



The Unity Between Strong and Weak Believers Part 7

January 11, 2026 Romans 15:7-13

(Video 50:49)

Turn, if you will, in your Bibles to Romans chapter 15, Romans chapter 15, as we continue on in this wonderful, wonderful portion of God's Word. Now, as you know, we have been looking as we transition into Romans chapters 14 and 15, Paul has been summing up this great treatise of his, this 16-chapter treatise, and he spent one and a half of the last three chapters talking about, and he's still talking about, unity within the body of Christ; wanting strong believers and weak believers to live in unity. And you all know, hopefully by now, the definition of a strong believer versus a weak believer. A weak believer, they're both believers in Christ. They're both born again, if you will. They're both on their way to glory. They're both desiring to serve the Lord by His grace the best way they know. But the "weaker" brother or sister in Christ is the one who's still hung up on religious traditions or formalism or rituals, Sabbath days or feast days or holy days and dietary laws and restrictions and so on and so forth. The "stronger" brother or sister in Christ, if you will, is the one who's come to a point where they recognize their freedom in Christ. They recognize that those things are not mandates in the Word of God. They're not commands from Scripture. We have a freedom in Christ to worship always in accord with the principles of His Word. But these things are not moral, if you will. They are simply traditions. And so, and by the way, just so you know, the, that was a huge issue in the church in Paul's day. And we're going to discuss a little bit more of that today. So, as he started out, again, just to orient you to our outline, there in Romans chapter 14:1-12, he basically says there's four things he's giving us to help unify the body of Christ. He says:

- we are to accept one another with understanding. That's Romans 14:1-12.



- We are to secondly build up one another without offending. That was Romans 14:13 to the end of the chapter, 23.
- The third thing we looked at was what? We're to please one another just as Christ did. And we saw that in Romans 15:1-7.
- And then last week, we finally got to the fourth section, if you will, where he talks about, you know, we are to literally rejoice with one another in the plan of God. And that's verses 7-13,

which while I'm doing my best to dodge the sunlight here, and by the way, just so you know, this issue is being worked on by our own John Roots, and we may have an answer for this eventually. But I know that the evil one would love to do anything he possibly could to get your mind off the truth of the Word of God and to start worrying about sunbeams and where John's standing. I'm doing my best to stay away from it. But don't get distracted with that, because that's exactly what the evil one you know would love. So stay with me on this, okay?

Romans 15:7-13, this fourth reason why, because we said last week, how can we possibly be with one accord, one mindset? How can we possibly praise God with one voice, when we're sitting out there with all these different divisions? And I think I underscored last week that most of you say, why is it that as we get into verses 7-13 here, 8-13, Paul is going to end up quoting four Old Testament passages that all talk about Gentiles being saved, Gentiles being a part of the family of God, Gentiles rejoicing with Jews together. Why would he talk about that? Remember, because when he talks about strong and weak brothers and sisters in Christ, both believers, predominantly the weaker brothers and sisters would be the ones coming out of Judaism, not the Gentiles. Why? Because it's the Jews who've had centuries and centuries of religious tradition and dietary laws and certain feast days and how you approach God with this and that and the bowl of bloods and goats and on and on and on and incense, et cetera, et



cetera. And they're the ones that are most likely going to be caught up with these religious traditions and trappings that they almost feel are mandates still for believers to follow. It's the Gentiles who basically have no religion at all or maybe come out of paganism that for the most part aren't hung up on religious traditions. Some were to be sure because of paganism and stuff. But for the most part, when he says weaker brother, he's really talking primarily about the Jews. Now he's a Jew himself. So obviously many, many Jews were mature and got it and all the apostles and so forth. But still, the point is that's the reason why when you get into Romans 15 and towards the end of Romans 15, he hammers so much on the Old Testament prophecies about Gentiles worshiping with Jews. Because from the Jewish mindset, you know, the Gentiles are sitting there saying, I can't believe these Jewish brothers and sisters are all hung up on all these rituals and stuff. And then you got the Jews over here saying, I can't believe these goyim, these Gentiles, that they're even in the family of God at all. That's a hard one for me to swallow. But they almost have a license. They don't do anything in terms of our Old Testament traditions. And so the two groups, Paul is trying to get to harmonize. Now don't forget something that underscores... you say, "Why would he hammer on this?" Because God knows the problems in the family of God. And to get this, the issue, Jew and Gentile, do you know what that is? That's race. That's racial prejudice. It's not just religious prejudice, it's racial prejudice, which is obviously has been a problem in our culture and still is in many ways today. And so this is incredibly important that this is hammered on.

