

Romans 15:1-13
More Characteristics of a Living Sacrifice

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

Romans 12:1

Introduction and Outline of the Book of Romans

Paul’s primary purpose in writing the book of Romans was to teach the great truths of the gospel of grace to believers who had never received apostolic instruction. Unlike some of his other epistles, Paul’s purpose for writing Romans was not to correct aberrant theology or rebuke ungodly living. The Roman church was doctrinally sound but, like all churches, needed the rich doctrinal and practical instruction that this letter provides.

In Romans 6:11, Paul reminds all believers what our position as living sacrifices requires, “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Romans introduces the world to God’s estimation of man’s need and the requirements of Christ’s Righteousness as the answer demonstrated at the Cross:

Chapter 1:18-3:20: Man’s Need for Christ’s Righteousness

Chapter 3:21-5:21: He Imputes to the Believer

Chapters 6-8: He Imparts it in the Believer

Chapters 9-11: Christ Demonstrated His Righteousness

Ch. 12:1-15:13: Urged Believers to Practice Christ’s Righteousness

Consideration of the Weak Brother, Verses 1-3

In the previous chapter, Paul looked at two great principles of conduct for the Christian, conviction and conscience. Now at the beginning of chapter fifteen, he addresses the principle of consideration of the weak brother. “We who are strong” implies a level of maturity in his/her relationship with the Lord. Weak brothers imply those who are young in the faith or those that are hurting. The word “ought” in Greek is in the front of the sentence for emphasis. Therefore, fit is a very strong admonition indicating “you better!” It is the stronger brothers’ responsibility to take care of weaker brethren.

In verse 2, “to please his neighbor for his good,” means with a view of building him up. The objective of all Christian conduct is the edification of our Christian neighbor in building him up in his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and helping him understand doctrines of the Christian faith to live by.

In verse 3, Paul references Psalm 69:9, a messianic psalm, showing that when God’s people are insulted, those reproaches touch Christ’s heart because we are part of His body.

Consolidation of Jews and Gentiles in One Body, Verses 4-7

The object of verse four is to remind the reader that whatever truth and facts already recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures are designed for our instruction both in salvation and sanctification. Scripture demonstrates that God’s way is never easy but, in the end, it is the only way to everything that makes life worthwhile in time and in eternity.

It is through the Word of God that we get our knowledge of the true God giving believers both encouragement and hope to be sustained in present trials while waiting for our Blessed hope, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul now pauses in verses five and six to pray that the blessings which are channeled only through the Word of God might have their effect upon both the Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ. Harmony and fellowship among believers are necessary, in order that they may glorify God properly. No matter one’s denomination, doctrinal truths must reflect one purpose: the glory of God as seen in Christ’s work for the salvation of mankind. Therefore, as Christians learn from the PAST, they are motivated to endure, and be comforted in the PRESENT, looking ahead in hope (confidence) to the FUTURE.

In verse seven, all are reminded that God accepts both Jew and Gentiles on the same basis, their simple acceptance of Christ are to receive each other in fellowship to the glory of God.

God’s Promises to the Jews, Verse 8

In verse eight, Paul now reminds Jewish believers that Christ came to the Circumcision, Jews by nationality, in order to confirm promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He lived under the Mosaic Covenant which required circumcision

in order to fulfill the Law. Circumcision is a biblical way of distinguishing the Jews from the Gentiles.

The Bible speaks of seven different covenants, for which God made with the nation of Israel: Abrahamic, Palestinian, Mosaic, Davidic. Of these four, three are unconditional in nature; that is, regardless of Israel's obedience or disobedience, God still will fulfill these covenants with Israel. One of the covenants, the Mosaic Covenant, is conditional in nature. That is, this covenant will bring either blessing or cursing depending on Israel's obedience or disobedience.

Three of the seven covenants are made between God and mankind in general and are not limited to the nation of Israel: Adamic, Noahic, New Covenant.

Inclusion of Gentiles, Verses 9-12

Now, Paul turns to Jesus Christ's acceptance of Gentiles into the family of God. It has always been God's purpose to have mercy on the Gentiles. There may be differences between the two groups, but there is the common bond that Christ's work was for both groups of people.

Already discussion in Romans 11:17, "But some of the branches were broken off, and you being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree." Paul now continues his argument of God's willingness to show mercy to Gentiles by using four Old Testament passages to support his argument. In all of them, Paul finds ancient forecasts of the reception of Gentiles into the family of God by faith alone, through Christ alone.

God will manifest His mercy

1. Verse nine asserts that Gentiles will give praise to God by quoting David's song of deliverance in 2 Samuel 25:44.

All the world tastes of His *sparing* mercy,
those who hear the gospel partake of His *inviting* mercy,
the Saints live by His *saving* mercy,
and are preserved by His *upholding* mercy,
are cheered by His *consoling* mercy,
and will enter heaven through His infinite and *everlasting* mercy.

2. Verse ten pictures David rejoicing in God for His victories over the nations as Moses saw the Gentiles praising God with the Israelites.
3. Verse eleven pictures the Gentiles by themselves praising God by quoting David from Psalm 117:1, *“Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, and let all the people praise Him.”*
4. Verse twelve declares that David as a prophet is referring to a Messianic prophecy from Isaiah 11:10 showing Gentiles will be ruled by The One who will come from the root of Jesse. This Rules will be the hope of the Gentiles.

The Church is to Abound in Hope and Peace

The “God of Hope” is a new title for God. Believers now find that the Rock of Ages is the source of all joy and peace as their shelter in time of storms. This joy and peace can only come through believing in Christ. It is possible for believers to abound in hope because the power of the omnipotent Holy spirit is at work in us.

This concludes the section of Romans 1:18-Romans 15:13 on the righteousness of God in Christ. Paul ends the entire section with practical ways in which the body of Christ can glorify God in the world by continually offering themselves as living sacrifices on a daily basis.

As we live in the power of the Holy Spirit, we are earning rewards for our love and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. These crowns will be cast at the feet of Jesus as indicated in Revelation 4:10.

The Incorruptible Crown: 1 Corinthians 9:25

The Crown of Life: Revelation 2:10 / James 1:12

The Crown of Glory: 1 Peter 5:2-4

Crown of Righteousness: 2 Timothy 4:8

Crown of Rejoicing: 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

Points to Ponder

Unity of the brethren is needed in order to have a powerful and singleness of voice.

We must be accepting of our fellow believers as Christ accepted us.

We must serve the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to receive rewards.