

Romans 15:7-13 - The Motivating Mercy of God
Ryan Patty / 3.12.23 / Christ Community Church

Thank you all, sincerely and from the bottom of my heart, for your generous support of these young people going to Mexico. I'm praying that this would open their eyes more and more to the need of so many coming to faith.

If you have a Bible, please open it up to Romans 15. We have been walking through the book of Romans for the better part of a year now and find ourselves finishing up the book in the next few weeks as we head into Easter. Many of you know this, but the verse divisions and chapter divisions for the NT were added much later. Chapter divisions came in the year 1205 and verse divisions were added in 1551. So while we would say every word of Scripture is inspired and without error, we would not say that of these divisions, as most commentators agree that the natural division comes not with verse 1 of chapter 15 but with verse 13. Because the themes that Paul begins in chapter 14 continue into this section.

In chapter 14, we see this relationship between the stronger and weaker Christian. That the stronger, those who have liberty and freedom, are to look out for, care for, and at times even draw back on some of their liberty for the sake of their brother or sister (often not a popular message today). In essence, we are to look out for one another, edify one another, and refrain from placing a stumbling block in front of another. And these themes continue right on into chapter 15, as Paul says, we who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak.

And as we finish out this section today that began in chapter 14, you might be thinking I have heard some of this before. I recognize these themes and the emphasis here seems similar to chapter 14. You would be exactly right! In our Western minds, we argue in points, sequentially, we build the building one brick at a time. But in the Jewish mind, there was lots of repetition, re-emphasizing, coming back to make make the point again.. (hand-motion – rather than a stair-step there is a loop) Why? Because that's how we learn. We learn through repetition and someone repeating things to us and re-emphasizing them over and over again. And here in the Roman church there were some difficult things to work through. The Jews have been God's chosen people for thousands of years, and now the Gentiles are included?! How is this supposed to work out?

So with that explained, I want to pastorally say, don't assume there is nothing new here for you to learn! All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. So while listening today, and hearing God's Word proclaimed to you, be praying that the Holy Spirit would apply it to your heart, teaching, rebuking, correcting and training where He sees fit. Let's read Romans 15:7-13 (CSB) and then I'll pray.

7 Therefore accept one another, just as Christ also accepted you, to the glory of God. 8 For I say that Christ became a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises to the fathers, 9 and so that Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

**Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,
and I will sing praise to your name.**

10 Again it says, **Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people!** 11 And again,

**Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;
let all the peoples praise him!**

12 And again, Isaiah says,

**The root of Jesse will appear,
the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;
the Gentiles will hope in him.**

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let's Pray.

If you're taking notes or following along in the bulletin, our main point and sub points are as follows:

God through Christ has had mercy on you, therefore:

1. Accept one another to the glory of God

2. Evangelize to the glory of God
3. Have hope to the glory of God

God through Christ has had mercy on you –

I have already given a brief recap through our section of Romans, but this is the undergirding truth flowing the entire book. God has sent His Son to redeem you and I. This truth is applied in various ways throughout chapters 14 and 15, but here in our section, we see in verse 8 that Christ became a servant. Jesus tells us in Mark 10 that he came to serve and not to be served. Phil 2 will tell us that Christ humbled himself to the point of death, even death on the cross. This picture of Christ coming, serving, saving, and redeeming us highlights the mercy that God has shown us because of what Christ did. We who deserved no mercy have received it fully. Paul can put it like this in Romans 5:6-11 - 6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For rarely will someone die for a just person—though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. 8 But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 How much more then, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath. 10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. 11 And not only that, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

Since all of that is true, how then does this inform the Christian life (that's the turn we took in chapter 12 – what is the application of these theological truths) so how does this inform the Christian life AND our relationships with one another in the church? How are we motivated by this truth to live? 3 truths from our section today.

1. Accept one another to the glory of God

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

Paul is writing to Christians here, calling on them to accept one another. This idea of acceptance is not what our culture would tell us acceptance looks like, or love looks like. No these people have submitted their lives to the Lord

Jesus Christ and are seeking to follow him, not living their lives or **desiring to live** their lives in open rebellion to his word.

So, In light of what God through Christ has done for one another, we are to accept one another. Your version might say welcome or receive. Same wording in Chapter 14, verse 1, “accept anyone who is weak in faith, but don’t argue about disputed matters.”

This idea of accept implies the idea of “to bring into Christian fellowship.” Don’t withhold a Christian community from someone who is a Christian just because they eat a certain food or observe a certain day as more holy. This is what they were wrestling with in the church. Who can belong? What do they have to believe? What matters are first-tier issues and what matters are conscience issues?

Now all of this has been taught on before, but the clear truth from Scripture is that God has accepted us into His family, therefore we are to show that radical hospitality and acceptance towards our fellow brothers and sisters whom God has ALSO saved.. And we show this particularly in the fellowship of the local church.