So in verse 7 of chapter 15, he gave us the basic instruction. ***Therefore, accept one another just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.*** Now that's where I left off last week. How do we accept one another as Christ accepted us? That basic instruction. Okay, before you do that, I want to underscore that word *accept*. That word accept, A-C-C-E-P-T, accept. There's some of your translations might say *receive*. That word is *lombanō* in the Greek, but this



particular word is *proslombanō* (G4355). It's *lombanō* with a preposition in front of it. It's highly intensified. It's used 11 or 12 times in the New Testament, and it always carries this one primary reading, meaning. It means to open your arms and embrace the other individual in a special, intimate way. A pulling someone very close. Let me give you a couple examples of that. And the reason why I want to go to these passages and show you this is because if you appreciate the richness of this word, the practical application is we should live it out amongst the body of Christ more if we understand this. I want you to look real quick at ~~Matthew 8:32~~. ~~Matthew 8:32~~. Jesus, of course, is speaking to Peter and speaking to the, I should say, the rest of the disciples as well. I need to get to ~~Matthew 8:32~~ myself, okay? And He's told them about His, I'm going to go to the cross. The Son of Man must be lifted up, and so on and so forth. Well, this is the famous passage where Peter, it says in verse 32, he said to them, Peter comes to Him and says, oh, that'll never happen to You, Lord, and this and that and the other. And it's where Peter goes and takes Christ aside, it says. And in ~~Matthew 8:32~~, he said to them, be gone. And they came out and went, you know what? I am reading the wrong passage of Scripture. In any event, it's the passage of Scripture where Peter goes to take the Lord. It says, he took Christ aside and started talking to Him and as if to in school him and instruct him. And that word there where it says, he took Christ aside, it's *proslombanō*. In other words, he took Him aside to talk to Him about something intimately. Let me give you, it was Mark 8:32, by the way, that's why I was lost, not Matthew. But let me give you a few more. In Acts 17:5, in Acts 17:1, actually, the Jewish leaders are upset and they're angry at what Paul and the disciples are doing and instructing in a way. And it says in Acts chapter 17:5, that ***the Jews***, that's referring to the Jewish leaders, ***becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the marketplace, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar*** and so forth. Taking along, they took some wicked men from the marketplace and took them to themselves, took



them along. They took them into intimate communion with themselves. That is proslombanō again there. Let me give you a couple more. In Acts 18, that's a very familiar passage of Scripture, Acts 18 in verse 20, excuse me, 26. It's where Apollos is preaching boldly. And it says, when **Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside** and instructed him more completely, more adequately in the things of God. That word **took him aside**, proslombanō. It's the same word that is being used here in Romans 15, Romans 14:1, Romans 15:7, when it says we should accept, we should receive one another. We should take one another into ourselves in intimate communion. There's to be no divisions, if you will, in the body of Christ in that regard. Let me just give you one more in Acts 27. Three different times the word is actually used for the ingesting of food, taking in food. Paul is shipwrecked on Crete or one of the islands. And it says, the natives there, they kindled a fire and made some food and had us take in food, had us accept, receive, proslombanō food. There's another one there in Acts where they're facing shipwreck. And he instructs the Roman centurion what to do. He's going to lose everybody on the ship if he doesn't do this and that and the other and so forth. And he said, and we instructed them to take some food, to take in some food. What's the point? The word means to take in, to intimate communion, to accept in a personal, intimate way. And lastly, in Philemon, and I'll let it go, in Philemon [1:17], the slave Onesimus is sent back to Philemon and Paul says, **accept him just as you would me**. Proslombanō, accept him. Okay, what's the point? Well, the point being is that that is exactly the way we are to accept one another in Christ. Matthew 10 says this, what? A disciple is not above his master. And so, what's it say? How does Christ receive? How does Christ accept? How does Christ take in you and me? He says there again in Romans 15:7, you are to **accept one another just as Christ also accepted us**, just as Christ took us into intimate communion with Himself to the glory of God.



