vs.**

Your Bible is God's **Supernatural WORD** (*communication*) to you
It's His **Love letter** to you

The more you **MAKE USE** of it
The more you **RELY** on it
The more you **BELIEVE** it

The more **ENDURANCE** you will gain from it
The more **ENCOURAGEMENT** you will gain from it
The more **HOPE** you will gain from it

So there's **a quick "1 Vs. Exhortation"**
to remember to **CONSUME** God's Word **every day**

(as Job says) **Treasure it** more than your Physical Food
cause it's more important

Now - **Back** to the subject at hand - **Unity in the Church**

Remember - I said the **3 truths** we saw in Jesus' prayer
start in **V.5** of **Rom 15** ?

In **Vs's 5-6-7** - we have those **Same 3 truths** in this text

Rom 15:5 – (The **POWER** for our unity) - **ESV**
5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,

May the God of endurance and encouragement

Those are the **same words** used in **V.4**
for **what we get** from **studying the Scriptures** - **See it ?**

& now **God** is described as
the God of endurance and encouragement

Isn't it interesting - that in a msg about UNITY in the Body

God is described as

the God of endurance and encouragement ??

As if to imply - that we will CERTAINLY NEED
the God of ENDURANCE & ENCOURAGEMENT

If we're going to Live in UNITY in the Body of Christ

& notice closely in V.5

***May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to
live in such harmony with one another***

As always - this is NOT something we work up
but something GRANTED to us - as we Abide in CHRIST

& then finally (end of V.5) - this HARMONY with one another
is to be IN ACCORD WITH Christ Jesus

The GK word translated "IN ACCORD WITH" means LIT
"By a Similar Process"

We are to live in HARMONY with one another
BY A SIMILAR PROCESS as Jesus Christ ??

Are you **KIDDING** ?? - - NO, God's not kidding

"In accord with Christ Jesus" means

We are to do this "***By a Similar Process***" as Jesus did

& so (we have to ask) - exactly HOW DID Jesus do it ?

(turn over) Phil 2:5-8 - NLT → →

Phil 2:5-8 - NLT

5 You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

6 Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.

7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.

When he appeared in human form,

8 he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

THAT - is HOW Jesus Christ *DID IT !!*

& **ROM 15:5** says we are to live in Harmony with one another
BY A SIMILAR PROCESS as Jesus took

In Fact - **Phil 2:5** says

We are to have ***THE SAME ATTITUDE*** as Jesus had

He **gave up** His rights - **Humbled himself** - Even to **death**
so that He might **ACCEPT us** to Himself

Which (we'll see in a moment)

is **exactly what** we are called **to do** for one another

But FIRST - as long as we're here in **PHIL CH 2**

WHAT is the ***CONTEXT*** - when **V.5** says

we must have the **SAME ATTITUDE** that Christ Jesus had ?

The **CONTEXT** is in the ***Previous 4 Vs's***

so let's just go ahead & **read those**

Phil 2:1-4 - NLT

1 Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate?

2 Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

3 Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.

4 Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

Those are the Vs's leading up to V.5 - - *that says:*

To do THIS - we must have the same attitude that Christ had

& THIS - is the HOW

of us Living in TRUE UNITY

Back to Rom 15

We've seen (#1) the POWER for our UNITY

it's Granted to us by God

In ACCORD with (by a Similar Process) as Jesus Christ took

now - NUMBER 2 - The PURPOSE of our unity - is seen in V.6

Rom 15:6 - ESV → →

Rom 15:6 - ESV

6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The **PURPOSE** of our Supernatural UNITY
is that we would **GLORIFY GOD** !

