

119. The Book of Romans 15:14-16

Paul's Epistle to the Romans
A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(4-8-26)

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The first thirteen verses of Chapter 15 continue the subject of the previous chapter—dealing with division that had resulted due to matters of moral neutrality (what some have called 'grey areas'), things which God never said were wrong but left it up to each individual believer's conscience.

Romans 15:1–2, 5-7 (NKJV)

¹ We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ² Let each of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good, leading to edification....⁵ Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶ that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

The whole Christian life is not about our 'rights' but about His glory—and unity in the Body of Christ glorifies God. Paul's point is, can't we as Jewish and Gentile believers accept one another's conviction on non-essential issues for the sake of unity and the glory of God?

Therefore, Paul admonished us (in verses 5 and 6) to put aside our petty differences and **"be like-minded toward one another...and with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?"**

In other words, instead of letting these issues about non-essential things divide Christians, we should receive one another just as Christ received us—faults and all!

Romans 15:8–12 (NKJV)

⁸ Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision [the Jews] for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers, ⁹ and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written [Paul quotes a series of passages from the Old Testament demonstrating that God always intended that the Gentiles would be included in the Kingdom of God and praise Him]: *"For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name."* ¹⁰ And again he says: *"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!"* ¹¹ And again: *"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!"* ¹² And again, Isaiah says: *"There shall be a root of Jesse [Messiah]; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope."*

The statement **"I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name"** comes from Psalm 18 (a Messianic psalm) and describes Jesus Himself giving praise among the Gentiles.

Then Paul ends this section of Romans (12:1-15:13) where he has been focusing on believers applying everything he taught in the previous 11 chapters on doctrine—with a beautiful prayer for the saints in Rome—

Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

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

Many people don't realize just how important hope is for living a normal, healthy, productive life.

The word 'hope' appears 154 times in the Bible (NKJV)—78 times in the Old Testament and 76 times in the New. And whenever it's used in relation to something God has promised His people it always means—*"To wait with expectation; Quiet, confident trust."*

In Scripture when God promises us something—it's not an '*I hope so hope*' (maybe it will be or maybe it won't); it's always an '*I know so hope*' (a sure thing)!

The most important promise of all the promises God has given—is the promise of eternal life to all who receive His Son into their hearts as Savior. This promise produces hope in our hearts—the hope of our eternal inheritance someday in heaven:

Colossians 1:3–5 (NLT)

³ We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, ⁵ which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven. You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News.

Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

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

Hope is essential for joy and peace—but is only ours when we put our trust in the promises of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. We must stop thinking that being a Christian means God has promised us blue skies and smooth sailing while we're on this earth. And that because we are His children that—He "owes" us a happy ending to every problem we face in life.

Of course, you pray for solutions to your problems and hope for happy endings—but if they don't come how are you going to handle it? There are many adversities in life that come our way as children of God that God hasn't promised to deliver us from—at least not in this life.

The history of the Church is full of examples of Christians who loved God with all their hearts and walked in obedience to His commandments—that wound up being martyred for their faith.

When that happens, we ask ourselves—how is that compatible with Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 13:8 that *"God's love never fails"*?

Look, just because we're God's children and He loves us—that doesn't mean His love will never fail to produce for us a happy ending and that everything will always work out the way we're hoping. There are times when we won't experience a 'happy ending' in a given situation—no matter how much hope we have. In other words, sometimes the marriage won't be saved; the job won't be salvaged; and the sickness won't be healed.

How is that going to impact your relationship with God? (Job said, *"Though He slays me yet I will trust in Him."*)

I don't know what the future is going to bring—the world is a volitive place and as Christians we're not immune from pain and suffering. But I know one thing for sure—God is on the throne and therefore I'm not going to worry about it!

Worry doesn't solve our problems—it only adds to them!

Corrie ten Boom said something profound regarding this—*"Worrying doesn't empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength."*

One Christian author had to say on the subject of hope to close this section of Romans—

"What is hope? Hope is the absolute expectation of coming good. Hope is the antidote for divisiveness and defensiveness. And throughout Scripture, hope is most often referred to in conjunction with the coming of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is pointless for us to argue and debate here on earth, for soon we'll be in heaven with Jesus, where all questions will be answered, all divisions will cease.