Well, then the question becomes, well, how did Christ do that? How does Christ accept, receive, take in sinners? Because that's exactly the way you and I are to put into practice our agape love for others in the body of Christ who have differences with us, who may be hung up in some legalistic tendencies, who may be of a different skin color, who may be of a different background, have a different ethnicity, a different church upbringing, who've been brought into this fellowship. And James is pretty clear, don't be respecters of persons. We'll get to that one too. But how does Christ do that? We're to accept those people, as believers in Christ, in the same way Christ accepted us. Well, what's the first way He accepted us? Let me give them to you. There's four of them that I wrote down. One is this, gladly. He gladly receives. It's not a burden. It's not work. Charles Spurgeon had a great line. He said, believers in Jesus Christ, your whole life should be characterized by a cheerful holiness. I love that phrase, a cheerful holiness. Too many believers are walking around and if they bump into another believer that has some sort of difference, whatever it might be, cultural or otherwise, they're almost put off or they're cold or they turn us. That's exactly the opposite of the way God has called us to be. I put down Luke 15. You don't have to go there. I'll read it for you. But Luke 15:2-7, it says this, And Jesus said to them the following parable. ***What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders.*** That's a great, great portrait of the good shepherd carrying the sheep over his shoulders. ***He lays it on his shoulders***, what? ***rejoicing.*** ***And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.*** By the way, don't miss that. He's not saying that people who live in



holiness does not bring joy to God. The sinners who, the “righteous people” who need no repentance, he's talking about, that's a euphemism for self-righteous. Self-righteous, not righteous in Christ. Verse 8, ***Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she's found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I found the coin which I had lost!'*** Christ rejoiced over the salvation of your soul. Christ rejoiced over your coming into the family of God. We need to rejoice when Almighty God brings other believers into our fellowship or across our paths or into our life, and we need to embrace them, not reluctantly, but gladly. What does Christ say? ***O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem,... how often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks.*** But you what? You would not. What's He say? ***Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*** What's He say? Look, I'm the living water. Take of the living water, you who thirst and drink freely. On and on, and even on the cross. He says, forgive them, Father. They know not what they do. Grace, open joy, comforting, receiving the sinner gladly. I underscored the reason why this is huge because I think one reason why it's huge is because of race relations. White on black, black on white, the blacks and whites on the Asians, the Asians on the Hispanics, the Hispanics. On and on and on and on it goes. And shame, one sad, tragic, real-life example of this. Some of you actually may know that my my brother Gary went to the University of Mississippi. He went there in the 60s when James Meredith was being protected by federal troops in efforts to integrate the University of Mississippi. You know, praise God, they've come a long way. We've come a long way from that. But in any event, the only reason why I bring it up is to put this in context. In the 1960s, I have personal knowledge of this, in Mendenhall, Kentucky, there's a Baptist church, has a sign, you know, as many small churches do, they have a quote of the day, or the verse of the



day, or whatever. There's a sign in the front of this church. Basically, it quoted the Matthew 7 verse, come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. The pastor of that church one day was approached by a black man in this all-white Baptist church. And apparently this black man had some heavy burdens and some heavy labors and was very weary. And this pastor embraced him. He proslombanō him. He took him in. He started to disciple him. And he started to mentor him. And this pastor in this little Baptist church in Mendenhall, Kentucky, the church that has ***"Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest"***, on its sign out front, began to get all sorts of criticism from his congregation. You're going to create racial issues if you keep doing that. Pretty soon, he could no longer buy groceries at the local grocery store. Pretty soon, his car insurance was mysteriously terminated by the local insurance agency. His children got harassed at school. And on and on it went. He ultimately was admitted. He had a nervous breakdown, at least that was the description of it. He was admitted to a hospital in Jackson, Mississippi. And his second day there, he threw himself out of a third-floor window and committed suicide. Now, obviously, it's tragic, very sad what that pastor did. Obviously, not condoning his conduct. But it was brought on by a church, a lot of people, I'll say, in a church congregation that had their theology sign out front, right, but something far different in their heart. And that is, and so you say, what's the point? The number one reason, by the way, this is a total aside, but it ties into what we're talking about. Because it breaks your elders' hearts. It breaks pastors' hearts to see the sheep constantly in these squabbles, in these differences, and these divisions. And again, I praise God, there's very little of it in Reformed Living Bible Church by God's grace. But the number one reason, we were just sharing this with another couple the other night, the number one reason why men, year in and year out without fail, it's off the charts, the number one reason why men drop out of ministry is not moral failure. That's way down the list. The



