

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

October memory verse, Romans 10:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

In the fourteenth chapter Paul was dealing with the subject of walking in love within the body of Christ. Recognizing that we have differences of feelings, convictions, or opinions on the different issues involving the Christian walk. Paul said, "Those that are strong in the faith can eat meat, those who are weak in the faith have convictions against eating meat so they eat vegetables." But we need to recognize that people have different convictions, that not everybody is going to see the thing the right way like I see it.

You have got to respect the right of people to be wrong and not create a big dissension over the differences is basically what Paul is pleading for. That if we disagree, we disagree agreeably, that we not split over issues and get in a big controversy over these little issues. That is tragic how the church has been split and divided over the most ridiculous things. The encouragement in chapter 14 by Paul is to accept those weaker brothers in the faith. Don't get into arguments with them, and also, you should not flaunt before them your liberty because you might stumble them when they see the liberty that you have. So walk in love. If your eating meat stumbles the weaker brother, then for the sake of the Lord, don't eat meat in front of him. You have the liberty to eat the meat, then have it to yourself. Do it in your own home. But do not flaunt your liberties in such a way that you could offend a weaker brother and thus destroy one for whom Christ died, just because you are going to insist on exercising your liberty.

Now he is continuing in that very vein of thought as he begins the fifteenth chapter. And here he puts the final few touches on this subject, but chapter 15 is a continuation of this very subject of our treatment towards the differences within the body, and especially towards the weaker brothers.

We then that are strong [strong in the faith] ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves ([Rom 15:1](#)).

I shouldn't just be thinking about my own pleasure, "I'm going to eat this prime rib; I don't care what he thinks." Well, if it is going to stumble and offend him, if I am strong in the faith and eating prime rib doesn't bother me spiritually, then I need to bear the infirmities of the weak. I need to put up with him and not live for my own pleasure.

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up ([Rom 15:2](#)).

So rather than willing to please myself, I should live to please others. As a Christian, many times we are called upon to live by the standards that other men have set. Not that we share those convictions, not that we would feel guilty if we did them, but walking in love, not living to please myself, but living, actually, to please the others, walking more rigid than I would if I was just following my own convictions. Paul gives to us, then, the example of Jesus Christ.

who did not please himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me ([Rom 15:3](#)).

So Christ our example. He came not to please Himself, but when He came He said, "I do always those things that please the Father. For I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." A good rule is live to please God, not live to please myself. Living to please yourself can create a stumbling block for weaker brothers, so in love, because it would please God, be gracious. Don't exercise your liberty in such a way as to cause offense.

Now he goes on to another subject:

For whatever things were written before time [or aforesaid] were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the scriptures we might have hope ([Rom 15:4](#)).

So the twofold purpose of the Word of God. The scriptures that were given to us a twofold purpose listed here. First of all, for our learning. The Bible was given to us to reveal God, for our learning about God, our understanding of God. That we, through the patience and the comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.

Now God and hope are inextricably connected together. There is no real hope apart from God. But it is amazing how that when you have God, hope is extended, hope is expanded. The psalmist said, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God" ([Psalm 42:5](#)). He is our hope. All the way through, the hope of the believer is connected with God. So that God has given us the scriptures to understand His nature, His character, His faithfulness, so that we in the time of trouble will not despair. We will not give up, but we will continue to hope in that work of God and in that work of God's victory within our lives. That position of despair and hopelessness is not one that the Christian should find himself in. Like the psalmist found himself cast down, but he talked to himself about it, and said, "Why are you cast down? Why are you depressed, O my soul? Why are you upset? Why are you disquieted within me?" The reason why was because he forgot for a while that God was on the throne. When we forget that God is on the throne and ruling over lives, it is possible that we can get discouraged and upset over the situations. It is interesting how quickly we can forget that God reigns. How quickly we forget that it is His church. Suddenly we get all worried and get all concerned and we wonder, "What are we going to do?" Over and over the Lord reminds me that it is His church, and because it is His

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

church, I have no business worrying about it. He can take care of it. He has created it and He is able to maintain it. And I don't have to lie awake at night wondering, "Oh, what are we going to do now? Or what are we going to do next?"

