

The Footsteps of Faith Series
Lesson #23 “In One Voice We Might Glorify God”
Romans 15:1-13

Scripture: Romans 15:6 “So that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Introduction:

Last year brother Aukes (Blake) if I remember right bought some raffle tickets at work to support some charity and ended up with 2 tickets to the Galigar Bluedorn for a symphony. He asked me if Charity and I could use the tickets as his plans didn't work out.

So Charity and I got all cleaned up and put on our fancy clothes and went down for the evening to listen to great instrumental music. It was the first time we had been there. I had watched them as they built the place years back and just as I thought it was very nice.

We got there early so as not to miss a thing, claimed our seats and began to read the brochure hand out. It promised to be a wonder concert boasting some famous piano player whose name I have long since forgotten.

But there was one thing I won't soon forget. Before the concert started all the musicians started showing up and tuning their instruments. I developed a head ache as they all played their own little notesit was truly to worst noise I had ever heard.

Somehow I knew at that moment that the whole thing would end up in a sermon because while these folks went their own direction with their instruments the noise was awful....but when the concert began they all played from the same book and the same page and each instrument complemented the other ...and the sound was heavenly.

Transition Statement:

Church, while worship includes private time in our inner rooms, God calls our attention to the need for us, as his people, to come together and with one voice let the fruit of our lips rise to the heavens in a praise to God for His glorification.

Lesson:

I. First, the strong should help the weak

Romans 15:1

“Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.”

- A. Have you noticed in both chapter 14 and here in 15 that the first and primary instruction begins to the strong in faith.
1. It seems true that God has a higher expectation from those who are spiritually strong.
 2. But, we might wonder why God doesn't just pull the weak person off to aside and tell him how the cow eats the cabbage and have them step up to the plate.
 3. God could have certainly chose to do that.
 - a. But, most of the time, isn't it true, that people end up rebelling against what is shoved down their throat.
 - b. In addition to God's instructions....He wants a Christian to come along side a weaker brother to help him.
 - Sometimes we forget that being a Good Samaritan includes more than just strangers.
 - Isn't it true that we can be a Good Samaritan to other Christians as well?
 - c. You see, when we get involved in helping each other through this life,.... i.e. we take a personal stake in each other, and it is no longer just me trying to get to heaven, but it's us.
 - And this is what God is after !
- B. Notice that the instruction here is not an atta-boy to the stronger Christian
1. Telling him to cut the cords of anything slowing you down.
 2. And to focus on the finish line..... and forget everything else.
- C. But, here He tells the stronger to “*bear the weakness*” of those without strength
1. The idea is not to put up with them.
 - a. This attitude toward brothers and sisters in Christ breaks down the very loving bonds that Christ died to establish.
 - b. Church our attitude toward each other is vital to our goal.

2. “*bear*” in this text means to carry
 - a. You see, weakness is a heavy load, often leaving Christians frustrating and feeling shunned and left to fend for themselves.
 - b. It should break our hearts to think of any Christian feeling that way.
3. And God expects us not to stand back and just hope our brother doesn’t fall beneath the load...
 - a. Not to just pray for them...although that is important !
 - b. Not just stand back and shout instructions.
 - c. But to step up and help the brother carry the load.

D. But, He adds, not to please ourselves.

1. “*please*” has to do with filling our own desires and interest
 - a. Here the driving force of our actions come under consideration.
 - b. God doesn’t want us focused on what we can get out of the deal.
 - c. This is one of the biggest deterrents to spiritual maturity.
2. Church, God wants us to get outside of ourselves.
 - a. It interesting to think that we, can come between us and God.
 - b. Jesus pushes to the same point in:

Matthew 16:24 “...*If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*”

II. Then, we should think about the good of each other !

Romans 15:2

2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

- A. Here both the weak and the strong come under instruction.
 1. The instruction to please our neighbors
 2. That is, try to accommodate their opinions, interests and desires.
- B. And we are to set the good of each other as a priority.
 1. We might make all kind of excuses as to why we can’t do this.
 - a. But, the truth is, that choose our priorities.
 2. You see the more God’s people make each other a priority...the more we can grow our relationship with God and the more kingdom business we can do.

C. All of this leads to an end purpose of edification

1. That is the building up of each other.
2. You know we are kind of like our homes.....we need constant maintenance
3. And God wants us to build each other up !

D. Again Jesus points to the same thing when He tells us to:

Matthew 19:19 "...*LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.*"

E. And Paul gets right to the heart of the matter in:

Philippians 2:3-4

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

F. Sometimes it might be a temptation to think "if I take care of everyone else...who will take care of me?"

1. I think about the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:25-33, where we are reminded of how God takes care of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, and how much more He will take care of us.
2. When we don't make each other a priority....you can just hear Jesus sayoh ye of little faith.

III. Christ set forth the ultimate example

Romans 15:3

3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME."

A. Can you imagine if Christ had sought His own pleasure.

1. He would have done more than just turned over the money changers tables.
2. He would have turned the stones to bread and took care of Himself
3. He would have set up an earthly kingdom to glorify Himself
4. He wouldn't have died in our place.
- * He would have called 10,000 angels and we would be lost for eternity !
- * He could have asked God to fry everyone that put Him upon that cross.