number one reason why hundreds of men leave the pastorate every year is the griping, the complaining by the sheep under their care that leads to their incredible discouragement, and in some cases, serious depression. They're never good enough. They never meet up to the expectations enough. They never feel like they can do enough. And on and on and on it goes until, and that is not the way it's supposed to be. And that actually is the point. We need to accept one another as Christ accepted us.

Second, second way in which Christ accepts us, gladly, but He accepts sinners. Guess what? This will be a shock to you. In spite of your sin. Romans 5:8, what's it say? ***While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*** There's nothing here, in other words, God doesn't sit there saying, you know, I wish you, I wish the Anderson, I wish that Bill and Sherry Anderson, I wish they'd clean up their act, and if they would, I might save their soul. That's not, that's heresy, by the way. If you think you can add anything, including, by the way, your exercise of faith to your salvation, even the faith you exercised was given you by Almighty God, Ephesians 2:8-10, ***For by grace you have been saved through faith;*** and so forth, and even that is a gift of God.

By the way, one great way to pray, which was suggested to me not long ago, and I'm trying to implement it more and more in my own prayer life. You know, a great thing to pray, especially now we're going through this memory challenge, pray: Lord, I want to be used by You to share my faith. I know that You've probably got, at least I hope You do, God, a lot of elect people in the greater Phoenix area, the Scottsdale area, in my area of work or school or influence, our neighborhood. Lord, would you be pleased to bring those elect souls that need to hear the truth of the gospel of Christ across my path, and when that door opens and I sense this prompting of the Spirit and that opportunity, would You, by Your grace, enable me to walk through that door and literally share the truth of Your gospel with them? We had a Sunday school class that was taught over here for weeks where Bob Merwin and Brian and others



encouraged people and gave them better tips and training on how to actively share your faith and so forth, and there's other tools that are available as well, but that is a fabulous prayer to pray. And when you've got a loved one, as I do, or more, that do not know Christ, to pray a prayer and say, oh God, you're the God of grace, you're the God of mercy, would You please show mercy on this particular loved one of mine? Would You show him or her mercy? Would You lift the veil of spiritual blindness? Would You allow someone to come across their path again who knows the genuine, pure, true gospel of Christ? And would You enable that individual to be faithful and to share that gospel with my loved one who lives off in wherever? God will answer those prayers. He's promised to do so in His word.

But in any event, in spite of our sin, He accepted us. What was the big, they thought it was a condemnation. It was a commendation. What did the Pharisees say in Matthew 9:11-13? Your master eats with tax gatherers and sinners. I got a question for you. Now, the topic, the subject, the principle is believers in the body of Christ being friendly and open and accepting and gracious and hospitable to other believers in the body of Christ. So, this is a little off point. But let me ask you a question. When was the last time you spent some meaningful time in the fellowship of non-believers? When was the last time you just had a cup of coffee and a pie? Maybe even invited one or more or a couple over to your home? When was the last time? I'm not talking about compromising your walk of personal holiness. I'm talking about just building a bridge of grace with non-believers in your realm of influence. Build that bridge of grace strong enough to support one day the weight of God's truth when He gives you the opportunity to walk across that bridge of friendship and share that truth with them. There's two things. We need to be more proactive in our doing that, and we need to be better equipped, i.e., memorizing the Word of God, better equipped to have an answer for the truth that we hold within us. But let me just suggest both that prayer, asking God to bring some



elect souls that haven't yet, from their perspective, come to Christ across your path, and taking opportunities to spend time with others outside the family of God.

