

Prayer:

Slide # 1
Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical: 12:1-15:33** (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

Paul begins the letter of Romans by showing that the whole human race is WRONG with God. Paul then shows how we can be RIGHT with God with two interrelated emphases. 1) We need to know WHO Jesus is as Lord-God and Savior; and 2) we need to put our faith in Him as Lord and Savior. Paul emphasizes being right with God involves what Jesus has done for us and our response of faith.

Having established the truth of justification by faith Paul then building on that emphasizes how we should then live. A large section of the book has this emphasis involving various aspects of life. But the longest and strongest emphasis concerning how we should then live comes at the end of the letter as seen in Romans 14:1-15:13 where Paul emphasizes the importance of Christians getting along to the glory of God.

Being RIGHT with God and being RIGHT with others as fellow believers are the major emphases in the book of Romans and in Paul’s writings generally.

Back in 1992 Rodney King was brutally beaten as he was arrested in L.A. The result was widespread riots and burning down all kinds of businesses, etc. Rodney King famously came on TV and said, “**Can’t we all just get along?**”

The world finds that very hard to do! What characterizes the world is wars and rumors of wars, fussin, fightin, and feudin.

Slide # 2

Titus 3:3 (NKJV)

3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

This defines the world of the lost generally. They don't know the Prince of Peace and therefore there will be no lasting peace until He comes.

But for God's people it is to be different. We are to be a peace-loving people. Jesus said, "**Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.**" (Mt. 5:9). Jesus said, "**By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**" (Jn. 13:35). A major part of our testimony as true Christians is that we are to get along – to have biblical unity centered in truth – centered in Christ.

This is the major emphasis that Paul makes for a chapter and a half as seen here in Romans 14 and 15. This is a HUGE part of our testimony – and of MAJOR IMPORTANCE!

"Can't we just get along?" Well, yes, as we walk in the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit, we can!

Years ago we had someone in the Church and they said they just couldn't get along with someone, and they didn't like them. Their solution to the problem they said, was that they stayed on one side of the Church and the other party stayed on the other side of the Church. I told them that was a foreign spirit to me. They however, thought it was perfectly acceptable. I told them it made no sense to me. It is foreign to everything I see Paul teaching in terms of how God's people should carry on. Not surprisingly, those people are all gone from the Church. Such an attitude doesn't make for healthy body life.

When people refuse to get along, there is something spiritually wrong. Now note that you can't help what other people do. You can only be responsible for your own attitude and actions. As Paul says in Romans 12:18, "**If it is possible as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.**" Paul fleshes this out in Romans 14 and 15.

In particular, Paul has been dealing with secondary matters where Christians have differing opinions. He is dealing with strong and weak believers who have differing backgrounds and differing levels of understanding.

Here are some of the principles that he has brought out.

Slide # 3

- 1) Don't have a critical attitude.
- 2) Live with a clear conscience in light of Christ's Lordship.
- 3) Don't be a stumbling block regarding someone else's conscience.
- 4) Follow Christ's "selfless example," thinking about the other person's highest spiritual good.

And with all this in mind Paul prays this for them in Romans 15:5-6....

Slide # 4

Romans 15:5–6 (NKJV)

5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,
6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul now continues on and finishes out his emphasis on biblical unity amongst God's people, as seen in Romans 15:7-13. We pick up our study today in Romans 15:7.

Romans 15:7–13 (NKJV)

7 Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

In Romans 14:1 Paul said for the strong to receive the weak but here he says to receive one another. So, the message at this point is to both the weak and the strong. Whatever our level of maturity, as believers in Christ, we are to receive one another.

To receive one another means to accept one another – to welcome one another wholeheartedly (cf. Acts 28:1-2; Phile. 12, 17).

As noted in the previous discussion Paul brings up the issues of diet and days. And clearly as he goes on to show in chapter 15 he is talking about differences in background between Jews and Gentiles. These differences could cause tensions. But Paul emphasizes that now in Christ we should fully accept one another as fellow believers.

To not accept a fellow believer is very hurtful! In effect, this makes a statement that they are not right with God and perhaps they are not even saved. That is very damaging!