God is in control. Now I need to bring that into my own life. I need to realize that God is in control, that God is going to work. Not to get upset, not to get discouraged, not to be in turmoil, for the Lord reigns, and He shall bring to pass His work, if I just patiently wait for Him. And that is the problem, isn't it? That thing called patience. We are exhorted in reading of the Old Testament saints to realize that they through faith and patience inherited the promises of God. And again, we were told that we have need of patience that after we have done the will of God we might obtain the promise. There is that time after I have done all that I can do in following the will of God, there is that time where I have to then by faith, patiently now wait for God to do His work. Now there is where I am tempted to meddle and mess things up, because I don't wait for God. Somehow He always seems to be slow according to my calculations. Of course, when it all works out, I realize He was right on time. I was fast. But that is because I am impatient. I want God to do His work in their life right now. "God, I don't want to wait for a week. I don't want to wait for a month. God, help me. I don't want, like Abraham, to wait for thirteen years. I can't take that, Lord."

So we have need of patience, and through the patience and the comfort of the scriptures we might have hope.

Now the God of patience ([Rom 15:5](#))

And isn't He patient? God is so patient, and another word for it is long-suffering. God is so long-suffering. He is so patient to bring to pass His purposes, but that is because God is outside of our time dimension. God lives in the eternal. I live in seconds. Of course, now in milliseconds, the scientists have divided them down. Minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years. God lives in eons, eternity. And a thousand years is as a day to the Lord; a day is as a thousand years. And Lord, it has been so long. When is Jesus coming back? It has only been a couple of days. What is your hurry? Because God is outside of the time dimension, and we move in this dimension of time, it seems that God is so patient in bringing to pass His kingdom, His work upon the earth. So we continue our prayer, "O God, give us patience, right now."

The God of patience and consolation [the God of comfort He is called] grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Jesus Christ ([Rom 15:5](#)):

How are we to be? We are to be patient with one another. As God is the God of patience and consolation, so we are to be to each other. We are to be comforting to one another, and we are to be patient with one another.

Now there is an interesting thing. I appreciate God's patience with me. I am thankful for that. However, I am not so patient with Him. I appreciate other people's patience with me, but I am not always so patient with them. Now, as you would that men should do

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

unto you, that is the way you should do to them likewise; comfort, be patient, according to Christ Jesus.

That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God ([Rom 15:6-7](#)).

Now, the church, as we minister to each other in the love of Jesus Christ and through the Word of God, we do glorify God through this life of love, consolation, patience with one another, and we are to receive then one another. How? As Christ received us. Now, how did Christ receive you? Were you absolutely the ideal, perfect person? Did He say, "Go out and clean up your act and then I will accept you?" No, He received us with all of our imperfections. Isn't it amazing how horrible our sins look when someone else is committing them? How blind we are to our own faults. How astute we are in being able to pick out the flaws of others, but as Jesus said, "First take the four-by-six out of your own eye, and then you can see more clearly to take the splinter out of your brother's eye" ([Luke 6:42](#)).

But why is it that I have such a hard time seeing the four-by-six in my own eye, yet I can see so clearly that splinter in your eye? It is all a matter of love. Love covers a multitude of sins, and I just love myself so much I don't pay any attention, you see. I am to love you as I love myself, and if I love you as I love myself, then I won't be seeing and picking at all the little flaws in you. But I will then receive you even as Christ has received me.

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers ([Rom 15:8](#)):

In other words, He came to the Jews because God had made the promise to the fathers that He would send the savior unto them, the seed of David, the seed of Abraham. He came to minister unto those whom God had made the promise.

And that the Gentiles might glorify God; as it is written ([Rom 15:9](#)),

I love Paul. He makes a statement, and then he begins to back it up with scripture. When you can back up your statements with scriptures, three or four references, for in the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established, it shows me one, Paul's vast working knowledge of the Old Testament. He is grabbing scriptures out of several different books, putting them all together on the same subject. This fellow is a walking topical index. Give him a subject and he will quote you all of the scriptures from the Old Testament that deal with that particular subject. So he is introducing the fact that Christ came directly to the Jews, and yet, the prophecy expanded beyond the Jews to the ministry to the Gentiles. He came to confirm the promises to the fathers, which He did. But then, "that the Gentiles might glorify God through the mercies that they received; as it is written,"

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

For this cause I will confess thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name ([Rom 15:9](#)).

