

## Romans 15

By: Charles Stanley

From: On the Epistle to the Romans

The apostle says, We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. How tender then we ought to be now in these days when all are weak, and feeble together. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. Is not this truly lovely?

Where shall we find it perfectly exemplified? Oh, there is One, yes, one only perfect One. For EVEN CHRIST pleased not Himself. No self-vindication; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on Me. His eye ever on and up to the Father, He was the expression, the revelation of the Father, God manifest. And all the reproaches He felt to be against His Father. He answered not again, He pleased not Himself, but His ineffable delight was to bear all, and do the will of Him that sent Him. Now, the GOD OF PATIENCE and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus. That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a prayer! How needed at all times, but more especially in the last days of discord. He is the perfect copy; it is “according to Christ Jesus.” He has received us to the glory of God, yes, as objects of mercy according to the riches of His grace.

Let us never forget how He has received us, in receiving one another. Then the scriptures are quoted to show how grace has, and was, to abound to the Gentiles. This showed that Jewish believers were not to reject them. It is also to be observed, that these scriptures will have their complete fulfillment in the millennial kingdom. “There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.”

Then follows another prayer, Now, the GOD OF HOPE fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. How distinctly the

state of the soul is connected with the coming of the Lord, though it is not the subject of this Epistle! May we know our Father as the God of patience, and the God of hope.

**Verse 14:** In this verse it must be noted that there is no thought of the first bishop of Rome. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish ONE ANOTHER. Now is it not remarkable that in the whole of this inspired letter to the saints at Rome, there is not a single sentence that can have the slightest recognition of, or reference to, such a person as a bishop of Rome.

The brethren were able to admonish one another; and each was responsible according to the measure of grace bestowed, as in chapter 12. The first bishop of Rome and his successors are a pure invention of after times. Had Peter been, or any other brother THE BISHOP of Rome, Paul must here have recognized him as such. Does he not rather declare his own apostleship, as minister of the Gentiles? (Vss. 16-20). All this to Paul was the free favor of God, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. And the result of all this blessed favor, he could offer up to God, “being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” Now, all thus being of the free favor of God, he could glory. I have therefore, whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

The young believer will do well to ponder these precious divine principles of service — how the Gentiles had been made obedient to the gospel. Through mighty signs and wonders, by (not human wisdom or eloquence, but) the power of the Spirit of God. And what a mission to the Gentiles! And mark the true work of this evangelist not to build on another’s foundation. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named. This is most important.

Oh, think even in this day, how many thousands of nominal Christians are in the towns and villages, who have never heard the

gospel. And in many places, there is a real thirst for the simple truth. It is most cheering to know how God in sovereign grace is using tracts. Still, it is pleasing in His sight, that His saints should not only spread these in faith, in regions beyond, but also the evangelist take the glad tidings everywhere, “and round about.”

Some may say, we are not evangelists. No, but you can help the evangelist; let him be well supplied with tracts and books: these greatly help him in his blessed work in winning souls to God, and in building them up when converted. You can help, perhaps, most in prayer, and sympathy. You can help him to take lodgings in the distant village. In a word, if our hearts are stirred up in the sympathy of Christ for precious souls, He will open a way in which we can be fellow-helpers in this work. The Lord give us more of the yearning after souls we have in these verses.

**Verse 22:** For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you... and having a great desire, these many years, to come unto you. Here a fact of no little importance is recorded. The Holy Spirit well knew the future arrogance of the professing church, and how Rome would be the ultimate head of those pretensions. He has therefore carefully excluded all knowledge as to who first preached Christ at Rome. It is evident, from these words that the apostle of the Gentiles had, as yet, never been there. Neither is there a particle of evidence that either Peter, or any other apostle, had been there when it was founded, and the brethren were able to edify one another.

We also learn that this epistle was written about the time that Paul went up to Jerusalem, to carry the contributions to the poor saints. That is a little before he was sent a prisoner to Rome (Acts 20-21). He did not know what means the Lord would employ to send him to Rome. Let us learn in this that the Lord can, and will, accomplish all His purpose.

**Verse 29:** And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Yes, and though bonds and imprisonment, and the fierce Euroclydon, awaited him as companions to Rome, yet his Lord did not disappoint him. It was from Rome, and at Rome, the Lord used him in bringing out the fullness of the gospel in the revelation of the church. And from thence he sent the precious stream of truth to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Thus, in the severest storms of life, we may rest in patience, assured that He doeth all things well.

**Verses 30-31:** We see how the apostle valued the prayers of saints he had never seen; and yet the Lord answers those prayers in His own way. He has in this chapter spoken of God as “the God of hope,” and “the God of patience.” “Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.” Thus we surely need to know Him as the God of hope, patience, and peace. How important thus to know Him in these last and difficult days.

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