The phone rang in a fashionable suburban home. "Hi Mom, I'm coming home." It was a serviceman in San Diego who had just returned home from active duty. The mother was wild with joy that her boy was alive.

"I'm bringing a buddy home with me," the boy said. "He got hurt pretty bad. Only has one eye, one arm, and one leg. He has no home and I'd like him to live with us."

"Sure son," the mother said. "He can stay with us for a while."

"Mom you don't understand. I want him to always live with us"

"Well okay" the mother relented. "We'll try him for a year."

"But Mom. I want him to be with us always. He's in bad shape, One eye, one arm, and one leg."

The mother became impatient. "Son you are too emotional about this. You've been to war. The boy will be a drag on you."

Suddenly the boy hung up.

The next day the parents received word from the Navy. The night before their son had leaped to his death from a hotel window in San Diego.

And when the boy's body was shipped home, the parents found he had one eye, one arm, and one leg.

Rejection can be devastating. Not being accepted for who you are as a believer in Christ is very spiritually damaging.

And then Paul qualifies "***receiving one another***" with "***just as Christ also received us***". In Romans 14:3 Paul emphasized that God has received both the weak and the strong. As noted before, Paul is not dealing with differences on core fundamental gospel issues. These people all agree on the Lordship of Christ. They are all serious about serving Jesus as Lord.

Slide # 5

Romans 14:6–9 (NKJV)

6 He who observes the day, observes it to the **Lord**; and he who does not observe the day, to the **Lord** he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the **Lord**, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the **Lord** he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.

8 For if we live, we live to the **Lord**; and if we die, we die to the **Lord**. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the **Lord's**.

9 For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be **Lord** of both the dead and the living.

These people (both the weak and the strong) know Jesus as LORD. They are all serious about living for Him. They all believe on Jesus as Lord!

How has Christ received us?

He receives all who come to Him in faith!

Slide # 6**Romans 5:1 (NKJV)**

1 Therefore, **having been justified by faith**, we have **peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**,

And Christ receives us fully on that basis ALONE! There is no probation. There are no small print qualifiers. There is immediately full acceptance on the basis of FAITH ALONE.

Side # 7**Romans 8:1 (LSB)**

1 Therefore there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.

This is how we are to accept one another as believers in Christ. We fully accept one another on the basis of our mutual faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior! The basis of true fellowship is a shared faith! We can disagree on many secondary issues, but what binds us together is our faith in the gospel. We all know Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior!

Now realize that Paul is talking about unity in regard to serious fellow believers and not about unity with false teachers or those who don't hold to the true gospel of grace.

In fact, in the space of just a few verses, Paul is going to put forth this exhortation regarding biblical separation.

Slide # 8

Romans 16:17–18 (NKJV)

17 Now I urge you, brethren, **note those** who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and **avoid them**.

18 For those who are such **do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ**, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

There is to be no fellowship with false teachers or those who cause division contrary to sound doctrine. Rather we are to mark them and avoid them. The unity emphasis here in Romans 14 and 15 is between true believers.

As true believers, we are to receive one another just as Christ has received us on the basis of FAITH alone.

As brand-new believers, we come with lots of immaturity. And yet Christ accepts us. We start off with lots of baggage – there is a lot of need for growth. We have our prejudices, blind spots, lack of understanding, shortcomings, habits, stubbornness, foibles, idiosyncrasies, cultural hang-ups, and all sorts of weaknesses. And guess what? We still all have our struggles, no matter how mature. None of will be perfect until we get to glory! We are in process – but not perfect – not in practice. And yet, Christ accepts us on the basis of our faith ALONE!

If Christ accepts someone – should not we? Who do we think we are? Are we above Christ? Aren't you glad Christ doesn't walk away from you because of your failures and weaknesses? Receive one another, just as Christ has received us.

And Paul says to do this ***“to the glory of God.”*** In this God is glorified. It exalts Him. It speaks highly of Him when we get along and accept each other as fellow believers.

Christ, the night before He was crucified, prayed for the believers that would follow after Him.