B. But He didn't seek His own pleasure....but looked to our needs above His own. Here the text quotes Psalms 69:9 "*THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.*"

1. Here, King David is basically saying that he feels that the sins of everyone else was upon his back as the leader of Israel.

2. But here this passage is spelled out as Messianic in nature because in reality it ultimately applied to Christ.
 - a. You see Jesus went to the cross to redeem us from sin.
 - To pay the price of our iniquity
 - To reconnect us with God.
 - b. And He did this, willingly
 - Hebrews 12:1-2
 - “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*
3. In essence Jesus showed us the greatest gift of all.....selfless love !
4. No greater love can be shown to anyone than one who lays down his life for his friends. John 15:13

IV. Now comes an explanation of why an Old Testament quote was linked to Christ

Romans 15:4

4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

A. *“For whatever was written in earlier times”*

1. Refers to the quote from Psalms 69:9 that we just looked at in Verse 3
2. He says, look, the Old Covenant was written for our instruction.
 - a. The Gentile might think that the Old Testament is antiquated and of no use anymore. But, Christ said:
 - “He didn’t come to Abolish the Law but to fulfill It” Mathew 5:17*
 - b. And on the other hand, the Jew might think the Old Covenant is all that is necessary.

But Paul says:

“The Law was simply a school master (tutor) to lead us to Christ”. Gal 3:24

- c. Maybe it is good for all of us to remember that:

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;”

2 Timothy 3:16

B. All of this.....So, that

1. Through perseverance
 - a. Hanging in there and remaining steadfast in faith
2. And through the encouragement of all scripture
3. We will find Hope....
 - a. Hope is God's pleasure for us.
 - b. And Hope is only realized in Christ Jesus !

V. Now, a call to be like minded.

Romans 15:5

5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

A. First of all God is where we get our strength and encouragement from

1. Modern thought has us turning inward to self help and healing.
2. But if we are looking anywhere besides to God, and His people we are at a dead end.

B. Here Paul's words seem to take the form of a prayer asking God to grant us to be like minded.

1. As I consider the life of Paul and all the times he was run out of town and even stoned...and left for dead in the name of Christ.
2. I can see his deep desire for unity.
 - a. In 1 Corinthians, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he presses point of unity
 - b. In Ephesians 4 Paul gives the Hallmark of unity.
3. You see, Church,..... there is power in unity !
 - a. Do you remember the Tower of Babel ..Gen. 11
 - b. Verse 6 says as one people nothing will be impossible for them

C. Let us not forget the last phrase.... "*...according to Christ*"

1. The unity that matters isaccording to Christ
 - a. For His purposes
 - b. And to His end.

VI. So that, with one voice we might glorify God

Romans 15:6

6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- A. It is true that God wants us to lift Him up and give Him glory in our lives.
- B. It is sad to know, that many people have bought into the idea that Christianity is just a personal experience with God, and gathering as His Church is not really important.
- C. But here, God places emphasis on joint worship
 - 1. With one mind and one mouth (Greek).....i.e. UNITY !
 - 2. Have you ever assembled with the saints only to feel the tension of disunity in the air?
 - Let me be bluntit makes God sick.
 - 3. It's no wonder God tells us to repair our relationships before we worship Him.
Matthew 5:23-24

VII. Therefore, accept one another.

Romans 15:7

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

- A. We are suppose to take each other into our lives.
- B.As Christ took us in !
 - 1. How did Christ take us in?
 - Romans 5:8....while we were yet sinners
 - Romans 5:10...while we were his enemies
 - 2. Christ didn't demand that we get every little thing right first.
 - 3. He didn't' attached strings
 - 4. He simply opened His arms and allowed sinful man to drive nails through His hands ...while calling out to the Father for their forgiveness.
- C. Jesus' acceptance of us was to the glory of God.
 - 1. For the express purpose of God's pleasure.

VIII. And, Christ is a servant to all

Romans 15:8-12

8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, 9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy;

- A. Jesus didn't come to be served...but to serve Matthew 20:28

B. And Christ has become a servant of the Jews ...Why? to confirm the promises given to the fathers.

1. Not to justify the Old Testament Law
2. But to confirm the promise made to Abraham, that all nations would be blessed through you (Gen 12) and your seed (Gal 3:16)
 - a. To bring them salvation through....Christ !

C. Christ also became a servant to the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy.

1. No more clearly, can God's mercy be seen than the inclusion of the Gentiles into God's Kingdom.
2. Truly God's mercy was meant for all of mankind. 2 Peter 3:9

D. Using the Old Testament again to confirm his statement:

*"THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES,
AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME."*

10 Again he says,

"REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE."

11 And again,

*"PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES,
AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM."*

12 Again Isaiah says,

*"THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE,
AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES,
IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE."*

Conclusion:

Romans 15:13

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- A. Sometimes we can be tempted to think our lives are empty
- B. But in believing
 1. We are filled with Joy & Peace
 2. And abounding hope by the power of the Holy Spirit