

Romans 15

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- [0 : 00] Good morning. Welcome here this morning to the service. A beautiful day the Lord has given us to worship as we move into spring.
- And this morning I was reminded again the blessings of God and the freedom to gather to worship.
- And it's a privilege that we have to be together as believers. And what a privilege it is. So we are blessed.
- And this morning we want to continue in the passage that was read for us in Romans 15. As Paul concludes his letter, he has a lot of housekeeping items, given the reason why he writes and so on.
- But the section that was read for us is still doctrine. And we want to maybe focus a little more on the verses that were read for us.
- [1 : 16] And then maybe go a little faster on the remainder of the chapter. And so Paul starts here in Romans 15 with a therefore.
- And so because of what I've written, because of what I've said in the past, therefore, receive one another just as Christ also received us to the glory of God.
- To receive one another just as Christ has received us. Now, to receive means to accept.
- To accept. To accept. To accept one another. And this morning I want to ask, have we ever gone through rejection?
- Probably in some way, all of us have felt rejected at one time or another.
- [2 : 32] Rejected, pushed away. Not accepted. That's the opposite. And here within the body of Christ, we are told to accept one another.
- On what basis? On what basis? Because Christ received me. He received me.
- And then it follows. How did Christ receive me?
- How did Christ receive you? Did Christ receive you because of your goodness?
- Your holiness? As a sinner. Just as we are. Just as we are.
- [3 : 48] Amen? All of us came as we are. And if we have tried to clean up our life to be more presentable to Christ, I know you failed.
- Because we can't. And we try. But in the end, we come as we are. And Christ receives us. On what basis?
- On God's grace and desire to forgive us His Son. The death of His Son. Our faith in His Son is the basis in which we can come as we are.
- So now Christ received me as I was. Where did I start? In my faith?
- Right down in the bottom. Weak in the faith. Weak in the faith. And over the last years.
- [5 : 10] Since then. I trust that I've grown in the faith. And I trust all of us are growing in the faith.

God is saying here, as we grow, we have no reason to look down our nose at the guy that's starting out. We are to receive them.

We are to accept them. Not to reject. In our cultures, I'm sure there is much rejection that we've seen, that we've experienced from siblings, from parents, from churches.

But the Lord receives us as we are. Now, the context, maybe the immediate context of this Scripture is that Paul is telling the Jews, these Gentiles who have now joined you in the body of Christ, you receive them as they are.

Just as I have received you. And, but we can take the application of that right home to where we are today.

[6 : 57] And so it's, it's a, it's an admonishment to us that, that we are to be on guard for that.

And, and that we treat everyone that Christ has received as a brother, as a sister. Because we are in the family of God.

Regardless of our level of maturity in faith, we are equal in Christ. And that's, it's a wonderful thing that God has done for us.

to receive us on the same merit, on the same basis. And, a verse in, in Ephesians chapter one, the fourth verse in chapter one of Ephesians, some spiritual blessings that we have that we have in him.

Verse three and four, Ephesians one, he says, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

[8 : 27] Just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

How has he received us? According to the good pleasure of his will. and he has lifted each one of us out of the miry clay and placed us into the heavenlies.

And chapter two in Ephesians says, and he has made us sit in the heavenlies. Spiritually, that is where God has placed us in him, in Jesus.

and on his merit and our faith in that.

And so that is the depth of what is behind receive one another just as Christ received you.

[9 : 48] Just as Christ received me. And so this is what we are to do regardless of culture, of race, nationality, wealth, or poverty.

It does not matter. We are to receive. And so that is the lesson here. As we go down in our text in Romans 15, we see a clear picture for them.

Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision to the Jewish people for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers.

So Jesus Christ came as a servant to fulfill the promises that God made through the prophets in the Old Testament.

And we know that Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him to righteousness. And he died in his sin believing that God would raise up a prophet who would die and pay for his sins.

[11 : 11] Abraham had not seen that. Moses had not seen that. And everybody in between. Jesus' fulfillment of all those prophecies of all the Old Testament believers who had put their faith in what was yet to come.

And then he says not only that but to confirm those promises but that the Gentiles might glorify God. So not only did he die for the Jews but he died for us for the Gentiles and that we too might glorify God.