Slide # 9

John 17:20–21 (NKJV)

20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

God the Father answered this prayer. As believers, we have a spiritual ONENESS in Christ. We all share in the same faith. We all have the same Lord (Eph. 4:5). We all have the same Holy Spirit living inside (1 Cor. 12:13). We have all been made a part of the same spiritual family called Church (1 Cor. 12:13). Yes, this prayer has been answered. Positionally speaking we as believers are unified in Christ. We are one – spiritually. It is for this reason that Paul says....

Slide # 10**Ephesians 4:3 (NKJV)**

3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Note Paul does not say endeavoring to CREATE the unity, but rather to KEEP it. It is already a spiritual reality. We now need to live in accordance with it. That is the great challenge!

And when we do it brings glory to God. It speaks of His work in our lives! It champions Him for what He has done to make this a reality. This is our grand objective – to bring glory to God. Paul places a double emphasis on this reality in verses 6 and 7.

Slide # 11**Romans 15:6–7 (NKJV)**

6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

The chief end of man is to glorify God. We were created for God – to bring Him glory! And a KEY way we do this is by functionally accepting one another, by loving one another, by wholeheartedly receiving one another. Christ received us to the glory of God, and we are to receive each other to the glory of God.

No one is ostracized in heaven. There are no “losers” in heaven. No one is looked down on or rejected in heaven. No one is spurned in heaven! No one is discriminated against in heaven! The Church is to be a little bit of heaven on earth. It is a place where you, as a fellow believer, are to be valued and loved! This brings glory to God! Let us live for the glory of God – let us accept one another – affirm one another – support one another – encourage one another.

This doesn't mean there is no accountability – there is, as we are called to be a holy family. Yes, sin breaks fellowship, but Paul here, at this point, is not dealing with SIN in the family. Rather, he is speaking on a very basic level in terms of the lowest common denominator of fellowship that unites us all. If we are fellow believers, we can have fellowship and should accept one another on that basis.

Paul began this section in chapter 14 (14:1-3) with an appeal for acceptance of one another, and he ends with the very same emphasis here in chapter 15 (15:7). Sandwiched in between is his long and reasoned argument on how the weak and the strong should get along and treat one another. This is what living for the glory of God is all about!

All through the letter of Romans Paul is addressing in the background the tensions between those of Jewish background and those with a Gentile background, showing that NOW in the family of God they need to get along. This is their calling!

Slide # 12

Romans 1:16–17 (NKJV)

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, **for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

God's plan involves both the Jew and the Gentile – it is a BIG plan – big enough to include BOTH! Paul's emphasis is that on the BASIS of FAITH, God receives all who come to Him.

Slide # 13

Romans 3:29–30 (NKJV)

29 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? **Yes, of the Gentiles also,**

30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised **by faith** and the uncircumcised **through faith.**

All are saved in the very same way – on the basis of FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is on this basis that we should receive one another. Paul now is going to show that God’s plan involves both Jew and Gentile. First, he shows this to be true in regard to the Jew and then in regard to the Gentile. Both matter. Both have value. Both are to be accepted!

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

Jesus Christ came to earth as a SERVANT. The word “servant” (Gk. *diaknonon*) here is the same basic word that is elsewhere translated as “deacon,” which means “servant” or “minister”. The deacons of the Church are servants. They serve in functional ways as the close assistants to the elders. Christ came to serve (cf. Lk. 22:27; Gal. 4:4-5).

Slide # 14

Mark 10:45 (NKJV)

45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, **but to serve,** and to give His life a ransom for many.”

And specifically, in this context, the emphasis is that Christ came as a servant to the circumcision, which is to say, to the Jews. Circumcision was the outward sign that they as Jews were in a special covenant relationship with God.

And Jesus came serving to the end that He might fulfill the truthfulness of God in fulfilling the covenant promises that God made to the fathers – that is the Jewish patriarchs such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David.

Slide # 15

Matthew 15:24 (NKJV)

24 But He answered and said, **“I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”**

God made Messianic promises to Israel. These were covenant promises and Jesus is the One by whom those promises are fulfilled. Thus, we clearly see the Jews have a priority position in God's grand plan. They are not to be slighted as a people group. They have a special place in God's program. They ALONE received the covenant promises – and those promises must be fulfilled through them (cf. Rom. 9:4-5).