Two related things I want to point out with this:

- 1) You might not have everything in common with, or even naturally like, the person God has brought into fellowship with you. Paul here is clearly bringing correction to the Jew and Gentile relations as there was some natural friction between those who had been born Jews, spent their whole lives as Jews, and then came to embrace Christ, and those who had spent their whole lives not doing that. And then the Spirit does a work in their hearts, they confess Christ as Lord, and now they find themselves in this family and they gotta learn to get along! They have to learn to show grace and forgiveness and mercy towards one another; they have to accept one another.
 - a) And is it not the same for us here, friends? I tell the youth all the time, you don’t have to be best friends with everyone in here, but you do need to treat them as a brother in sister in Christ, overlooking the differences for the sake of unity.
 - b) My wife often lovingly describes me as a “button-pusher,” or a “pot-stirrer.” Now most of the time I have no idea what she is talking about.. Nonetheless, I realize I might not be everyone’s “cup of tea” in light of light-hearted remark here or there. Or even further, my face really can’t hide well what I’m thinking. If I think you are saying something incoherent, I don’t know how to smile and nod. Alan Gunn, our elder-

chair, has often remarked, “Ryan, I can’t hear what you’re saying because your face is yelling at me...” So I recognize things about myself that might cause friction...But praise God for a church that accepts one another, faults and all. We can be prickly, we can annoy one another, we can even differ over matters of conscience that makes life hard... nonetheless, God through Christ has accepted you and calls you to accept your brother or sister in Christ.

- c) And this is the heart of Paul’s argument and how he’s tying this practical acceptance of one another back to the Gospel: if we treat others in the church differently based off of ethnicity, or a certain doctrine that’s not of first importance, or just because they bother us (they push our buttons), **we in essence are denying the Gospel:** that it is by grace through faith that we are saved and that alone.
 - d) Think for example of Galatians 1:10 - Paul can write, “Am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.” In others words, we don’t change the Gospel to fit our mold, or to hold others to our conscious.
 - e) By grace through faith is the resounding cry of the Gospel, and our life-on-life relationships in the church must truly model this: by grace through faith. Second thing I want us to consider...
- 2) Practically we practice membership here to both know who is a part of the local church and to model this very idea of acceptance. Our membership covenant is designed for members to *covenant* with one another in such a way that we edify one another, we spur one another one, and we accept one another as a brother or sister in Christ *despite some of our differences*. This togetherness, the Biblical metaphor is that we are members of one another, is the idea here. So here at CCC, we truly seek to major on the majors, and minor on the minors. When Paul tells us here in Romans 15, to accept one another, matters of conscious placed aside, we are truly seeking to do that.
- a) Imagine this. How ridiculous would it be if I and another elder are interviewing one of you for membership. We hear your clear testimony of faith, that you recognized your sin and your need for a savior and then saw by the grace of God how Jesus Christ was that Savior and you placed your faith in him and since then have been seeking to follow Christ as a faithful disciple. Growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, being sanctified day by day by the Spirit’s work in your life.

- i) We ask you to share the Gospel with us and you tell us how the great news that God through Christ is reconciling people to himself so that all who repent of their sins and place their faith in Christ and see him as their Lord and savior can be forgiven, redeemed, and have ever-lasting life.
- ii) And then you say in passing, “ya know, I’m not that big of a fan of Chick-Fil-a, I don’t think it’s that great of food.” And I say, “I’d like to thank you so much for your time today, but I don’t think CCC is the right church for you...”

(1) Now, as much as I might like to say that to you at the moment, I’m putting a preference of mine and something that rubs me the wrong way about you in between our Christian fellowship and membership. Now obviously I’m going light-hearted here with Chick-fil-A, but I could have easily upped the ante. What do we do practically when it’s a specific end-times view that we hold closely? Or When it’s over the government and how it should be run? What about a couple years ago over masks and their efficacy? And I could keep going.. But what do we do when it’s over something we care more deeply about but ultimately is not a first-tier, or even second, tier issue in our theological triage. Will we accept one another? Will we accept one another as God through Christ has accepted us?

(2) **Listen I have thoughts about all of those things and more..** But the mature are able to set aside differences for the sake of loving, admonishing, and living life with one another. The emphasis throughout this section is that those who have stronger consciences in one area would be willing to forgo their liberty for the sake of the weaker brother or sister, and those with stronger consciences in a different area would do the same. Does that characterize us? Are we seeking to mature in that manner?

(3) Practically, membership in many ways makes us do that. We are united in the Gospel and what God through Christ has done for us. Therefore we accept one another to the glory of God.

2. Evangelize to the glory of God

You might be wondering where I am getting this point, but let me read the text and then explain.