Because we too are accepted by the Lord. And we're accepted on the same basis as the Jew by faith.

Same as Abraham. Abraham. And then what follows is that four different quotes from the Old Testament that speak of the Gentile people being brought to salvation.

Starting in verse 9 that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy as it is written for this will confess you among the Gentiles and sing to your name.

[12 : 37] It's a quote by King David and I will confess your name among the Gentiles and I will sing to your name for what you're doing.

And then Moses in verse 10 again he says rejoice oh Gentiles with his people. It's a quote by Moses in verse 11 and again praise the Lord all you Gentiles laud him all you peoples.

A call to praise for what God has done as we celebrate as we experience salvation. And that's a psalmist that's unidentified as to who wrote it but it's one of the psalms.

And then verse 12 Isaiah and again Isaiah says Paul says it's a mystery.

In Ephesians chapter 3 he speaks of it's a mystery. God has brought the Gentiles and the Jews together in one body.

[13 : 59] We are to receive one another as all over the world believers everywhere accepted on the same basis as we receive Christ through faith.

We were brought into this body and this morning we're one expression of the body of Christ. As all over this globe every country there are believers.

Perhaps not meeting right now because of time zones and so on but yet there are believers all accepted on the same merit.

And so no matter where God will take you in your journeys here on earth you will meet people that belong to the kingdom accepted by Christ and we are to receive them on the same merit.

Praise the Lord for that. Verse 13 he says 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.

[15 : 30] Hope is everything. It comes out of our relationship with Christ that we have hope the God of hope gives us hope.

hope. And we talked about this morning a little bit what is our hope in Christ. It is that we will be with him for all eternity.

We will be in his presence. That lies at the end of my life here and at the end of yours in Christ.

the hope the living hope the sure hope that as I cross the river into eternity it's going to be with the Lord.

He has promised. He has promised. And so now the Gentiles have that hope and Paul is saying may that hope be in you as well.

[16 : 40] may the hope of God fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. And again in the body of Christ we were all baptized into the body by one spirit.

That's how we got there. As we trusted Christ and he baptized us identified us with the body of Christ.

each and every one of us the same way. That's how we get into the body. And so it's that same spirit that baptizes us into the body that indwells us that gives us hope.

And that's what we cling to is the evidence. Let's turn back to Ephesians just to glimpse that a little deeper. Ephesians 1 verse 13 I believe.

Verse 13 and 14 in Ephesians 1 in him you also trusted after youth the gospel of your salvation in whom also having believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of his glory.

[18 : 27] So not only did the Holy Spirit seal us mark us out as belonging to God but is is the guarantee of our inheritance with our Lord.

He's a down payment of what's yet to come. And so this is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives giving us that hope that we will inherit what the Lord has for us.

Paul had that hope. He said for me to die is to be with Christ. Fully confident as the Lord would take him that's that's his destiny of God testifying not only in Paul's life but in ours as well.

But that's what lies ahead. On my merit? No. On God's. Because he has promised. He has said.

He has purposed. And it will be so by faith. Romans chapter 15.

[19 : 54] So Paul brings kind of his doctrine together in this of the whole book. A very deep book that we've gone through Romans and he's kind of climaxed that with this acceptance in Christ and that we are to receive one another as God's plan came together.

And now in the rest of the chapter verses 14 through 21 he gives the Romans perhaps some background for why he's writing them and then the rest of the chapter 22 to the end he kind of goes over his travel plans with them.

And so additions to the book in a way that he adds at the end to clarify some things. Let's read the next section 14 through 21.

We'll just glean a couple thoughts. He says 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.