After spending the first half of chapter 15 talking about unity in the body, we'll see Paul put in the clutch and shift gears to discuss ministry in the world. Why? Because the two are very closely related. When does unity in the church happen? When people are ministering in the world. Check out a Billy Graham Crusade. It's amazing who's on the platform—ministers and denominations that normally wouldn't speak to one another are brought together for one purpose: to let folks know that heaven is around the bend and that there's hope in Jesus Christ.

A tourist approached a farmer in Iowa and said, "Don't you think all these fences ruin the beauty of the fields out here?"

"Yep," said the farmer—"until the corn starts growing. When the corn starts growing you don't even see the fences."

When are fences seen in the church? When there's no fruit. That's when the divisions become real and pronounced. But when there's growth and fruit, evangelism and ministry, the fences of factionalism disappear. That is why the more evangelistic a church is, the less divided it becomes."

As I said, verse 13 of Chapter 15 ends the section we have been studying.

The outline of the Book of Romans is as follows:

- I. **Introduction**—1:1-17
- II. **Condemnation**—*All people apart from Christ are lost and on their way to hell and need God's righteousness for salvation*—1:18-3:20
- III. **Justification**—*How a person acquires God's righteousness*—3:21-5:21
- IV. **Sanctification**—*How a person lives a righteous life for God once saved*—6:1—8:39
- V. **Restoration**—*Using Israel as an example of God's righteousness and calling being permanent (irrevocable)*—9:1–11:36
- VI. **Application**—*The practical demonstration of God's righteousness*—12:1–15:13

Starting with verse 14 of Romans 15 and running through the end of the book we enter into the seventh and final section of the book:

VII. Conclusion, Greetings, and Benediction—15:14–16:27

Romans 15:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ **Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.**

Romans 15:14 (NLT)

¹⁴ I am fully convinced, my dear brothers and sisters, that you are full of goodness. You know these things so well you can teach each other all about them.

Peter said something similar when he wrote—

2 Peter 1:12 (NKJV)

¹² For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

It's interesting (and frustrating) how simple and basic truths that we learned long ago in our walk with the Lord are so easily forgotten at times causing us to act like we never learned them at all! For example, that God will allow trials in our lives to test and purify our faith. (1 Peter 1:6-7)

Some Christians forget that when trials come their way and think that God is punishing them or that He really doesn't love them...etc. So that when another believer reminds them of that biblical truth—they're like, "*Duh! I know that! What's wrong with me!!*"

One of our Calvary pastors put it this way—

"Haven't you found it incredible that you forget the things you really want to remember, yet remember the things you wish you could forget? It's a mystery to me—and yet partially explained by the fact that Satan reminds us of our failings day and night (Revelation 12:10), while he constantly seeks to pluck away Scripture from our memories (Matthew 13:19).

It's not how much you know, gang. It's how well you know what you know."

That's why God will put **'feet to your faith.'** In other words, He'll put you in real life situations that will force you to put into practice the truths that you learn in the 'classroom' (church and Bible study) so that they become living and powerful, and you never forget those truths ever again!

Verse 14 contains 3 key words I'd like to look at—

Romans 15:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ **Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.**

The word **goodness** translates a Greek word that means *'high moral character.'*

So first of all, the believers in Rome hated evil and loved righteousness—something Paul (even though he had not yet visited Rome) had heard about—that the Christians there were upright, loved the Lord, and lived lives of character and morality.

Second, Paul commended the church at Rome for being **"filled with knowledge."**

This didn't mean they were all 'intellectuals' in the secular sense—but that they had a deep knowledge of the truths of God from the Old Testament Scriptures and the gospels of Jesus Christ. Paul said something similar when he said to the Colossians:

Colossians 2:2–3 (NIV)

² My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

As you read the NT keep in mind that one of the great first century heresies that those early Christians were fighting against was Gnosticism. The word 'Gnostic' comes from the Greek word 'gnōsis' which means 'knowledge' (mystical knowledge).

