

Romans 15:1-13
When Our Selfishness is Exposed

Introduction:

1) Summary of necessary attitudes toward other church members—15:1

- a) The REALITY of the obligation—15:1a ¹ *We* (emphatic) *who are strong* [dunato,j] (continually) *have an obligation* ...
 - i) It is not wrong, sinful, or arrogant to perceive of yourself as strong/able and others as weak/unable.
 - ii) Being “strong” refers to those believers who can confidently trust that they no longer have to adhere to the religious rules they practiced before coming to Christ. Freedom in Christ has cleared their conscience (see 14:1). (FSB)
- b) The CONTENT of the obligation—15:1b
 - i) Stated POSITIVELY: *to bear with* [basta,zw] *the failings* (weaknesses) *of the weak* [avdu,natoj],
 - (1) Not merely **passively** putting up with or tolerating them, but **actively** supporting them.
 - ii) Stated NEGATIVELY: *and not to please* [avre,skw] *ourselves*.
 - (1) Self-denial is to be characteristic of the followers of Christ.

2) The command to have a positive relationship with others—15:2-4

- a) The command—15:2 ² *Let each of us please* [avre,skw] *his* (weak) *neighbor* ...
 - i) What is spiritually beneficial: *for* [eivj] *his good* [avgaqo,j],
 - ii) What is spiritually constructive: *to* [pro,j] *build him up* [oivkodomh,].
 - iii) Do we have an example of someone who has done this?
- b) The foundation of the command—15:3
 - i) Stated NEGATIVELY: ³ *For* [ga,r] (the) *Christ did not please* [avre,skw] *himself*,
 - (1) John 4:34; 5:30; 8:29
 - ii) Stated POSITIVELY: *but as it is written* (Ps. 69:9), *“The reproaches of those who reproached you (i.e. God the Father) fell on me.”*
 - (1) He willingly embraced the verbal abuse and the resulting shame intended for others.
 - iii) There has always been the tendency of God’s people to insist on their rights to engage in activities—sometimes questionable activities—on the basis of Christian liberty. But the more virtuous approach proffered by Paul is the willingness to surrender those rights for the sake of unity. (Moody)
- c) Some purposes of the OT for NT believers—15:4
 - i) There is a TEACHING purpose—15:4a ⁴ *For* [ga,r] *whatever was written in former days was written for* [eivj] *our instruction* [didaskali,a],

- ii) There is a FUTURE purpose—15:4b *that [i[na] through endurance [u`pomoh,] and through the encouragement [para,khsij] of the Scriptures we might have hope [evlpi,]*.
- iii) As Christians learn from the *past* (what is written in the OT about others who did not please themselves) they are motivated to endure and be comforted in the *present*, looking ahead in hope (confidence) to the *future*. (BKC)

3) A prayer-wish—15:5-6

- a) The desire for unity—15:5 ⁵ *May the God of endurance [u`pomoh,] and encouragement [para,khsij] grant [opt. di,dwmi] you^{pl} to live in such harmony (think the same thing; cf. 12:16) with [evn] one another, in accord with [kata,] Christ Jesus,*
 - i) He is not praying so much that they would agree on food and holidays, but on how to treat one another with love and stop being critical of each other.
- b) The purpose of unity—15:6 ⁶ *that together [o`moqumado,n] (internally; of one passion) you^{pl} may with one voice (externally) glorify [doxa,zw] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