Nevertheless brethren I have written more boldly to you on some points as reminding you because of the grace given to me by God that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles ministering to the gospel of God that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable sanctified by the Holy Spirit therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God for I will not dare to speak of any of these things which Christ has not accomplished through me in word and deed to make the Gentiles obedient in mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God so that from Jerusalem and round about to Ilcrium I have fully preached the gospel of Christ and so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel of his name lest I should build on another man's foundation but as it is written to whom he was not announced they shall see and those they have not heard shall understand

[22 : 27] Paul has never been to Rome in Italy when he's writing this letter he's never been there he's never met these people and to think the depth of what he has written to them and spiritual understanding of salvation of the lostness of man and then the plan of God there's no other book that's deeper in explaining the doctrines of salvation than Romans and yet he has never been in their congregation he's never met them and so he says in verse 14 I'm confident concerning you my brethren that you are also full of goodness filled with all knowledge able to admonish one another able to teach and so on so he's saying in a way

I'm not looking down on you guys as I write this to you I acknowledge you're in the faith but and then he goes on and gives his credentials as an apostle that he is sent as a missionary and God is using him to write and so he's coming across gentle not to offend but to explain why this letter is coming to them and he acknowledges that they too have the Holy Spirit and they are able to teach within and so that's why he has written and he says more boldly on some points reminding them of the grace of God and so that's that's the book of Romans to them then he goes on that he is a minister of Jesus Christ we know the full story excuse me of how

God met him on the way to Damascus and as he was persecuting the church and God stopped him in his tracks so to speak and called out to him and that was Paul's conversion turned from a persecutor to a preacher and God said I will send you to the Gentiles you will suffer much on my behalf Paul you have made others perhaps suffer but now as my servant preaching the gospel you will suffer at the hands of others as well the same as he was persecuting others for the faith he experienced it later others persecuting him for his faith and but he assures them that he is a minister of the gospel and he has the authority to write these things as he has written and he goes on how he has traveled to the

Gentile nations to the Gentile worlds with signs and wonders as accompanied as the early church experienced God was doing something great here bringing Jew and Gentile alike in the plan of this is why I've written to you and then in the last section of our chapter he goes on and expresses his desire to see them in person and we'll read from 22 to the end for this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you so Paul says because of the call of God and the ministry that he placed on my life I have not had opportunity to come to Rome I've been so busy and as we read the book of

Acts we can see that Paul was full out preaching the gospel traveling everywhere not had an opportunity to come to Rome as of yet I've been hindered but now no longer having a place in these parts and having a great desire these many years to come to you whenever I journey to Spain I shall come to you for I hope to see you on my journey and to be helped on my way there to by you if first I may enjoy your company for a while so Paul is saying my plans are I would like to go to Spain well that's far away and if you take where Israel is and the Mediterranean Sea reaching out to the east and

[28 : 01] Paul's ministry was to the north in Asia Minor and up into Italy is over there but Spain is right at the far end of the Mediterranean Sea and he says I would like to travel to Spain and as I travel I would like to stop in at Rome and spend some time with you these are his travel plans by the way I find it interesting that that Tarshish Tarshish if I say that right the place that Jonah was fleeing to when God was sending him to Nineveh and he got on a ship and sailed in the opposite direction to Tarshish that is believed to be in Spain the very place that Paul wants to come and to minister Jonah never made it we have no evidence whether

Paul made it the scriptures are silent whether he actually was able to complete that journey we know that Paul's plans were he went to Jerusalem he was taken captured there he was imprisoned in Damascus not in Damascus in Caesarea Philippi for two years and then came to Rome but that he was released as well for a while and what happened we don't know but his goal was to go to Spain as well the far end of the kingdom and to preach the gospel there as well and so the scriptures speak of Targis I think I counted 17 times and it always speaks of the ships that sailed from Targis bringing silver and gold and all kinds of precious stuff and that they had fleets of ships that would travel and so it's a far away place from Spain so Paul says whenever I journey to

Spain I shall come to you 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 but now I'm going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints for it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem 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 immaterial things therefore when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit I shall go by way of you to Spain Paul is announcing his intentions he says I'm going to Jerusalem first with the gifts of the churches that I visited as there is a poverty a famine in Jerusalem and they have a desire to minister to

Jerusalem Jerusalem has been the one that sent out the prophets or the apostles and so on and we would like to help them now as well in their need and so but he says as soon as I've done that then I want to go to Spain but I'm going to stop in and he says that again verse 29 but I know that when I come to you I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ now I beg you brethren to the Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the spirit that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe and that in my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints that I may come to you with joy by the will of God and may be refreshed together with you so now he's imploring the believers in