[Isaiah 42:6-7](#).

And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people ([Rom 15:10](#)).

[Deuteronomy 32](#).

And again, Praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people ([Rom 15:11](#)).

Of course, you all know where that one is, [Psalm 117](#).

And again, Isaiah said, There shall be a root out of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust [or hope] ([Rom 15:12](#)).

[Isaiah 11](#).

So he is putting together all of these various prophecies out of the Old Testament relating to the gospel coming to the Gentiles through the mercy of Jesus Christ.

Now Paul said,

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing ([Rom 15:13](#)),

Again, the subject of hope which comes from the scriptures, the God of all hope. Hope is one of the most important things. We must not lose hope in God. He is the God of all hope. May He fill you. The result of hope is joy and peace. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted?" You see, he is talking about depression and unrest. The opposite of that is joy and peace. The result of the hope that we have is joy and peace in believing. In believing what? The scripture of God, the Word of God. Our belief is based upon the fact that God said it. The result of that belief is joy and peace.

As you get my age even the weather can change you. I can wake up in the morning and tell you how long the fog is going to last by how much my knee is aching. Stupid things that you can tell the weather by your body.

Feelings can change. They can be altered. The Word of God is forever established. And because my salvation and relationship with God is predicated upon His sure Word, my relationship with God never changes. It is established, and so it is the believing that has brought me the peace and the joy.

Paul said after fourteen days tossed in the ship, "Be of good cheer, for this night the angel of the Lord stood by me, and he assured me that though the ship is destroyed there will not be the loss of life. I believe the Word of the Lord." Paul was cheerful. He was happy. He was encouraging them to be cheerful when they had lost all hope of

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

ever being saved. They had given up hope of ever being rescueded, of ever coming out of this alive. And to have a guy getting up and whistling and smiling, they probably wanted to have him walk the plank. "Be of good cheer." "Are you kidding, man? I am so seasick. Fourteen days bobbing like a cork on the Mediterranean, haven't seen the sun and the stars." He didn't say, "Be of good cheer. I feel good today. I have a peace in my heart." No, "I have the Word of the Lord and I believe the Word of the Lord." So the faith is established and it is solid and it is secure, because it is established in the Word and in the scriptures.

I am saved because God's Word declares that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead and thou shalt be saved. I know I am saved because here is where God said it. I can point right to it and thus, it doesn't waver, it doesn't change, it doesn't alter with my feelings.

Again, I love the way Paul can just get right to the heart of the issue, "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 Spirit ([Rom 15:13](#)).

It is the Holy Spirit who makes the Word of God real to my heart. It is the Holy Spirit that teaches me God's truth. He leads me into all truth. He shows me the things of God. He makes the Word of God alive in my heart. So through the work of the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God in my life, hope abounds. "Thanks be unto God who hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." A blessed hope of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. A living hope, a blessed hope, an abounding hope that we have through the Word.

I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able to admonish one another ([Rom 15:14](#)).

I am confident, brethren, that you are capable of doing this, full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able, capable of admonishing one another.

Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God ([Rom 15:15](#)),

Now I know that you can admonish each other and yet, you have all knowledge. And yet, because of the grace God has given to me, I am writing boldly now these things to you.

That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the good news of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost ([Rom 15:16](#)).

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

Paul, writing to the Gentiles, is declaring unto them that they are accepted by God, the offering up of the Gentiles. That would be the offering of their praises and worship unto God. Because of the work of the Holy Spirit is accepted to God. You don't need the priesthood, you don't need the washings and the cleansings of the law, but God accepts you because of the work of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God that is given to us.

I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by the word and deed ([Rom 15:17-18](#)).

Paul the apostle had a very powerful ministry among the Gentiles. It was more than just the ministry of the Word, it was the Word confirmed by the work of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Mark, the last verse, it says, "They went everywhere preaching the Word, the Holy Spirit working with them confirming the Word with signs following." Paul, when he wrote to the Corinthians, said, "My speech was not with the enticing words of man's wisdom but with the demonstration and the power of the Spirit." Paul, in the beginning of this epistle to the Romans, declared that he desired to come to them that he might impart unto to them some spiritual gift to the end that they both might be built up. Paul's ministry was in word and in deed.