Remember the Messiah is first and foremost a Jewish Messiah! He is the promised deliverer of Israel. As Jesus said, “**salvation is of the Jews**” (Jn. 4:22). The problem was that when Jesus came and presented Himself to Israel, they largely rejected Him as their Messiah.

Slide # 16

John 1:11–12 (NKJV)

11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

God's plan all along is that His great plan of salvation flows through Israel. Paul makes this emphasis strongly in Romans 9-11 telling the Gentiles to be humble because Israel is the root and they are merely “**grafted in**” on the basis of faith (Rom. 11:17-24). And then he goes on to emphasize that God is not yet done with Israel as there will yet come a time when “**all Israel will be saved**” (Rom. 11:26).

But Paul's point at this point is that the Jews are not to be put down because of their background but rather realize the special place they serve in the sovereign plan of God. As believers, they are to be fully received and accepted. Realize that God's great plan of salvation – the fulfillment of all His covenant promises happens in conjunction with Israel through the Jewish Messiah.

But note that while Israel is special in that they received the covenant promises, yet, verse 8 is not a complete sentence as the thought continues on into the next verse.

God never intended for Israel to operate in a vacuum completely independent of the world. He always intended to use Israel as a TOOL to reach out to the entire world. Yes, Israel is special, but they are not the full story – they are not an end within themselves.

Slide # 17**Genesis 12:1–3 (NKJV)**

1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To **a land** that I will show you.

2 I will make **you a great nation**; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**”

Note it very carefully that God’s intention was that through Abram all the families of the earth would be blessed. And this would ultimately happen through the Jewish Messiah Who would come as Savior of the world.

Slide # 18**Genesis 22:18 (NKJV)**

18 In your seed **all the nations** of the earth shall be blessed.... [to Abraham]

Genesis 26:4 (NKJV)

4 ...and in your seed **all the nations** of the earth shall be blessed...[to Isaac]

Genesis 28:14 (NKJV)

14 ... and in your seed **all the families** of the earth shall be blessed. [to Jacob]

It was through Jesus Who is called “the Son of Abraham” in Matt. 1:1 that this was ultimately to be fulfilled.

Slide # 19**Galatians 3:14 (NKJV)**

14 that the **blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus**, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit **through faith.**

Galatians 3:16 (NKJV)

16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” **who is Christ.**

And this is where Paul now goes – showing that the Gentiles also have a special place in the BIG picture plan of God.

9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.”

The Jews were given covenant promises, but the Gentiles had no such promises (cf. Eph. 2:12). They fit in simply on the basis of MERCY. God in His great plan of salvation demonstrates His faithfulness to Israel in relation to His covenant promises and He demonstrates His mercy in relation to the Gentiles. Thus, both have become the benefiteres of the Messiah’s ministry.

The fact that God’s plan mercifully included the Gentiles is repeatedly seen in the OT. Paul, in verses 9-12, gives four quotes from all three sections of the Hebrew OT Scriptures to make his point.

His first quote comes from David as seen in Psalm 18:49 and 2 Sam. 22:50 – showing that David’s testimony extended beyond the Jews to also include Gentiles.

Slide # 20

2 Samuel 22:50 (NKJV)

50 Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, **among the Gentiles**,
And sing praises to Your name.

Psalm 18:49 (NKJV)

49 Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, **among the Gentiles**,
And sing praises to Your name.

Paul is showing that the Gentiles were no “afterthought”. They have been included all along as recognized even by David. Therefore, the Jewish believer should not think it contradictory for God to be working in reference to Gentiles as well as Jews.

10 And again he says: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”

This is a quote from God as spoken through His servant Moses in Deut. 32:43.

Slide # 21

Deuteronomy 32:43 (NKJV)

43 “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people.”

There is a progression of thought here. In the first quote, praise is given to God among the Gentiles. Thus, the Gentiles were witness to the worship of the one true God. But in the second quote, the Gentiles themselves are called upon to enter into the celebration of God with His people Israel.

11 And again: “Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!”

This third quote comes from Psalm 117:1. Psalm 117 is the shortest chapter in the Bible, consisting of only two verses. And it is positioned right in the very middle of the Bible.