Rome whom he's never met pray for me as I journey to Jerusalem that I will be accepted there the gift the gifts that I bring the money will be accepted but furthermore that in verse 31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe so we know from the book of Acts in chapters 21 and onwards how Paul traveled after writing this letter traveled to Jerusalem and there in the temple the mob grabbed hold of him and was about to kill him and the Roman soldiers intervened and took Paul out of the hand of the mobs and took him to prison and that marked the beginning of a couple of year journey in prisons on his way to

[33 : 38] Rome and so God had other plans but Paul Paul kind of saw it coming as he asked for prayer he knew there would be opposition back home in Jerusalem and he's asking for prayer and yet God allowed Paul to be taken prisoner he used that means to bring him to Rome even though it took two years during those two years while he was on the coastal place of Caesarea Philippi Paul had opportunity to preach to kings numerous times to present the gospel not only to the Jews but to the rulers of the land as they came to hear him and we can read that in Acts 24 right through 26 the different accounts of the people that he preached to and yet

God brought him to Rome and very difficult as they suffered shipwreck in Acts 27 but he did get to Rome and there met the church he was under house arrest but had the freedom to speak and the freedom to share the gospel and that's where the book of is for us and so this is Paul's heart desire to visit the church in Rome and God saw that through that Paul could do that whether he went to Spain we do not know from the scriptures it would seem that that never happened but perhaps it was not recorded we don't know but that brings chapter 15 to a close as Paul just shares his travel plans with them so there's no maybe direct applications for us this morning but there is in that

God directs our steps and as Paul had a desire God gave him that desire to go to Rome but in a different way than Paul had envisioned and God still saw it through and so we too can trust the Lord and when he gives us desires that are godly we can trust he will bring it about it pleases God to see these things through when we have godly desires they come from him he has planted them in our hearts to carry through with that all right and then I'll read verse 1 and 2 of 16 and then we'll close with that so Paul

Paul is telling the Romans that our sister Phoebe from Centuria is going to be delivering this letter I'm going to send it by her hand verse 2 or verse 1 our sister who is a servant of the church in Centuria that word servant is where we get our word deacon from it's the same word and a deacon is a servant of the Lord and from this example some have expounded that it is then okay Phoebe was a deaconess and that she had the office of a deacon now this is a historic account of what happened it is not that we can take doctrine out of here and say now that we can have deaconesses in the official office of deacon

I don't think we can gather that out of there but was she a servant in the church absolutely and this morning we have many many ladies that are serving that are in the true sense being a deacon in the sense of the word of servanthood so just to let you know that's what's in these verses so Paul is sending this letter by her hand and he's encouraging the church in Rome receive this lady in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints she's one of the believers receive her accept her as such and then the rest of chapter 16 is greetings as Paul sends greetings and encourages greetings of many many people that have been part of his ministry and read that for yourself a lot of those names we'll read in the book of

[39 : 43] Acts as we've encountered them there but they've been part of Paul's journeys he's met them he's worked with them they've served together and there's greetings and blessings that flow together and in that sense we as part of God's church of his kingdom today we're part of a much bigger circle and as other believers travel and we travel we can be that to them as well as fellow servants sharing with one another sharing what God has done here and some of you are going to Mexico and Belize and Texas and Ontario you can share with the saints there what is

God doing in Grand Prairie and it's an encouragement and that's what Paul is doing and vice versa and as you go there you will be encouraged to see what God is doing over there and so it's a good way for Paul to end the letter so that will bring the conclusion to the book of Romans it's been a fair journey since last summer but I trust it's been fruitful and that's increased our understanding of salvation of who we are in Christ and how we are to live and to serve him as his children may the Lord bless us with this and with that let's close in prayer thank you

Lord for the journey that we took this morning as we focus on on receiving one another father we can't help but go to the very root of that and that you received each one of us individually as your child that is your marvelous grace your mercy and Lord as as we ended the book here with with receiving that grace and mercy that we now extended to fellow believers that they too have experienced that Lord it is the unity of the church the oneness as we've been brought together by one spirit it's all about you Lord

Jesus we praise you for that may we strive for that unity may we strive that brings glory to your name we thank you in Jesus name amen