

## Notes on Romans 15

### Background:

**The writer:** Paul referred to himself as the apostle to the Gentiles. He brought the gospel to many parts of the Gentile world, planted assemblies and led the efforts to ensure fellowship between the Jewish and Gentile believers.

**The timing:** Paul was just completing his missionary tour in Greece and wanted to take to Jerusalem a large offering that the Saints of Macedonia and Achaia had assembled for the destitute believers in Jerusalem. Paul was looking for confirmation that the Gentile believers were being accepted with warmth and respect by the Jewish believers. After his visit to Jerusalem he planned to go through Rome to Spain on another missionary journey. (However God had different plans for his journey to Rome. According to Bruce even at the time of this writing rumours were circulating in Jerusalem by those trying to vilify Paul).

**The audience:** The church at Rome was very eclectic. Rome attracted or otherwise gathered people from all parts of the empire. This included Jewish believers, as well as people from Rome and other parts of the world. In earlier chapters Paul had taught them about the righteousness of God (light), the way to re-establish the relationship between man and God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (love), and the position the believer now has through the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit (life). He also described God's sovereign grace towards Jew and Gentile in reconciling them in one body to Himself. From chapter 12 on, he described the conduct of Christians manward and Godward as they manifest the life that they have in Christ.

**The context:** By God's sovereign grace Jewish and Gentile believers are part of the bride of Christ that throughout eternity would be worshipping the Lamb and the Father. The believers in Rome would be part of this bride that would fulfil Old Testament promises about gentiles worshipping God. Paul was encouraging them to show that future oneness in their service and testimony for the Lord in Rome. However this required effort on their part because of the many factors that led to discord and division. He then outlines his own personal efforts and plans for preaching the Gospel and bringing the Gentile believers into their blessings in Christ.

### Section A: Chapter 15:1-7 (Comprehensively covered in Richard McCammon's notes)

The goal of oneness and unity in an assembly can be achieved by:

- 15:1: Recognizing it is a moral requirement
- 15:2: Recognizing it is the purpose of God
- 15:3: Conforming to the example of the Lord Jesus Christ
- 15:4: Providing a witness to the correctness of Scripture (endorsement of the Old Testament)
- 15:5: Providing a witness to the character of God
- 15:6: Promoting unity in worship and appreciation of Christ (God wants to unite our minds and mouths in our worship and our service)
- 15:7: Promoting unity in the family character of the assembly.

How does the assembly at Parkview Street rate when measured against this standard?

### Section B: Chapter 15: 8- 13

The unity of Jew and Gentile will be achieved in glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ both in a future day and today. Perhaps as an appeal to Jewish believers Paul refers to the Old Testament to make his case.

- 15:8: Christ's purposes in ministering to the Jews
- 15:9: Christ's purposes in saving Gentiles – Gentiles praise God for mercy (Psa. 18:49)
- 15:10: Gentiles and Jews will rejoice in the same blessing (Deut. 32:43)
- 15:11: Gentiles would independently praise God for who he is (Psa. 117 – part of the Hallel)
- 15:12: The gentiles will bow to the rule of Christ and God (Isa. 11:10)

15:13: Paul's prayer that the condition which will stretch around the globe and through eternal ages would govern the life and decisions of believers in the Roman church (and in the Parkview Street Gospel Hall today).

### **Section C: Paul's role in advancing the purposes of God towards the Gentiles Chapter 15:14-21**

Paul's description of his role and service in the purposes of God with respect to the Roman assembly.

15:14: Paul believed the assembly of Rome was predisposed to do good.

15:15: Paul's sense of responsibility to ensure they fulfilled their part in God's purposes

15:16: Paul's ministry aimed at ensuring the "offering" of the Gentiles brought glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[God will raise up the Jews on earth in his time. Two errors today 1) church has replaced the Jewish nation. 2) this is the time of the Jewish nation – not the time God will deal with them later.]

[Paul was a minister of the Gospel – a priestly service – laboring publically under a higher authority]

15:17: Paul found his entire boast in the Lord Jesus Christ

15:18: Paul will only speak of his own experience and God's blessing on his service although he acknowledges that many influences have worked on the Gentiles

15:19: The Lord had been faithful in working through Him toward the Gentiles

15:20: Paul's missionary spirit – his commitment to reach those areas of the gentile world where the gospel had not been preached.

15:21: Paul's ministry was fulfilling prophecy (and thus the Word of God)

### **Section D: Paul's plans for the future and his desire for prayer 15:22-33**

15:22: God's blessing on Paul's labours in Greece prevented him from coming to Rome

15:23: Paul had completed his work in Greece and now would fulfill his desire to visit Rome

15:24: Paul was planning another missionary journey to Spain that would bring him through Rome.

15:25: However, first he would go to Jerusalem to minister there in a practical way

15:26: Saints in Macedonia and Achaia had provided a large offering for the Saints at Jerusalem

15:27: Paul acknowledged there was a debt to the believers in Jerusalem. Spiritual blessing had come forth from Jerusalem – it was proper that material blessing should be returned to them

15:28: Paul wanted to secure this fruit on behalf of the Gentile believers before going to Spain (he wanted to see the gift received)

15:29: Paul wanted to come among them in the full blessing of knowing the work of Christ for Jews and Gentiles was fully acknowledged

15:30: Paul requested they strive together in prayer because he realized that while the blessing could be great the enemies were strong and the risks were high

15:31- 32: Paul wanted prayer for his personal safety, oneness between Jewish and Gentile believers, liberty to travel, and God's mutual blessing on their time together.

15:33: Paul's benediction