

Good morning and thank you so much for joining us. Would you please turn in your Bibles to Romans 15? Only 1 chapter left in Romans, and Luigi will be doing Romans 16 next Sunday as I'll be teaching at a CC near the Chicago area.

As you know, the Bible is filled with practical instructions for us as Believers. And one of the most common expressions for instructions in the New Testament is the two-word phrase, "one another." There're are over 50 "one another commands" in the NT.

**SHOW PIC** Here're a few examples: "Bear one another's burdens" - "Build up one another" - "Care for one another" - "Comfort one another" - "Forgive one another" - "Honor one another" - "Be kind to one another" - "Be hospitable to one another" - "Love one another" - "Pray for one another" - "Submit to one another" - "Serve one another"

– the list goes on and on. **CLOSE PIC**

And this is important because each one of these explains to us how relationships should exist in the body of Christ. Christianity is not to be lived out in solitary confinement-all believers in Jesus have a responsibility to one another.

And Romans 15 gives us 3 more of these "one another commands"... **SHOW PIC** Chapter 15:5 "be like-minded toward one another" - 15:7 "receive one another" - 15:14 "admonish one another" **CLOSE PIC**

Chapter 15 of Romans focuses on the Christian's duty toward one another.

The title of this morning's message is FOR ONE ANOTHER

Let's pray

Last week we saw how chapter 14 warned us about using our freedom in Christ in a way that could cause a fellow Christian to stumble in their faith. And verse 1 continues that thought...

**1 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples** (principles) **of the weak, and not to please ourselves.** Again, we spent significant time on this last week, about sacrificing our rights and desires in the name of love for others.

If we consider ourselves strong in the faith compared to other Christians, then we should use that strength to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ — instead of using that “strength” just to please ourself.

That’s what the words ‘bear with’ mean. The idea is to support the weaker Christian with our superior strength.

**2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.** It’s such a challenge to put others before ourselves isn’t it? Now I can do this some of the time with someone I love, like my wife or children. I can even put others before myself, if I like the other person.

But a careful review of these verses doesn’t give a qualifier of putting others first whom we like-it’s to put everyone first! And that’s where I really struggle. Because if I don’t get along really well with someone, or they don’t measure up in my eyes, then my flesh automatically recoils at the thought of putting them first.

But isn’t that what showing others grace is all about?

And why should we go through such self-sacrificing? verse 3 tells us...

**3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.”**<sup>[fn]</sup> Paul quotes Psalm 69, a prophesy concerning Jesus.

Do we need to go any further than Jesus, for an example of someone who forfeited His own freedoms, and rights, and privileges for the good of others?

Jesus, our Savior came to earth to bear our burden! **Philippians 2: 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**

Jesus is our example isn't He?

**4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.** What was written before? Paul is speaking of the OT. The OT is filled with examples of followers of God who laid aside their liberty and rights for the sake of their weaker brothers.

Abraham **Genesis 13:8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."**

David **1 Samuel 24:9 And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Indeed David seeks your harm'? 10 Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.**

Moses Hebrews 11:24 24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in[fn] Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

The list goes on and on in the Bible of people who willingly let go of their rightful possessions or positions. They didn't demand their own way—and God used each of them mightily.

But before we move on, notice that nasty word “patience.” Yes, the Scriptures comfort us—but we have to be patient. James 1 2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Verse 5 Paul now prays for the fulfillment of this attitude for the Christians in Rome

5 Now may the God of patience and comfort, PAUSE HERE God is patient and comforting, isn't He? Just think about how patient God has been with all of us? I mean if we really think about it, if we were God, how long would we have put up with ourselves? I would've written me off a long time ago! I'm so glad He's patient!

And isn't God a comforter in our storms? 2 Corinthians 1 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.

Let's read all of verse 5

5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

Now in verse 5 we have one of the NT's "one another commands" - "be like-minded."

In light of Romans 14, and the instructions on how to conduct ourselves in those gray areas we discussed last week, I'm certain Paul isn't advocating perfect agreement on every detail of church life.

But is it possible for us to be of "the same mind" when it comes to the essentials of the faith-absolutely! And here's why we should be "like-minded..."