This leads to a third way. How does God accept us? Gladly, in spite of our sinfulness. I'll give you another way He accepts us. Impartially. Impartially. This is, well, Acts 10:35 is one I wrote down. ***But in every nation the man who fears Him***, referring to God, ***and does what is right, is welcome to Him***. Romans 2:11, ***For there is no partiality with God***. And, of course, the one that I keep alluding to is the James 2:1 passage. ***My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism***. Hey, look, I'm not unaware that we all have certain proclivities and tendencies and backgrounds and personalities and temperaments. And some people within the body of Christ are generally easier to be with, we'll say, from our own personal selfish perspectives than maybe others. But we need to be open and engaging and certainly be welcoming to any and all in the body of Christ that the Lord brings across our path.

I can't think of the guy's name. I think his first name was Francis. But one of the most powerful examples in my own personal life that I can think of wrong attitudes and God, and it was shared with me by my older brother-in-law, Reese. He was in a church south side of Indianapolis for many, many years. And he was, as a matter of fact, I was just talking to Diana Graydon's daughter, this metal stamping business that we were talking about beforehand. He was a businessman in a metal stamping business in Carmel, Indian. Seventy-five, a hundred employees, dozens of trucks, materials being shipped in, raw steel being purchased, things being stamped out, three-story tall presses, 50, 60 of them pounding 24-7, or things going intercontinental to other foreign countries. On and on, he's a businessman. He's riding a herd on this gigantic company, okay? And he goes to church one Sunday, and he's got problems and pressures, and he's weighed down, and he's got a serious, serious issue in his business.



And he couldn't wait at the end of that service when their pastor, a man named Pastor Felber, dismissed them all to go into a special prayer time down in the basement of the church. Because as Reese said, "I wanted to link up with my prayer partner, Larry. He was a businessman like I still is, like I was. He understood the nature and the problems and the many things that we deal with in the world of business, and employees, and hassles, and all that stuff." And he said, "I knew Larry would be able to relate. I couldn't wait to link up with him, because Pastor Felber had said, I want you all to pair off one-on-one and have a special season of prayer." So he's heading down to the basement of the church, looking for his longtime prayer partner, really Larry Green, that he could link up with and have this intense moment of prayer, because he had these burdens on his heart. And this guy named Francis, I think I was, walks up to him, and he says, "Francis was not very well-educated guy. I'm sure he graduated from high school. Worked in menial, low position, low-paying jobs, worked with his hands basically all his life." And he says, and Francis walks up and says, "Hey Reese, will you link up with me and be my prayer partner?" And Reese is thinking, oh no, this is the last, and this guy will never relate. He'll never understand what's going, and all those things. He said, "Well, I said yes. And discouraged about the whole thing. We sit down, we're supposed to share our burdens with one another." So he said, "I go through, and I did the best I could to share with Francis what my problems were." And he said, "We went to prayer." And he said, "I'm sitting there regretting that I was with this man." He said, "this guy prayed a prayer", he says, "that God still reminds me up to this day that changed my life. As he prayed for the various needs I shared, and sat there humbly petitioning the Lord, and said, 'You know, I don't understand everything Reese is going through, God, but you do. And whatever these problems all are...'" and go on. And then he said, "and Francis said something at the end of his prayer, that at that point in time, (this of course is 40 years ago, but he said, it changed me



forever.) He said, 'and Lord, not only would I ask that you show Reese grace and help him with these problems, but Father, actually, I hope that you show Reese grace and impress upon his heart how he literally has no control over any of them, and that it's all going to be up to you.'" I don't know if that was the exact words. That was the import of the man's prayer. And he said, Reese said, I was so humbled that I ever, and so embarrassed at my own sinfulness, that I ever had those thoughts about that man to think that he somehow couldn't relate to what I was dealing with. He said, I ran and found my prayer partner, Larry Green. I said, hey, Larry, you are never going to believe the prayer time I did. He said, I had tears running down my eyes of repentance as well as joy. And he said, God has used that over the years to cause me instantly to never, if that sin, that temptation to be a respecter of another person in the body of Christ even starts to rear its head. I said, I remember, Lord. I remember 40 some years ago, Lord. Thank you by Your grace. I don't ever want to do that again. How dare we do the same thing? James 2:2 says, ***For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool", have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?*** And he goes on. It is a serious transgression to have a respect of other people in the body of Christ. Their skin color, the clothes they wear, the car they drive, their legalistic hangups, and so forth. I'm not talking about doctrine, doctrinal differences we can discuss. I'm talking about