The Gnostics were always teaching people if they meditated a certain way or chanted the right way then all the secret treasures of hidden spiritual wisdom and knowledge would be unlocked to them.

Part of the teachings of Gnosticism grew out of the philosophical question, "*Why is there evil in this world if creation was made by a holy God?*" As these philosophers pondered that question, they came to the false conclusion that *matter* (the physical universe) was evil—and since matter was evil it couldn't have been the creation of a holy God.

So then where did the material universe come from?

A. T. Robertson explains:

"The Gnostic speculation concerned itself primarily with the origin of the universe and the existence of evil. They assumed that God is good and yet there is evil in existence. Their theory was that evil is inherent in matter. And yet the good God could not create evil matter. So they postulated a series of emanations, aeons, spirits, angels that came in between God and matter. The idea was that one aeon came from God, another aeon from this aeon, and so on till there was one far enough away from God for God not to be contaminated by the creation of evil matter and yet close enough to have power to do the work."

Now the real problem with the teaching that matter is evil, from a doctrinal standpoint—was in the way they applied it to Jesus Christ. You see the Gnostics reasoned that if matter was evil then Jesus couldn't have come in the flesh because then—He would have been evil. So many Gnostics claimed He must have come as a *spirit* and not as a physical flesh and blood man (a denial of His humanity).

That's why the Apostle John opened his first epistle with the words—

1 John 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ That which was from the beginning, **which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life--**

He said this because he was trying to refute Gnostic teaching about Jesus not coming in a physical body.

1 John 4:2-3 (NLT2)

² This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. ³ But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus [that He has come in a real flesh and blood body], that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here.

2 John 1:7 (NLT2)

⁷ I say this because many deceivers have gone out into the world. They deny that Jesus Christ came in a real body. Such a person is a deceiver and an antichrist.

Other Gnostics believed that since Jesus *was* a physical man (too much evidence to deny that truth) and that since the physical was evil and God cannot be evil—they concluded that Jesus couldn't have been *God* in the flesh (a denial of His divinity).

That's why Paul said—

Colossians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

Again, Gnostics were always teaching people that they had deeper spiritual knowledge in the secret things of God than even the apostles did.

And they told people that if they followed them they would teach them how to meditate the right way, and eat the right foods, and chant the right way so that all the secret treasures of hidden spiritual wisdom and knowledge would be unlocked to them.

Paul said, *“Don't be deceived by that! In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”*

The only way a person can gain knowledge of spiritual truth and the wisdom to apply it into their lives is by receiving Jesus into their heart at which time the Holy Spirit comes in and begins to lead them into all spiritual truth. (John 16:13)

As someone has said—

“All wisdom, all knowledge is in—not from—Jesus. Whoever desires wisdom to navigate life successfully must come to the realization that there is nothing more, nothing less, nothing else than Jesus. All treasures of wisdom are in Him.”

So, Christians don't need to go looking for spiritual wisdom and understanding anywhere else—they already have it all in Christ and in the knowledge of His Word. Those Christians who are always running around looking for a *'deeper understanding'* of what God has already made clear to them are setting themselves up for the deception of *esoteric* doctrines when God has already given them all spiritual treasures in Christ.

I came across this true story that illustrates this truth:

“The story is told that one day William Randolph Hearst was looking through a book of famous artwork when a painting caught his eye.

“I want this painting for my collection,” he said to his aides. But after making some inquiries, they reported that they were unable to locate the particular work.

“If you value your jobs,” Hearst said, “do whatever it takes to find that treasure, and secure it for me immediately.”

Three and a half months later, the aides returned to Hearst. “Did you find the treasure?” he asked.

“Yes,” they replied. “After much searching and painstaking research, we found it.”

“Did you purchase it?” he asked.

“No.”

“Why not?” Hearst asked.

“Because we found it in your warehouse. You already owned it!”

This is like many Christians today that are running around looking for spiritual treasures that they already own in Christ.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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