6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Clearly it pleases God when His children glorify Him with "one mind and one mouth."

Something special happens when we lift up our voices to Jesus together. Something special happens when we hear the Scriptures and study the Word together.

See there's a oneness of mind that takes place—even if we differ on certain interpretations or certain applications, because we're unity in our love for Jesus. IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT JESUS!

That's why you will notice that when a person stops coming to Bible study and worship, slowly but surely, they no longer have one mind and one heart. It's not that they don't love the Lord, and it's not that they're not saved. But, as they become isolated, they become vulnerable.

Jesus tells us in **Matthew 18:19, "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven."** In praise and in prayer it delights God when we come to Him with like minds.

7 Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us,<sup>[fn]</sup> to the glory of God. Here's an additional "one another command" - "receive one another..."

When the prodigal son returned home, the father didn't wait for him to walk up the road to the house, no the father ran to meet the wayward son, embraced him, and welcomed him.

Luke 15 17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."' "

20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring<sup>[fn]</sup> out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry. The Father didn't hold the sorrowful son at arms length until he'd proven his sincerity.

The boy wasn't placed on probation, or bonded until his court date, nor did he have to wait 90 days for his benefits to kick in. He was given full family membership immediately.

And this is the way we should treat newcomers into the Body of Christ - whether they're new believers... or renewed believers... or

just plain newcomers... Let's "receive one another, just as Christ also received us..."

**SHOW PIC OF THIS QUOTE** It's been said, "The Christian church is the only society in the world in which membership is based on the qualification that the candidate is unworthy of membership." **CLOSE PIC**

Church should be a grace place. We should receive one another just as Christ received us. **Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

Building upon this theme of receiving one another, Paul again declare's how Jesus has come to save both Jew and gentile- Jesus is the savior to all!

**8 Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers,** What is verse 9 telling us? Well Jesus was a Jew, He came to the Jews and lived as a Jew in order to share truth with the Jews.

**9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written:** Pause here. In Romans 11 Paul talked about God's plan of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles. It's God's desire for everyone to be saved. Here Paul lists four OT Scriptures to prove his point that God didn't come to just save the Jew, but the Gentile too.

**"For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name."**[fn]

**10 And again he says:**

**"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!"**[fn]

11 And again:

“Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!

Laud Him, all you peoples!”[fn]

12 And again, Isaiah says:

“There shall be a root of Jesse;

And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles,

In Him the Gentiles shall hope.”[fn] So Psalms 18 and 117, Deuteronomy 32, and Isaiah 11 all affirm the inclusivity of Jesus. Jesus is an equal opportunity Savior!

Our world clamors for inclusivity-look no further than Jesus! We don't clean up our lives to come to Him, we come to Him and then let Him change us from the inside out!

**Romans 10:13 For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”**

Interestingly enough, here are 3 quotes from all three categories of the Jewish Bible—the Psalms, the law, and the prophets—are all represented in this brief section as Paul continues to drive home the fact that Jesus came for the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

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.” What is hope? Hope is the absolute expectation of coming good. And throughout Scripture, hope is most often referred to in conjunction with the second coming of Jesus Christ.

And here's another great name for God. Not only do we serve “the God of patience and comfort” but also “the God of hope!” How can we ever be out of hope - or even call a situation hopeless - if we truly serve “the God of hope”?



Our world has no hope, but as believers we're to abound in hope, not by trying to fake it, but through the power of the HS.

Maybe this morning you're saying I don't have much hope, and I'm def not abounding in hope through the HS. So what do you do? **Luke 11:13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"** pray right now for more of the HS, and that the HS will have more of you!

**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.**[fn] Here we see a third "one another command."

We've read, "be like-minded toward one another" and "receive one another" - and now, "admonish one another." The word "admonish" means "to remind or to caution." And this is another reason why it's so important to be plugged into a fellowship, so that we may admonish one another.

Now starting in verse 15, Paul quickly pivots, and he now begins to share his heart rather than give instruction.

15-16

**15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God,**

**16 that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.** God had called Paul to minister to the Gentiles. Paul regarded the Gentiles who were coming to faith and growing through his ministry as his offering to God.