Slide # 22**Psalm 117:1 (NKJV)**

1 Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!

Here, the thought progresses to where the Gentiles, of their own accord, are giving praise to YHWH – the covenant God of Israel. All peoples without distinction are called on to praise the LORD. He is a God for all peoples!

12 And again, Isaiah says: “There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.”

This fourth quote (which under inspiration is loosely quoted) comes from Isaiah 11:10.

Slide # 23**Isaiah 11:10 (NKJV)**

10 “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.”

Here the thought progresses to where the Gentiles actively seek the Jewish Messiah and are found to be under His reign in the kingdom. Isaiah 11:10 is a Messianic kingdom text that finds ultimate fulfillment in the kingdom (cf. Zech. 14:16; Mal. 1:11).

Jesse was the father of king David. Thus, this is a way of referring to the Messiah Who comes through the line of David. He is the Son of David as promised in the Davidic Covenant (cf. 2 Sam. 7:8-16). When it says He is the root of Jesse it means Messiah is the Creator or origin of Jesse. In Revelation 5:5 the Messiah is spoken of as “the **Root of David**”.

Slide # 24

Revelation 22:16 (NKJV)

16 “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the **Root** and the **Offspring** of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

This is a profound verse showing the Jesus the Messiah is the ROOT (meaning the Creator) of David and at the same time He is the OFFSPRING of David (accounting for His humanity). We see here both the Deity and the Humanity of Christ. But note His identification with David! In 2 Sam. 7 an eternal throne was promised to David which is fulfilled in his greater Son (humanly speaking) who is Messiah Jesus.

Isaiah 11:10 is clearly and undeniably is a Messianic text and clearly the Gentiles in the end have a place in His kingdom under His reign. And then Paul under inspiration interprets this as: “***In Him the Gentiles shall hope***”.

Paul makes this application, saying, that the Messiah would be One whom the Gentiles would set their hope on – which is a way of saying that they would trust in Him to fulfill His promises. They, too, would be people of faith.

Slide # 25

Gentiles witness the worship of God – (Ps. 18:49; Rom. 15:9)

Gentiles worship with Jews - (Deut. 32:43; Rom. 15:10)

Gentiles worship God of their own accord – (Ps. 117:1; Rom. 15:11)

Gentiles seek the Jewish Messiah and He rules over them – (Isa. 11:10; Rom. 15:12)

The Gentiles are definitely included in God's great plan of salvation. They are not left out! Yes, God is faithful to His covenant promises to the Jew, but He is also a very merciful God in relation to the Gentile. The point is that His plan applies to both Jew and Gentile.

Paul repeatedly quoting from the OT serves to show how the whole Bible, properly understood, fits and harmonizes together regarding this theme of including both Jew and Gentile in His sovereign plan.

Slide # 26



The Jews divided the whole of the OT into a three-fold division, as represented here by Paul in Romans 15:9-12.

Slide # 27

Luke 24:44 (NKJV)

44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the **Law of Moses** and the **Prophets** and the **Psalms** concerning Me."

The Jews divided the OT into **Law of Moses** – the first five books of the Bible. Paul quoted from this section here in Romans 15:10 as he quotes from Deut. 32:43. Then he quoted from the **prophet section** as he quoted from Isaiah 11:10, as seen in Romans 15:12. And finally, he quoted from the **Psalms** seen in both Romans 15:9 and 11 as he quoted from Psalm 18:49 and Psalm 117:1, respectively.

In doing so, Paul is showing that the whole of the OT Scriptures show that God's plan all along included the both the Gentile as well the Jew. Therefore he forcefully makes the point that we should accept one another to the glory of God. This is his essential point!

Having stated that the Gentiles shall hope in the Jewish Messiah in a KINGDOM context triggers Paul to break out in verse 13 in the language of a benedictory prayer - which is the first of several benedictions in these last two chapters (cf. Rom. 15:13, 33; 16:20, 25-27).

13 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.

Paul at this point, is thinking and emphasizing HOPE.

We commonly use the word hope in the sense of a hope so hope. We hope to get a better job, we hope it won't snow, and so forth.

