

Romans 15:7~13

We have been dealing with the subject for some time now, of “Unity” in the church. Speaking to *peace* and *harmony* among the assembly. Given the fact of so many different people, coming from different backgrounds and such, to have a spirit of harmony and peace is one of the greatest testimonies or witnesses the church can give.

Here in this passage, Paul explains that the only way unity is possible, is for each person walk in Christ likeness... Here in verse 5, Paul describes it as being “*likeminded*.”

⁵*Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:*

An exhortation to SEE each other *through the eyes of our Lord*...and not through our own eyes. Meaning that we walk in the “*Spirit of Love*” as was in Christ. To be Christ like is to accept one another in spite of our differences, for Christ has accepted us!

Knowing that Christ has accepted all of us...we should accept each other...

⁷*Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.*

Jew and Gentile are to receive one another, in spite of your differences...for Christ has received them both! By the mercy of God, Christ receives all who come to Him, and so are we. In spite of our differences, we are to accept one another just as Christ has accepted us.

Paul is writing to the Gentile church, which consisted of both *Gentiles and Jews*, and calling for them to accept one another, receive one another. The issue here is unity in the church. Up until Christ, before the church was established, the Gentiles had no part of the covenant, they were “*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*.” But all that changed in Christ...Christ not only came as “*Israel’s Messiah*,” but He came to be the Savior of the whole World! Even though it’s great news, and the best thing that has ever happened, with it came all sorts of problems...specifically in relation to “*beliefs*.” The differences between the two made for some potentially, serious problems in the church. On many things, they couldn’t see eye to eye. Which is what Paul is dealing with here...

Strangely enough, the ones he refers to here as the “*strong*,” are most likely the Gentiles. With the “*weak*” being a reference to the Jews. Reason for that, is the fact he’s talking about FAITH. Jews were raised in Orthodox Judaism, a very strict and legalistic religion. Judaism restricted their diets, the food they were allowed to eat, it celebrated certain “*holy days*.” Like the Day of Atonement, feast of firstfruits, feast of unleavened bread, the Passover, etc... All of which were very special days, one’s that God had commanded them to observe and keep as ordained and outlined in the writings of Moses. The writings of Moses (*first five books of the bible*) are known to the Jews as the “*Pentateuch*,” the “*Torah*,” or the more common name, *the Law*. For understanding sake, its best to refer to them as the Law. The “*Law*” that Paul has been referring to throughout the book of Romans, is a reference to the writings of Moses.

At the coming of Christ, everything changed... All who come to Faith in Christ, are *no longer under the law*, but grace (Ro. 6:14) Which some have mistakenly took to mean that obedience to God is no longer required, that God overlooks disobedience. God forbid. What it means is, that obedience to the requirements of the Law, is not obedience! Obedience to God is submission to Jesus Christ as Lord. Just because a man does “*right things*” in accordance to God’s Law, doesn’t make him right. For one can do that, and yet not live his life in submission to God.

No doubt, any Jew who come to *faith in Christ* (Messiah) had a hard time of giving up the Law. They still felt obligated to keep and observe the “*Holy Days*” prescribed in the Law. No doubt, they had trouble with

eating what they were raised to believe were “*unclean*” based on the teaching of the Law, and so on. Its hard for us to imagine the difficulty a converted Jew would have with no longer being under the Law. Every aspect of their lives was shaped by the Law of Moses, from what they ate, to what they wore, to what they honored, the special days...everything! Faith in Christ was a whole new way of life for them! Even though they were saved, the Law was still very much ingrained in them, and they struggled with this new life of Faith. I’m convinced, that it is the Jews who Paul is referring to as the “*weak*” here in this passage. *Weak* is a reference to the fact, that they were *weak in the faith*! In contrast to the Gentiles, who weren’t raised in such a strict, legalistic manner under the Law. They never had the dietary laws ingrained in their minds, as did the Jews. They never attended the “*holy days*,” as did the Jews every single year. The Gentiles were FREE of such things, they held no such convictions. They had no problem with eating meat, they observed every day alike, and so on. They were FREE of all the legalistic bondage of the Law! They were FREE of the legalist requirements of the Law for righteousness, they were Free from the demands of the Law, through faith in Christ...

This is the same FREEDOM that Jesus was offering to the Jews in Matthew 11...