all of these things that have nothing to do. There's no longer Jew or Gentile, bond slave or free, male or female, spiritually speaking, in the body of Christ. And the Lord knows what a huge problem and potential for division in a church body these things can be.

And by the way, I want to underscore again, I want to convict you, perhaps, be used by God to convict you. But I really want to encourage you. Because as far as I know, we've had very little, if any, of any of this here. But the point is the Word of God in this passage that we're studying hammers on it. And God knows and I just want to make sure that I'm faithful to my calling and I expound it and lay it out there so that the Lord might use it to protect us going forward.

Gladly receive others. In spite of their sin, receive others. Impartially receive others. But guess what? Christ also accepts sinners for a fourth reason, the same way we should. And it says it right there in verse 7. The last part of the verse, Romans 15:7. What's it say? *...to the glory of God*. Do you think Christ saved you because of you? He didn't look around and go, you know, that John Politan is such a winsome guy. He is so handsome. He's so wonderful. I think I'll save him. You know, I'm being a little flippant. Obviously, that didn't occur. And it didn't occur with you either. Literally, you were saved for the glory of God. And we're called upon to be living right now for the glory of God.

You know, again, it's funny how this, by the way, this will show you how things from the word of God can apply to your daily life. I go out in front of our, we have an American flag hanging on in front of our garage. I think I told this to you, Teri. Maybe I didn't. And so I go out and I went to straighten the flag. Yeah, I did. I know I did. And I, and the thought went through my mind. Okay, I'm straightening you up, old glory. And I thought to myself, do you know why the American flag is referred to as old glory? It actually harkens back in a, in a, in a time to



our Judeo-Christian roots. What do we say? What's the glory of God? The glory of God is the sum total of all of his attributes; love, holiness, justice, grace. So whenever you demonstrate an attribute of almighty God, you're said to be giving God glory because we demonstrate an aspect of the totality of who He is. We, we keep our word, God keeps his word. And so we give God glory when we keep our word, that kind of thing. But the sum total of all his attributes is the scriptures refer as His glory. What's the flag? The flag represents the sum total of all of the attributes, the characteristics, that we as a country, historically at least, espouse. Freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, due process, and on and on and on. Therefore, that's our, those are all our character qualities as a nation. That's our glory as a nation. And the flag is a tangible, physical symbol of all of those freedoms and character qualities that we as a people, espouse, and ascribe to enjoy. Therefore, the flag is referred to as old glory. Now, I had to share that with you because I just had to get it out.

Okay. So now, you know, but that's why, but, although, and this is why I wanted you, Jim, to read Ephesians chapter 1. Listen to Ephesians 1, just the first few verses. Ephesians 1, he says this, ***Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*** I'm going to drop down to verse 4. ***Just as He chose us in Him, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, here we go, to the praise of the glory of His grace.*** God is glorified when a sinner is saved. Guess what? God is glorified when a fellow believer in Christ is embraced, is taken in, is accepted by you as a fellow member of the body of Christ. What is a great aspect and a great principle, I might add, of that very truth is set forth for us by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the Gospel of Matthew, where he says, he who receives one of



these receives me and receives the Father who sent me. I don't know if you ever thought about that. When you show loving kindness and hospitality and friendship and encouragement and, and fellowship and communion with another individual in the body of Christ, you are literally loving Christ. That's huge! Unbelievably huge!