Jesus made it very clear in His prayer in **Jn 17**

That our Supernatural UNITY Would have a **DIRECT IMPACT**
on the **world believing** that He was sent by God

Again - Jesus prayed in **Jn 17:23 - NLT**

23 . . . May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

Jesus prayed that our **Perfect Unity**
would be a **Great Witness** to world - to **Glorify God**

Unfortunately – Our in-ability to live in unity
is an incredibly **POOR witness** to the world

& certainly **does NOT** Glorify God

& so **this Command** to live in **UNITY**
comes w/ a very heavy responsibility

We've seen **(# 1)** The **POWER** for our UNITY

We've seen **(# 2)** The **PURPOSE** of our UNITY

& now - **NUMBER 3** - the **PERFECTION** of our UNITY

When Jesus prayed in **Jn 17:23** (*that we just read*)
for our perfect unity

That word "perfect" means **MATURE** or **COMPLETE**

Which means that our Unity would be "***In ACCORD with***"
(***By a Similar Process***) as Jesus Christ's

& so - in **Rom 15:7** we have **the PICTURE**
of our Complete or Mature Unity

(The "**Perfection**" of our Unity)

Rom 15:7 - ESV

7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

The word "Welcome" strikes me a little strange
but **the NLT** really makes it clear

Rom 15:7 NLT

7 Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

There it is . . .

***Accept each other **JUST AS** (In the same way)
as Christ has accepted you - so that God will be given Glory***

How was it again that Christ **accepted** us
Oh that's right . . . He **DIED for us**

& now - we are called to **accept** one another
JUST AS (in the same way) Christ accepted us

THAT is the fulfillment (the "Perfection")
of our CALL to UNITY in the Body of Christ

When we **ACCEPT** one another
Just As Christ Accepted us ! - AMEN ?

Let's re-read the heart of the message today from the NLT
& we'll see the 3 truths all together

Rom 15:5-7 - NLT

5 May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. [POWER for our unity]

6 Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. [PURPOSE of our unity]

7 Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory. [PERFECTION of our unity]

Man - That's GOOD, isn't it ?

God gives us the POWER for our unity in Christ

The PURPOSE of our unity is to Glorify God

The PERFECTION of our unity is when we accept each other
JUST AS Christ has accepted us

The first time we went thru Romans here - in 2001

2 Days before I taught this msg

God gave Marti Liem this poem

Marti Liem

*The casting of your shadow – all my brightness naught compares
Yearning what I should be – yet grieving how I fare
Glimpses of your likeness – how they fade short of my grasp
Do I dare plead “Savior, like You is all I ask”*

This entire series is summed up in that last statement

“Savior, like you is all I ask”

As we humble ourselves - Like Jesus did
As we set aside our own rights - Like Jesus did
As we sacrifice ourselves for the benefit of one another

THEN we will be able to **ACCEPT** each other
JUST AS Christ **ACCEPTED** us !

& then Jesus' OWN PRAYER in Jn 17:23
will be answered

Jn 17:23 - Jesus prayed to the Father - NLT
***23 . . . May they experience such perfect unity that the world
will know that you sent me and that you love them as much
as you love me.***

May we allow that prayer of our Lord
to actually come to pass in our lives, and in our church

Now - Paul finishes this long exhortation on UNITY

By reminding the **JEWISH** Christians
That Jesus Christ came for the **GENTILES** TOO

It seems he does it - to put an **EXCLAMATION POINT**
on the fact that Jesus died for **ALL BELIEVERS** Equally !

Something we need to be
constantly reminded of ourselves

Rom 15:8-9(A) - ESV → →

Rom 15:8-9(A) - ESV

**8 For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,
9 and (He became a servant) in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. . .**

Jesus Christ became a servant to the Jews
to show God's truthfulness - & to confirm God's Promises

AND - Jesus became a servant in order that
the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy

& now - Paul Cites FOUR O.T. passages that refer to
the Salvation of God - Coming to the GENTILES

Starting in Rom 15:9(b)-12 - ESV

**9 . . . As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."
10 And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."
11 And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him."
12 And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."**

Jesus Christ came as **The Sacrificial Servant**

To Show God's Truthfulness

To Confirm God's Promises

So that both Jews & Gentiles might **GLORIFY God**

& I love those last words of **V.12**
. . . in him will the Gentiles hope

There was a time - when we were ALL without hope

But because of the **indescribable sacrifice** Jesus Christ made
We now - **in Christ Alone** - We Have Hope

& it is only by each of us **RECEIVING** & **BELIEVING**
in **that sacrifice** that Jesus Christ made

that **each of us** - can receive the Promise of **Rom 15:13**

Rom 15:13 - ESV

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

I pray that **you have made** that **Commitment** Today

to **BELIEVE** & **RECEIVE**
the Sacrifice Jesus Christ made for **YOU**

Let's pray