But the Bible does not use hope in this way. It does not speak of a hope so hope but rather of a "know so hope". In the Bible, hope is a CERTAIN EXPECTATION. It is a certain expectation that God will bring to pass what He has promised.

Slide # 28
HOPE

Based on God's Promise
Certain Expectation
Awaits Future Fulfillment
Destiny

Referring to God as **"the God of hope"** means not only that He is a God of promise but that He is certain to fulfill those promises. God is behind the HOPE that we have! In Romans 5:2-5 Paul points out that God is at work to build HOPE into His people of faith. In 5:2 he says that we **"rejoice in hope of the glory of God"**. This is our hope – we are on our way to glory.

In Romans 8, Paul says that we have a HOPE that eagerly awaits the glorification of our body, which is currently groaning and breaking down (cf. Rom. 8:22-25). In Romans 12:12 we rejoice in hope as we endure tribulations. It is our HOPE that keeps us going! We know that God is yet going to fulfill His promises and that the BEST is yet to be.

In Romans 11 Paul says that if the fall of the Jew resulted in spiritual riches for the Gentiles how much more will their restoration bring (Rom. 11:12). Indeed, the HOPE of the kingdom will result in an enriched glorious time for both Jew and Gentile.

Paul uses the word “**hope**” three times in Romans 15:12 and 13. With the kingdom hope in view (as just stated in verse 12) Paul’s prayer is that God would fill the believers with all joy and peace. Note, not just some joy and peace – but rather with **ALL** joy and peace.

Joy and peace are both part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Joy is spiritual delight in God and His promises. Peace is the assurance that God is in control and will fulfill His promise.

Joy and peace go together. But note that they are grounded in believing. There isn’t any joy or peace apart from believing! In John 15:11 Christ spoke of “**My joy**”, in John 14:27 Christ spoke of “**My peace**”. And in John 14:1 Jesus said, “**Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.**” Our experience of joy and peace are centered in belief in Christ. Believe His promises! Believe in Him!

It is so human to doubt our beliefs and believe our doubts. It’s part of the spiritual battle.

Joy and peace are the element of a Christian, but he is sometimes out of his element: joy and peace are his usual states, but there are times when, with fightings within and wars without, his joy departs, and his peace is broken. The leaves on the tree prove that the tree is alive, but the absence of leaves will not prove that the tree is dead.

– **Charles Spurgeon**

It is in believing that we abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. To abound in hope means to grow more and more certain of what God has promised. We can’t do this on our own – it happens by the power of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:5). We are dependent upon Him, which is why Paul is praying to that end.

Paul has UNITY on his mind and KINGDOM HOPE on his mind. It is this combination of things that he has in mind. In Romans 14:17 he pointed out that the kingdom living is all about “**righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**”. This will be perfectly fulfilled in the kingdom to come! This is our HOPE!

But Paul’s prayer is that even now, through believing, we would know kingdom joy and peace – ever abounding in HOPE for the best that is yet to be.

With Paul’s emphasis on unity in combination with a kingdom hope, he is saying that we ultimately look forward with certain expectation to the time in the kingdom when we will live in perfect harmony. Then there will be perfect acceptance. No more will we know the reality of strained relationships.

And the prayer is that we would more and more live consistently with the kingdom people (positionally) that we are. As believers we are headed for the kingdom – and are called to live accordingly. That really is Paul’s prayer for believers. Kingdom people should get along – we will in the kingdom – this is our certain expectation. And it should be so now as well!

In Revelation 5 we find the saints all with one accord sing to the Lamb...

Slide # 29

Revelation 5:9–12 (NKJV)

9 And they sang a new song, saying: “**You are worthy** to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”

Slide # 30

Revelation 7:9–10 (NKJV)

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “**Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!**”

Indeed, heaven is filled with people who with one mind and one mouth give glory to God! This is our HOPE! As believers let us accept one another to the glory of God! We are going to be together for all eternity – so let’s get along to the glory of God while here on earth! This is our calling!

Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) was a missionary for many years in Burma. And there he was imprisoned. As he suffered horrible torture in a squalid prison, a friend sent him a letter asking him, “***How’s the outlook?***” Judson replied, “***The outlook is as bright as the promises of God***”.

Indeed!

Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

13 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.