

Rejoice In Our Mutual Salvation

Romans 15:7-13

Slide 1

The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures to bring us together in Christ. As we learned last week, in Romans 15:1-6, when we surrender to the leadership of the Spirit, the Word God brings about like-mindedness in Christ.

The passage before us today, Romans 15:7-13, begins to close the major theology section of Paul's letter to Rome. Yet, it reveals still another principle for promoting unity in the church.

That is, that the local church is to rejoice together in worship because of their sharing in God's eternal plan of redemption.

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Romans 15:7, "*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*"

This verse summarizes and justifies why the local church should be unified by the Word and by the Spirit. Because, as unacceptable as we were, with all our sins and problems, "*Christ accepted us.*"

This word "*accepted*" comes from a Greek word which means to "*move to receive something or someone with special concern.*"

Believers must accept one another by allowing Christ's indwelling love to overcome their reservations and judgments.

And since the justification to accept each other is grounded in the actions of Christ, we're commanded to accept one another because of the gracious way Christ accepted us.

Therefore, if we can't accept a believer as he is, then accept the Christ that lives within them. Regardless, all believers are to accept one another, including new believers, as a mandatory necessity.

Paul admonished the believers in Rome to treat each other with love and understanding because, as we accept one another, we bring *"praise to God."*

God established His eternal plan of redemption to glorify Himself. Everything He does is to His glory and everything His children do should be to His glory, too.

What we fail to understand is that the glory of God in Scripture has to do with the manifestation of God's presence. In fact, God's self-disclosure is a disclosure of His Glory.

God is intrinsically glorious, and when He reveals Himself, glory is present. That's why, when we demonstrate the presence of God in our lives and in our worship, we reveal the glory of God.

When Christ accepted us, He introduced us to God. When you know God, by knowing Who and What He is through a personal relationship with Him, you know the glory of God.

These verses called for unity within the Gentile and Jewish believers in Rome.

Paul wanted them to understand that the strength of the church depended on the diversity of believers, with all their weaknesses and strengths.

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Romans 15:8-11, *"For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed and, moreover, that the Gentiles might*

glorify God for his mercy. As it is written: “Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name.” Again, it says, “Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people.” And again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him.”

Now Paul moves the thought toward Jesus' ministry and its objective of reaching the Gentile world with the good news.

Romans 15:8-9a, "For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy."

Jesus was born a Jew to fulfill God's Word. He lived as a Jew in order to minister to His fellow Jews by bringing understanding of the truth to them.

Although He came to bring a new covenant, Jesus didn't come "*to abolish the law or the prophets-but to fulfill*" them and He fulfilled the law by keeping it perfectly.

Then Paul quotes four Old Testament passages which demonstrate the validity of his statement concerning the ministry of Christ and its purposes, particularly that He came to the Gentiles as well.

Paul introduces these passages, beginning in verse 9b, with the formula "*As it is written,*" which literally means "*it stands written for all time.*"

Romans 15:9b, "*As it is written: “Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name.”*

This passage comes from Psalm 18:49 and Paul used it to underline the unity that God desires in worship.

If God expected Jews and Gentiles to be unified in worship with all their differences, He expects a local body of Gentiles to be unified, too.

God was inviting those who were not His people, who were not born of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to enter into the salvation which came from the Jews.

The Jews had been chosen under the old covenant to go among the Gentiles and minister to them, but instead the Jews turned to the Gentiles' idolatrous ways.

Instead of giving Jews the judgment they deserved, God offered them mercy in Jesus.

That's why, since God shows mercy to different people, we should praise Him for that mercy, especially for "*not receiving what we deserve.*"

Also note that Jesus is "*among the Gentiles.*" That's you and me. So, when we sing, "*Father, I adore You,*" guess Who's joining in? Guess Who's in the midst of our praise?

Think about that! Jesus isn't just the object of our praise, He's in the midst of our praise, participating with us.

Verse 10 comes from Deuteronomy 32:43. "*And again He says, "Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people."*"

An unconverted sinner does nothing to glorify God, but a person who has grace working in his life has an urging to speak and do everything to the glory of God.

When Gentiles were given equal status with the Jews, they could then praise God together. Remember, the messianic kingdom is made up of all kinds of different people, with diverse opinions and backgrounds.

Verse 11 comes from Psalm 117:1, "And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him."

Again, the command is for Gentiles to praise God. The grace that saves also sets people to praising God. Grace gives fullness to the heart and the heart, in tune to God, overflows with praise.

All peoples are to praise Him, no matter their race, creed, color, or personality. All peoples no matter where they live or from where they come are commanded to praise the Lord.

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J. K. Gressett writes about a man named Samuel S. Scull who settled on a farm in Arizona with his wife and children.

One night a fierce desert storm struck with rain, hail, and high wind. At daybreak, feeling sick and fearing what he might find, Samuel went to survey their loss.