17 Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. 18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient— Paul had every reason to brag and boast about his ministry because countless churches had been planted, and countless souls saved from hell.

But Paul wouldn't dare dream of bragging, rather he gave all the credit for what had happened to Jesus, the one who had worked through hearts to lead the Gentiles to obedience.

Notice verse 18 Paul talks about word and deed. Word and deed are the 2 necessary functions of evangelism. How do we ever share the gospel with a world that hates even the idea of an ultimate authority in God? Well there's 2 ways-by word and deed.

We share Jesus by sharing the Word- by sharing the Scriptures.

Some folks are hesitant, saying I don't know the Bible well enough, I don't understand everything, I can't share it with others.

We may not understand all of the implications doctrinally. We may have trouble defending the Scriptures intellectually. But, like C. H. Spurgeon said when asked how to defend the Bible, "You defend the Bible as you would a roaring lion. You just open the cage and let it out."

God's word is powerful isn't it? **Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

Just start sharing the Scriptures and watch and see what the Lion of the Tribe of Judah does with the Word He's given to us. folks all we have to do is let it out!

## **But we also share Jesus through deed, or actions.**

People notice when we share the things in the bible that we ourselves are living out. That's why I share so much about grace. I need grace and I'm so thankful to God for His grace. Grace isn't just theological concept for me—it's what I need desperately.

When people see us walking with Christ, how we live differently, it's going to get their attention. **Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.**

19 in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20 And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, Paul's desire was to reach people who never heard about Jesus, so much so that he travelled 1,400 miles by boat and foot to share the gospel with the lost world.

21 but as it is written:

**“To whom He was not announced, they shall see;**

**And those who have not heard shall understand.”**[fn] Paul quotes Isaiah 52 as his confirmation of Scripture for going to those areas that were yet unreached for Jesus. Perhaps this was Paul's life verse!

Now the scene shifts, as Paul no longer gives instructions in the remainder of chapter 15, rather Paul share's his desire for the Roman Christians' help in two areas: First, he wanted their help in reaching another destination, he wants to go to Spain to share the gospel.

Second, he wanted the Roman Christian's prayer support as he takes a collection to the poor Christians in Jerusalem.

And from the book of acts, we know how much of this played out. It's like reading a dear friends diary or journal years later...

**22 For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.** If you recall, Paul had written his letter to the Romans from the port city of Corinth. It was his great desire to do pioneer work that hindered him from coming to the Romans, though he did desire to see them.

**23 But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, 24 whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you.[fn] For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while.** Paul wanted to go to Spain. And he hoped his journey would have a least a brief layover in Rome so he could visit the church.

Now we can't say for certain whether or not he made it to Spain. But we learn in the book of Acts, chapter 27, that Paul did journey to Rome, but not as a missionary on his way to Spain.

He went to Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial before Caesar, where he would preach the gospel on a different kind of frontier. And that's a reminder that even our best laid plans, plans we believe would be good for the kingdom of God, may not be God's plans for us.

Here in these verses, we see that Paul had wonderful, noble plans, but things didn't work out the way he envisioned them.

**Proverbs 16:9 A man's heart plans his way,**

**But the LORD directs his steps.**

25 But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. 26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. History tells us that a famine had hit the region of Judea. Paul had collected an offering from the believers in Greece that he needed to deliver to these needy folks

27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. The money that Paul was collecting was a love offering that birthed from a heart felt obligation. He could say that the givers owed it because the gospel, which they benefited from, had come from Jerusalem and Judea to the Gentiles

28 Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. 29 But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel[fn] of Christ. So again we see Paul's plan, he's going to drop the money off to the poor in Jerusalem, see the Christians in Rome, and then go to Spain. He had no idea that he would later arrive in Rome in chains

We can relate can't we? How many times can we look back on our lives and see how plans for God worked out differently than what we thought?

30 Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, The word translated "strive" is from the root word we get our word "agonize." In other words, Paul was asking for passionate, fervent prayer because he knew danger awaited him in Jerusalem. How did he know this? Acts 20:22 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the

things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.

31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. 33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen. Paul makes three prayer requests... protection from his enemies - completion of his mission - and rest and rejuvenation with his friends

His is a good prayer for us isn't it this weekend!