The Word of God is wonderful, it is important, it is powerful, it is alive, sharper than a two-edged sword, but it has to also work in our lives and be demonstrated through our lives. Many times what I say is totally lost on the ears of the hearers because of what I am. If the Word doesn't work in my life and I cannot demonstrate the power of the Word of God through my life, then all of the principles in the world, if they are not practical, don't work no matter how good a principal they may be; they are of no value. It is the Holy Spirit that takes the Word and then makes the Word operable in my life and the deeds then are demonstrated--that of love, that of power. And the Holy Spirit can manifest Himself in many different ways.

Jesus spoke of how His works testified of Him. And so our lives are witnesses of that work of God and His Holy Spirit in us. Our lives are a greater witness than our words. We have always thought of our words as witnesses and we have always thought as witnessing in a verbal sense. Verbalizing my faith to someone else. Verbalizing their need for Jesus Christ. But a greater witness than your words are your works wrought through the Holy Spirit in love. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, that ye love one another." So it is important that our deeds match the glorious gospel that we proclaim through the Word.

Paul here declares the deeds work,

Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God ([Rom 15:19](#));

It must have been exciting to have been around Paul and to see those mighty signs and wonders that were wrought by the Holy Spirit and the power of the Spirit in his life.

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

So Paul says,

so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ ([Rom 15:19](#)).

Or, I have preached the full gospel of Christ.

Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation ([Rom 15:20](#)):

Paul said, "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named. I don't want to build upon another man's foundation."

Paul sought to preach Christ where He wasn't heard of. He didn't want to come in and build on another man's foundation. He wanted to go where there was a true need, and that is commendable.

But as it is written ([Rom 15:21](#)),

You see, he uses even as scripture based for this. Paul is so filled with the knowledge of the Word of God. I love it.

I love reading Spurgeon. That guy was like Paul. He used just all the way through scripture and scripture examples. And oh how I love his sermons, because they are so chalked full of the Word of God.

But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. [[Isaiah 52:15](#)] For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you ([Rom 15:21-22](#)).

Because I've been wanting to go where there is a need, where people had not heard, I have really been hindered coming to you.

But now, having no more place in these parts ([Rom 15:23](#)),

Hey, that is quite a witness. I've told everybody around here so I've got to move on.

and having a great desire these many years to come to you; Whenever I take my journey to Spain, I intend to drop by: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go to Jerusalem to minister unto the saints ([Rom 15:23-25](#)).

Now Paul was in Corinth when he wrote this. He had gone to Corinth and to the churches in Macedonia to collect an offering to take to the poor saints in Jerusalem to help them in their need. He had written to the church in Corinth to take up a collection before I get there, I don't want any offerings taken while I am there, but each man as he

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

has purposed in his own heart so let him give, but I want to take it to the church in Jerusalem. The church in Jerusalem had experienced some real financial problems. Probably stemming from that early communal sharing where everyone sold their possessions and brought the money and laid it at the disciples' feet. And in time, it ran out. So they were left without property and all, they had sold it. So they were in a sad state in Jerusalem, and Paul is seeking to take them help.

So I'm going unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them truly ([Rom 15:25-27](#));

This was a good thing that they did.

for they are debtors. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, it is their duty also to minister to them in carnal things ([Rom 15:27](#)).

So they have benefited spiritually and so it is only proper that they minister to the carnal needs, or the fleshly, or the body needs.

When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ ([Rom 15:28-29](#)).

The fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. I know when I come that is the way I am going to come. Why? Because that is the way Paul went everywhere. Just in the fullness. His life overflowed.

Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me ([Rom 15:30](#));

Paul here is requesting that they join with him in his prayers for himself. I think that one of the great, great blessings, and they sort of pyramid, it has a pyramidal effect, that the more your ministry influences more people, the more people that you have praying for you. The more people you have praying for you, the more effective and broader is the base of your ministry.

But Paul here is asking now for prayers of the people. "Join me in my prayers for me," Paul is saying.