The hail had beaten the garden into the ground; the house was partially unroofed; the henhouse had blown away, and dead chickens were scattered everywhere.

While standing dazed, evaluating the mess, and wondering about the future, he heard a stirring in the lumber pile that was the remains of the henhouse.

A rooster was climbing up through the debris, and he didn't stop climbing until he had mounted the highest board in the pile.

That old rooster was dripping wet, and most of his feathers were blown away. But as the sun came over the eastern horizon, he flapped his bony wings and crowed with all he had.

That old, wet rooster could still crow when he saw the morning sun.

And like that rooster, our world may be falling apart. We may have lost everything, but if we trust in God, we'll be able to see the light of God's goodness, pick ourselves out of the rubble, and sing His praises.

Romans 15:12, "*And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope."*"

It's interesting to note that this verse is taken from Isaiah, while those in verses 9-11 were taken from the Psalms and Deuteronomy.

Thus, the three categories of the Jewish Bible—the Psalms, the Law, and the Prophets—are represented in this section as Paul drives home the fact that Jesus came for the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

The Messiah, Who came from the root of Jesse, the father of David, would rule over both His ancient people Israel and over the Gentiles.

The Messiah is the hope of the nations. At one time the Gentiles were without hope but now, because of Christ's life, death and resurrection, all men have hope.

This hope is the hope of redemption. In this hope, the church is to be unified and united. But this hope demands patient expectation.

The essence of hope is that we and our situations will be changed from bad to good, and eventually all will be changed for our eternal good.

There's a beautiful progression in the promises that Paul quoted in these verses.

- The Jews glorify God among the Gentiles (15:9, quoting Psalms 18:49).
- The Gentiles rejoice with the Jews (15:10, quoting Deuteronomy 32:43).

- All the Jews and Gentiles together praise God (15:11) quoting Psalms 117:1.
- Christ shall reign over both Jews and Gentiles (15:12, quoting Isaiah 11:10).

In light of the magnificent, gracious, and sovereign plan of God, as disclosed in His ancient revelation to Israel, Jews should have no grudge against Gentiles.

Because their calling, their very purpose for existing, was to reach Gentiles for the glory of God.

Likewise, Gentiles should have no grudge against Jews, because it was through the Jews that God brought them salvation.

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Romans 15:13, "*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*"

This benediction is for the entire unified Body of Christ. Here, Paul petitions "*The God of Hope.*"

God is so titled because He's the author of all true hope and specifically has given mankind hope for a bright eternal future in Jesus.

This *God of Hope* fills His servants with joy and peace through faith and believing.

"Hope, joy, and peace" are ingredients needed by those whose commitment is to edify those who're trying to bring unity to a church in conflict.

This means that faith in God, as a source of hope, causes joy and peace to grow within us.

So, let the joy and peace of our hope pour forth on our friends and neighbors. Let our joyful and peaceful nature grow more expansive and expressive.

We're to be a person who knows that eternal good is in store for us. Then, as we believe in God's good and perfect purpose for us, everyone we know will want to go with us.

Genuine faith results in an overflowing of hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Hope is the supreme need of all men. But our hopes, our good intentions, and our aspirations remain unattainable without the Holy Spirit.

We can't overflow with hope until Christ's Holy Spirit fills our weaknesses and masters our dreams.

Hope is the solid expectation of coming good. Hope is the antidote for divisiveness and defensiveness. And throughout Scripture, hope is most often referred to in conjunction with the coming of Jesus.

The culmination of hope is the fullness of time, the *Parousia*, the glory of a new universe which all believers will inherit together.

Those filled with such hope of Christ's return will overflow with joy, peace, and hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, why argue and debate here on earth, since we'll be in heaven with Jesus soon, where all questions will be answered, and all divisions will cease.

But when does this unity in the church happen? When people are ministering in the world. Have you ever seen a Billy Graham Crusade? It's amazing who was on the platform.

Ministers of denominations that normally wouldn't speak to one another are brought together for one purpose: to let people know that heaven is around the bend and that there's hope in Jesus Christ.

A tourist approached a farmer in Iowa and said, "*Don't you think all these fences ruin the beauty of the fields out here?*"

"*Yep,*" said the farmer—"until the corn starts growing. When the corn starts growing you don't see the fences."

When are fences seen in the church? When there's no fruit. That's when the divisions become real and pronounced.

But when there's growth and fruit, evangelism and ministry, the fences of factionalism disappear. That's why the more evangelistic a church is, the less divided it becomes.

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Conclusion

Yes, there's real hope. But it's easy, in light of personal experiences and in the light of current events, to despair.

But when we surrender to Jesus' rightful rule in our life and let Him unite us into a local body of believers, we'll experience the hope we need to turn sadness and depression into joy, to turn frustration and turmoil into peace.

So, let the Lord of Hope fill us with joy and peace in our believing, in order that we may overflow in hope. Let Him fill us with the power of the indwelling Spirit of God, who makes us one in Jesus.