

Christian Unity & Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles

Romans 15

- Paul has not been to R when he writes, in Acts 20:2-3. He makes it there ~4yrs later
- Church comprised of Jewish Christians & Gentile Christians – clash of cultures now one in Christ
- Ch. 14 discusses what to do when [not if] Christians disagree: accepting one another in liberty, love, and peace.

1. Accepting One Another in Unity – Romans 15:1-13

- 1: now: continues Ch. 14. Strong give up things for the weak. P identifies as stronger.
- 2: neighbor: weak brother; good: spiritual friend; edification: building up in 14:19
- 3: why not be selfish? JC not selfish; Ps. 69:9
- 4: from OT we learn lesson of perseverance
- 5: same mind: agreements on nonessential issues. How? Acc'd to teachings of JC
- 6: why important? To praise God. Antagonism in the hearts of worshippers destroys worship
- 7: now urged to accept one another; JC accepted all to demonstrate God's mercy
- 8: acceptance of J&G. J: ministry to show that God's promises are true
- 9: G: Qt. 4 OT texts to show this was always God's intentions to bring G in; 1] Ps. 18:49
- 10: 2] DT. 32:43; G nations rejoicing w/ Israel
- 11: 3] Ps. 117:1; all people urged to praise
- 12: 4] Isa. 61:10; Israelites to rule over & bless Gentiles
- 13: urging readers to get their priorities straight; abound: to be in abundance, to be extremely rich

2. Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles – Romans 15:14-33

- Previous success: from Jerusalem to Illyricum 14-21; future plans to go to Spain 22-29; desire to come to Rome & the contribution for Jerusalem 30-33
- 14: full of goodness: does not mean sinless
- 15,16: wonderful statement; boldly: dare, presume; Rome political heart of Gentile world – fitting to impact that city
- 17: always determined to give God the glory

- 18: God accomplished a lot through Paul; obedience brought about by words of Paul
- 19: power of the spirit: acknowledgment it was the HS enabling Paul to do miracles. Accomplished goal end of 3rd journey; probably boundaries; Illyricum: R province in Adriatic Sea, Macedonia to N, incl. Dalmatia
- 20,21: aspired: love [philos] and honor; Isa. 52:15; the world needs many Pauls to preach
- 22: Lord had prevented P from going to R
- 23: these regions: b/t Jerusalem & Illyricum; places to preach there; longing: strong desire
- 24: Paul's base was Antioch; Spain, Rome long ways away. Paul looking for assistance.
- 25,26: in Corinth, just across Adriatic Sea; collecting funds to go to Jerusalem
- 27: G Chr. wanted to contribute and obligated to do; 26,27 should be read in context of 7-13
- 28: P so involved in taking funds to Jerusalem that once it was done, he could not wait to go to Rome; Spaniards were among the most influential men in Roman empire
- 29: he believed their time together would be a blessing
- 30: beseech: implore, beg; strive: agonize
- 31,32: as far as we know, each answer 'yes.' Not always as expected. Service in Jerusalem: contribution; desired protection from non-believers; delivered from: preserve from
- 33: peace: GK equivalent of Shalom

Lessons:

1. It is of our utmost importance to strive for unity. Christ spent the night before He was killed praying for unity. There is just one – Ephesians 4:4-6 – stop trying to make it two *plus*.
2. We should be ready at all times to give to those in need. Sometimes this entails giving of our funds; sometimes it requires out time, talents, or resources.
3. God answers the prayers of His faithful children. As we saw in the final verses of the chapter, God answered Paul's prayer requests but it might not always be in the way that we always expect.

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