



Living for Others

Romans 15:1-13

Paul continues on in the spirit of the former chapter (Romans 14) by stressing how love is to specifically work itself out in strained relationships. The church at Rome evidently had certain tensions that Paul was here addressing (between Jew and non-Jews). There are certain positive things we can do to release tension and strained relationships.



◆ 1# Practice of Love (Ro 15:1)

“Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.” (Romans 15:1).

Strong does not mean oppressive. It is possible and important that through Christ we counter the world's admission that power tends to corrupt. Instead we capture our strengths for the purpose of ministering to those who are weak.

◆ 2# Instruction of Love (Ro 15:2)

“Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.” (Romans 15:2).

Paul amplifies the first statement by connecting it to Jesus' words. The Golden Rule: Seek the edification (i.e. building up) of others. Work to their advantage.

◆ 3# The Basis for Love (Ro 15:3-4)

“For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, ‘THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED THEE FELL UPON ME.’ For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” (Romans 15:3-4).

Some people avoid loving others because they might be hurt. It is a good thing Jesus did not go by this strategy. Instead, we love others no matter what their response is to us. We do not treat people good because they deserve it but because the Lord calls us to live this way. This was clearly the policy Christ lived by, and it is the same for His disciples.

The statement on “whatever was written in earlier times” refers to the OT scriptures (see later in the verse). Today we still use the Old Testament to encourage us in our faith. The scriptures are very relevant, and we should not at all treat the Old Testament as something that is irrelevant to us today.

◆ **4# The Result of Love (Ro 15:5-12)**

“that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers,” (Romans 15:6-8).

Paul prays that we have the same mind toward each other.

We are to love others as Christ loved us. We are to live in such an accepting way so that we focus on our responsibility of pleasing God rather than ourselves.

Verses 9-12 further supplies Old Testament ‘proof’ of the common calling of Jews and Gentiles. “And again, “PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.”” (Romans 15:11). They are to serve the Lord together.

LOVE

◆ **5# The Power of Love (Ro 15:13; 5:5)**

“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.” (Romans 15:13).

Interestingly, Paul engages in another benediction (lit. good word) in verse 13. The first one was in 15:5. He will close the book of Romans with the third blessing in 16:25. We must assume other things kept coming to His mind so that he picked up the pen after closing the book. In this case of 15:13, Paul will go on and explain why he has been so slow getting to Rome.

Summary

Verses 14:1-15:13 are special instructions on how two very different groups in the church are to live in harmony with each other and positively live out their lives in the spirit of Christ’s love.