And it's a great, great way to dovetail into the last few verses in finishing off this section of Romans 15. For what's he say? He gives us four, we, and we don't have to spend a bunch of time on them. He just gives us four Old Testament quotes. Four quotes out of the Old Testament. They are these. In verse 9 and, oh by the way, look at verse 8. ***For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision.*** Who's that? He's become a servant to the Jew. The circumcision. Why? ***on behalf of***, get this, ***the truth of God. To confirm the promises given to the fathers.*** Who are the fathers? Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David. In other words, Christ came to do what? First of all, He came to the Jew first. Why? To verify the truth of God's Word. To verify all the promises. So, you Jewish believers that I'm writing to there in Rome, Jesus came to prove to you the veracity and the truth of His Word. And, oh, by the way, you Gentiles, they're not going to know anything about the promises of God. They don't come out of Judaism. They're clueless. You Gentiles, he goes on verse 9. ***And for the Gentiles to glorify God.*** Why? ***for His mercy;*** For His mercy. For including our genuine believers in Christ who are Jewish, they glorify God for His mercy and saving their souls as well. And the Gentiles who are genuine believers in Christ, they glorify God because of His truth as well. What does it say in John chapter 1? You shall, we beheld His glory. The glory is of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. By the way, grace, just the flip side of mercy, mercy and truth. Grace, getting what you don't deserve. Mercy, not getting what we do deserve. So, what's he say? We worship the Lord God in grace and truth. And then he quotes to underscore for the Jews that this absolutely is prophesied. This is a fulfillment of your scriptures. This is



what you should know. Don't be paranoid that these goyim are a part of it now. It was always probably, he gives us four verses to just make the point. These are the illustrations. And we read those to you quickly. He says, ***"THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME."*** That comes from Psalm 18, and also 2 Samuel 22. Then verse 10. ***Again he says, "REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE."*** That comes right out of the writings of Moses. Deuteronomy 32:43. A third verse, verse 11. ***And again, "PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM."*** That comes from Psalm 117. By the way, Psalm 117. Some of you, you talk about memory for the year. I want to give you a challenge right now. Well, how would you like to say, if you've never done it before, how would you like to say, I memorized an entire psalm in one sitting? Guess what? The shortest chapter in the Bible. Anybody know what it is? It's Psalm 117. It has only two verses in it. Let me read them for you. Psalm 117. ***Praise the LORD, all nations; Laud Him, all peoples!*** For His *hesed*, His lovingkindness, His mercy. ***For His lovingkindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD is everlasting. Praise the LORD!*** There it is right there. Shortest chapter in the Bible, Old Testament, Psalm 117, His mercy and His truth. You Gentiles get His mercy. You Jews are finding out, you get mercy too, but you're finding out the veracity of His truth. And the last verse of Scripture He gives us to make the point, is found in verse 12. Isaiah 11. It's found in verses 1 and verses 10 of Isaiah 11. ***"THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE."*** And he closes our section. Doesn't need any commentary from me. We're on holy ground here. It's actually a prayer. We'll just let the prayer stand for itself. And I'll have Brian come on up and lead us in a closing hymn. But here's how Paul closes off this section of Scripture in verse 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.*** Actually, the



book of Romans, in terms of doctrinal teaching for the most part, stops right here with this benediction. There's more to share. There's more inspired text. We'll learn some wonderful principles out of it. But the bulk of his theology and his orthopraxy ends at this point with this prayer.

Let me close us in prayer. Father, thank You for this time in Your Word. Thank You for just allowing us to look into Your law of liberty a little bit more. I pray, Father, that those who You have taken Your Word and maybe brought conviction to this morning would take that conviction to heart, would repent of anything that needs to be repented of and take steps to make things better and to, by Your grace, have a renewed spirit to want to walk in a greater obedience to Your Word going forward. For those who maybe have been victimized by some of us who have not been as accepting of others, who have not been as diligently obedient to Your Word, as have not been open-armed as we should be in many, many ways. I pray, Father, that You would cause us the same to want to realize that, Lord, we can do much, much better in bringing healing, not only within the family of God, but within the culture in which we live by sharing and living out the gospel of grace. Father, we ask it all, we ask Your anointing to be on all of it in the matchless name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, our Christ, and all God's people again said amen and amen.