4) The command to welcome each other—15:7-13

- This paragraph concludes the train of thought from 14:1-15:6.
- a) The command itself—15:7 ⁷ *Therefore* (because of the character of God and the purpose of His Word) *welcome [proslamba,nw] one another*
 - i) The standard—15:7b *as Christ has welcomed [proslamba,nw] you^{pl}*
 - ii) The purpose—15:7c *for [eivj] the glory of God.*
- b) The basis for the command—15:8-12 ⁸ *For I tell you that Christ became [pf. gi,nomai] (and remains) a servant [dia,konoj] to the circumcised to [u`pe,r] show God's truthfulness [avlh,qeia], ...*
 - i) Jesus directly served the **Jews**—*in order [eivj] to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,*
 - (1) Given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
 - ii) Jesus indirectly served the **Gentiles**—⁹ *and in order that the Gentiles might glorify [doxa,zw] God for his mercy [e;leo].*
 - (1) This Gentile focus is found through the entire OT: *As it is written, ...*
 - (a) From the Writings: *“Therefore I will praise [evxomologe,w] (acknowledge the nature of) you among [evn] the Gentiles, and sing [ya,llw] (with instrumental accompaniment) to your name.”* (Ps. 18:49)
 - (i) God gives the Gentiles a witness from the Jews.
 - (b) From the Law: ¹⁰ *And again it is said, “Rejoice [euvfrai,nw] (celebrate), O Gentiles, with [meta,] his people.”* (Deut. 32:43)
 - (i) God gives the Gentiles an opportunity to worship with His people.

(c) From the Writings: ¹¹ *And again, “Praise [avine,w] (speak of the excellence of) the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol [evpaine,w] (intensified, speak of the excellence of) him.” (Ps. 117:1)*
(i) God gives Gentiles clear commands to obey.

(d) From the Prophets: ¹² *And again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse Jesus; Rev. 22:16) will come, even he who arises [avni,sthmi] to rule [a;rcw] the Gentiles; in [evpi,] him will the Gentiles hope [evlpi,zw].” (Is. 11:10)*

(i) God gives the Gentiles genuine hope.

(2) Note the highlighted progression for the Gentiles through the four texts.

iii) God’s two purposes in the ministry of Christ are being achieved **now** while Israel nationally has been set aside (cf. Rom. 11:1–31) and the church is being formed of both Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14–22). And it will be achieved **in the future** when Israel is restored to her place as head of the nations and becomes a means of blessing to everyone (cf. Deut. 30:1–10). (BKC)

5) Benediction—15:13

- a) Prayer-wish: ¹³ *May the God of (granting) hope [evlpi,j] fill [opt. plhro,w] you^{pl} (Jew and Gentile) with all joy and peace in [evn] believing [pisteu,w],*
- b) Purpose: *so that [eivj] by [evn] the power [du,namij] of the Holy Spirit you^{pl} (Jew and Gentile) may abound in [evn] hope.*

6) Things to remember:

- a) The world lives in disharmony. Will we be an example of Godward harmony for them?
- b) Both the strong and the weak must take the initiative to welcome each other.

Romans 15:14-33
Godward Ministry, Planning, and Prayer

Introduction: The conclusion begins!

1) Paul was engaged in Godward MINISTRY in the past—15:14-21

- a) Paul is persuaded by what he knows about the Roman believers—15:14
 - i) Because the Roman believers were actively beneficial: ¹⁴ *I myself* (emphatic) *am satisfied* [pf. pei,qw] (persuaded) *about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full* [mesto,j] *of goodness* [avgaqwsu,nh],
 - He is writing to the church members, not the pastors.
 - (1) Preparation for active beneficence
 - (a) *filled* [pf. pass. ptc. plhro,w] *with all knowledge* [gnw/sij]
 - ii) Essentials for active benevolence
 - (1) *and able* [pres. ptc. du,namai] *to instruct* [nouqete,w] *one another*.
 - (a) Impacting not only the intellect but also the will.
 - iii) Some see a sense of irony here, that Paul would include this in his letter that, at times, was bold toward the Romans Christians.
 - b) Paul is bold as he writes the letter to the Romans—15:15-16
 - i) Noted: ¹⁵ *But on some points I have written to you very boldly* [tolmhro,j] (emphatic) *by way of reminder* (of truths they already knew),
 - ii) Sacrificial language: (note the Tri-unity) *because of the grace given me by God* (the Father) ¹⁶ *to* [eivj] *be a minister* [leitourgo,j] *of Christ Jesus to* [eivj] *the Gentiles in the priestly service* [i`erourge,w] *of the gospel of* (from or about?) *God, so that* [i[na] *the offering* [prosfora,] *of the Gentiles may be acceptable* [euvpro,sdektoj], *sanctified* [pf. pass. a`gia,zw] *by* [evn] *the Holy Spirit*.
 - (1) The Gentiles are no longer unclean!
 - c) Paul is satisfied with his Godward ministry—15:17-21 (note the Tri-unity)
 - i) Satisfaction—15:17 ¹⁷ *In* [evn] *Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud* [kau,chsij] (a reason for being satisfied with) *of my work for* [pro,j] *God (the Father)*.
 - ii) Resolve—15:18-19a ¹⁸ *For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to* [eivj] *bring the Gentiles to obedience* (cf. 1:5; Acts 17:30)
 - (1) How were these things accomplished? —*by word and deed, ¹⁹ by* [evn] *the power* [du,namij] *of signs and wonders, by* [evn] *the power* [du,namij] *of the Spirit of God*—
 - (a) Signs and wonders were designed to authenticate one as an apostle. Thus, they were not common to every Christian.
 - iii) Ambition—15:19b-21
 - (1) The **past**: *so that* [w[ste] *from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum* (north of Macedonia, modern Croatia) *I have fulfilled* [pf. plhro,w] *the ministry of the gospel* [euvagge,lion] *of Christ*;