²⁸*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* ²⁹*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* ³⁰*For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

The Jews had *mistakenly* seen the Holy Scriptures as a means of acquiring righteousness! As a result, rather than bringing life, they brought both bondage and death. In the sense there was no joy, no peace...but rather a heavy burden to bear, with all the requirements of the Law. To which Jesus describes here using the analogy of a “*yoke*.” The instrument placed around the neck of a mule or ox to labor. Here the analogy is that of a double yoke. The Jews were “*Yoked*” with the Law, which made the burden heavy, because it required them to do “*all the work*.” But the yoke of Christ is easy, and the burden is light, because He has done all the work, Christ did all that was necessary for salvation. His yoke is easy, in that HE carries the burden for us... We are accepted by God, on the basis of what HE has done! Praise be to God! *Thank God* for Jesus!

That’s what Paul means here in Romans 15, verse 3...

“The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.”

“Christ came...says Paul...as it is written of Him, to bear our infirmities!” He came to fulfill the righteousness of the law, to fulfill its requirements, and to set us free from it! He did that by taking our sins, our infirmities upon himself, and paying the penalty of sin...death!

(Matthew 5) ¹⁷*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.*

Jesus affirms that he had not come to “*do away*” with the Law... He had not come to “*abolish*” the Law, and start a new movement... But rather, he had come to “*FULFILL*” the Law!

The worship of Israel consisted largely in part of “*sacrificial offerings*.” The Law requires, that atonement for sin require a blood sacrifice, that a life be given. The nation did this for thousands of years, ever since the days of Moses, when Israel was given the Law by God. The third book of Moses, Leviticus, is the heart of the Law, in that it describes all the various offerings for all the different kinds of offences.

Meat offerings, Peace offerings, individual sins, congregational sin, willful sin, unwilful sin, the sin offering, the wave offering, etc...

The Law was given by God for a twofold purpose...

- 1) To manifest sin...to *point out* our guilty condition against God.
- 2) To establish the fact that man's sin would require a "*sacrificial offering*."

Israel's worship consisted largely with sacrifices... Which God did for the sole purpose of establishing a pattern, to set a clear message, that the sins and trespasses of men would be atoned for by a sacrifice, by the shedding of blood.

Here in Matthew, Jesus is declaring that He had come as a final sacrifice! That He had come to fill the requirements of the Law by the offering up of His life, *once and for all* for our sins!

Through the sacrificial offering of Christ, we have been set free from the requirements of the Law! We are no longer under the Law, but under Christ, the one who gave himself for us.

(Matthew 5) ¹⁷ **Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.**

Paul declares a similar truth here...

(Romans 15:8)⁸ *Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:*

Paul declares that Jesus Christ came as a servant to the Jews...(*circumcision*). He came as a servant of God's truth to the Jews. He came to clarify the true purpose and meaning of the Law. And to fulfill all of its, thus making Him the only sinless man to have ever walked on the earth. Then turn around, and offer "*his life*", (*as a spotless lamb*) for our sins!

He came as a minister of truth, and to "*confirm*" the promises made unto the fathers. In other words, he came to fulfill "*all of scripture!*" All the writings written aforetime were written about Him! The institution of the Law, the sacrificial was a shadow of him. The Holy Days that Israel were required to keep were a shadow of him. The promises and prophecies written, were all written about him! In Colossians, Paul describes them as the "*shadow*" with Christ being the "*body*."

(Vs 4) All that was written aforetime was written for the purpose of creating "*Faith*" in us... All the writings were written concerning Him, and what ***He would do***...

(Vs 2) ...in "*bearing on Himself, the sins of man!*" He took our reproaches upon himself!

With the end result being, that both Jew/Gentile (whole WORLD) would praise and glorify God!

(Vs 8) Thus, He came to *bear witness* to the Jews, of the written testimony of God, concerning Himself...

(Vs 9) And to bring about HOPE to the rest of the WORLD...(Gentiles)

⁹*And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy;*

Up until the coming of Christ, Israel was the only nation identified with the one, true living God. The Gentiles were "*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*." But Christ changed all that! At his coming, he testified to the "*whole World*" that God is a god of love, one who is full of mercy and compassion. A friend to the needy, a forgiver of sin... And as a result of the coming of Christ, the Gentile world would rejoice and praise God for his goodness!

Paul quotes some O.T. writings, which prophesied of the "*rejoicing*" of the Gentiles at his coming.

⁹*And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; **as it is written**,*

For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

¹⁰*And again he saith, Rejoice, ye **Gentiles**, with his people.*

¹¹*And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.*

¹²*And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.*

Over and over in the O. T. Writings, it was prophesied that the Gentile world would be included in God's blessing.

Knowing the "good news of Christ," knowing what He has done for us, how he has made us acceptable, and has accepted us...rejoice and praise God! Be filled with peace and hope!

¹³*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*