That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted by the saints ([Rom 15:31](#));

Paul wasn't on the best of terms with those in Jerusalem, not because he didn't want to be, but they were just always suspicious of him. It seemed that wherever Paul went there was trouble with the Jews, and for him to go right back to Jerusalem when he came back, they said, "Now, Paul, the rumor is going around about your preaching

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

among the Gentiles. Look, behave yourself while you are here. Don't create problems now. Here is a couple of guys and they need to take their vows so they can observe the feast, and why don't you sponsor them and just show everybody that you are a good Jew. Be good, Paul." And so Paul was trying to be good and the Jews caught him anyhow, and were going to kill him. But they were concerned whenever Paul would come around, because he was so straightforward. He wasn't always that welcomed even within the church, and so he is going to take them some money. "So pray that they will accept the money and me."

That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen ([Rom 15:32-33](#)).

Paul is asking that they might pray, that they might come to them with joy according to the will of God. Jesus, when Paul probably had one of the nights of greatest discouragement, he kept arguing with the Lord over the issue that he was sure that if he could preach to the Jews they would listen. God said, "Get out of here. They won't listen to you." Paul was obedient and he got out, but he always felt that the Lord was wrong in that issue. "If the Lord would just let me preach to them. I know where they are coming from, Lord. I know how they feel. I was one of them, Lord, and if I could just share with them..." Paul's moment came. He was there in the temple, going through the purification rites with these two fellows he was sponsoring and some of the Jews from Asia saw him. They said, "This is the guy who has been preaching to the Gentiles that they don't have to follow Moses' law, they can be saved by just believing." They stirred up the Jews and grabbed him and were beating him to death when Lucius, the captain of the Roman guard, came down and rescued Paul. And he got back on the porch of the Antonio Fortress overlooking the temple mount, Paul said to them, "Hey, can I speak to these people?" My big moment, my big chance. The fellow says, "Do you speak Greek?" Paul said, "Of course." "I thought you were an Egyptian." "No, you have the wrong guy." He said, "Go ahead and speak to them."

Paul said, "Brethren, hearken unto me." My big moment, and Paul started to say, "You know me. You know where I am from. I was around here. I was zealous just like you guys are. Man, I figured to wipe out the church. I was just ready to murder anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord. In fact, the high priest sent me to Damascus with letters of authority to imprison those who called upon the name of the Lord. While I was on the road, there was a bright light from heaven and the voice spoke to me and said, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' And I said, 'Who are You, Lord, that I might serve You?' He said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting and I am going to send you to the Gentiles.'" Now the minute he said Gentiles, the thing exploded. The people began to take off and tear their clothes and wave them in the air, throw dirt in the air and scream, "Kill him, kill him."

Now, he was talking to them in Hebrew, and the captain of the Roman guard didn't understand him. He said, "Get him inside before they kill him," and he said, "What in the world did he say to those people that made them so incensed? Scourge him. Find out what he said." As they got ready to scourge Paul, he said, "Is it customary to scourge a

Commentary on Romans Chapter 15, by Chuck Smith 10.24.21

Roman citizen who hasn't been condemned?" So the executioner went in and said, "You had better be careful. That guy is a Roman Citizen." The captain came out and said, "Are you a Roman citizen?" Paul said, "You bet I am." He said, "I am too. I had to buy my citizenship. It cost me quite a bit." Paul said, "I was free born."

Now he had his moment, it ended in a riot. Not the revival he was hoping for, and Paul, no doubt, was discouraged. And that night the Lord came and stood beside him and said, "Paul, be of good cheer." Now when the Lord says, "Be of good cheer," you're down. You don't say, "Be of good cheer" to a person who is happy. You say it to a person who is sad. "Be of good cheer, for as you have borne witness of Me here in Jerusalem," Paul you had your day, you bore witness of Me here, "so must you also bear witness of Me in Rome." Did you say Rome? Been wanting to go to Rome, by the will of God. So the Lord is declaring to Paul now, "It's My will that you go to Rome now."

Paul began the journey to Rome. He had a little detour in Caesarea a couple of years. And then when he went to Rome, it was not as he expected. He didn't have to pay his own passage, he was taken care of by the Roman government, room and board. God had a few people He wanted to save on the island of Malta, and so God parked the ship at Malta in order that Paul might have opportunity to witness to the governor and many of the people before going on to Rome. "But pray that I might come by the will of God."