- (a) There is a time when one's ministry in an area is done.
- (b) Apparently he was comfortable that others would be used of God to accomplish what needed to be done.
- (2) The **future**: ²⁰ *and thus* (in this way) *I make it my ambition* [filotime,omai] *to preach the gospel* [euaggeli,zw], *not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation,* ²¹ *but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."* (Is. 52:15)
- (3) Paul viewed himself as a church planter rather than a pastor.

2) Paul utilized Godward PLANNING in the present—15:22-29

- a) Reviewing the PAST—15:22-24
 - i) ²² *This is the reason why I have so often been hindered* (by whom or what?; cf. 1:13) *from coming to you.* ²³ *But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions* (the eastern Roman Empire), *and since I have longed for many years to come to you,* ²⁴ *I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on* (materially supported) *my journey there by you, once* (3rd class condition) *I have enjoyed* (been satisfied with) *your company for a while.*
- b) Explaining the PRESENT—15:25-27
 - i) ²⁵ *At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints.* ²⁶ *For Macedonia* (Philippi, Thessalonica) *and Achaia* (Corinth) *have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.* ²⁷ *For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought* (a voluntary obligation) *also to be of service to them in material blessings.*
 - ii) Note the different concepts for giving: diakone,w, koinwni,a, leitouge,w
- c) Anticipating the FUTURE—15:28-29
 - i) Plan—15:28 ²⁸ *When therefore I have completed this and have* (securely) *delivered to them* [sfragi,zw] *what has been collected* (1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8-9), *I will leave for Spain by way of you.*
 - ii) Anticipation—15:29 ²⁹ *I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness* [plh,rwma] *of the blessing of Christ.*

3) Paul was dependent on Godward PRAYER for the future—15:30-32

- a) Pray to God the Father—15:30 ³⁰ *I appeal to you, brothers, by our* **Lord Jesus Christ** *and by the love of the* **Spirit**, *to strive together* [sunagwni,zomai] *with me in your prayers to* **God (the Father)** *on my behalf,*
 - i) Note the active Tri-unity of God
- b) Note Paul's submissive dependence—15:31-32
 - i) Concerning being rescued from unbelievers: ³¹ *that I may be delivered* [r`u,omai] *from the unbelievers in Judea,* (Acts 21:27-36)

- ii) Concerning acceptance among believers: *and that my service [diakoni,a] for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,*
- iii) Concerning his purpose: ³² *so that [i[na] by God's will [qe,lhma] ...*
 - (1) Anticipated joy: *I may come to you with joy*
 - (2) Anticipated rest: *and be refreshed [sunanapau,omai] in your company.*

4) Benediction—15:33

- a) ³³ *May the God of (the One who gives) peace be with you all. Amen.*
 - i) Cf. Rom. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 3:16; Heb. 13:20-21

5) Things to remember:

- a) May God grant us the grace to keep a Godward perspective regarding our past, present, and future.
- b) May God grant us the grace to minister, plan, and pray in such a way that He is exalted and glorified in and through our lives.