8 For I say that Christ became a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises to the fathers, 9 and so that Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, **Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and I will sing praise to your name.** 10 Again it says, **Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people!** 11 And again, **Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples praise him!** 12 And again, Isaiah says, **The root of Jesse will appear, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; the Gentiles will hope in him.**

In light of salvation history, God's people have always been a chosen people unto himself. We see this with the calling of Abraham, we see this as the promise extends through the Patriarchs and through Israel overall. And then we see something that is hinted at in the OT but now given fulfillment in the new, that the promises of God are now including not just Jew but Gentile as well. (The Gentiles being those who aren't Jews). That God's people will come from all backgrounds not just one. And this is what Paul has been interweaving throughout the book of Romans and here makes clear, this was the plan all along! God had elected the Jewish people with the purpose of eventually grafting in the Gentiles, to show his mercy and grace to people from all nations. Notice the thought sequence in the text.

- **Christ became a servant of the circumcised (of the Jews) to confirm the promises given to the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) so that what.. The GENTILES may glorify God for his mercy. And then he quotes four times from the OT, from 2 Samuel 22:50, Deuteronomy 32:43, and Ps 117:1 and Isaiah 11:10. Notice how many times the word Gentiles is mentioned there. Why is this important?**
- Because for the Jew they had the OT only as their Scriptures. NT wasn't still in process. But the Jewish division of the Old Testament was Law, Prophets, and Writings. And where does Paul expertly quote from? 2 Law - Deuteronomy, Prophets, Samuel and Isaiah, Writings, the Psalms. He quotes from the entirety of their scriptures!
- Do you see what he's doing? He's saying to the Jewish side of the church, accept one another, because really the entire scope of redemption history, the entirety of the Scriptures testifies to the inclusion of the Gentiles in order to unite all people under his rule and thus bring glory to his name. This is big! He's saying, put aside those petty squabbles and view what God is doing in terms of the grand sweep of history. IF you truly

understand THAT, then that reality will motivate you in how you treat one another. This has been God's plan all along. When I come to see God's plan of redemption I am motivated to pursue unity with my brother or sister for the sake of the glory of God.

But my point is that we are to evangelize to the glory of God. And the reason for this is the repeated refrain of the Gentiles coming to praise God for his mercy. This is salvation mercy as Paul describes in Ephesians 2: Ephesians 2:1-8 – And you were dead in your trespasses and sins 2 in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. 3 We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, 5 made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! 6 He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast.

So if this is in part the purpose for which Christ came, to redeem sinners from all nations. Do we not see how discipleship of all people (matthew 28, GC) and the grafting in of the Gentiles fits into God's plan for the nations? We are to be evangelizing here and throughout the world, proclaiming the news of what Christ has done. So that the Gentiles, and Jews, might rejoice that the Messiah has come.

So let me talk about going to the nations first, and then evangelism in our local context.

1. Missions

- a. In light of the great commission, in light of this passage that shows the focal point of salvation history, and numerous other passages, AND in light of the need of those who haven't heard, of those who need churches established, of those new believers who need to be built up and trained and strengthened, in light of the commission and in light of the need, we are to be a people who both go and send. We go ourselves. From short term trips, to medium trips, to indefinite trips, we recognize what God through

Christ has done for us, we recognize that the greatest news someone could ever hear is the Gospel, and we recognize that we have this one life to live to the glory of God, and we allow those things to motivate us in our desire to go.

- b. My prayer constantly Christ Community, is that apart from the missionaries we already have sent, that we would be growing our own missionaries right here in the church, those who would count the cost and go. I pray that for my kids, I pray that for all the kids and youth in the church. We want to be a sending church that seeks to partner with other churches in sending people to reach the nations for Christ. **That means, fathers and mothers, that we teach** our young people about the need of the nations, and about God's purpose of the Gospel going forth. We teach that to them. And we teach them that all of life is to be lived to the glory of God, and so if God calls them to go, we urge them on as a fellow brother or sister in Christ and though we are tearful at being apart for so long we trust that in light of eternity it is but a blink of the eye. We should be passionate about sending another generation.
 - i. And if God calls them to be an engineer, a plumber, a teacher, a stay at home mom, or something else, then we teach them of what it means to live sacrificially. To give, to support those going.
 - ii. One pastor writes, ""You have three choices in world missions: be a joyful, sacrificial goer, be a joyful, sacrificial sender, or be disobedient." I agree whole-heartedly.
 - iii. We model what it means that we might not get to do something extra because our family supports this family that lives overseas. WE model to our family and friends using vacation time to go on short term trips like some of my leaders for the Mexico trip are doing, because in light of our comfort driven culture, we delight in that sacrifice. We teach them that the cost is worth it.
 - iv. And in speaking with the missions team and for the pastors, we desire to do more short term trips. Both to visit our missionaries and to form and build other partnerships we can develop. We want to be a sending *in all forms* church. Sending our people long term, medium term, and short term to be a part of the kingdom work outside of Idaho Falls. So as more information comes out in the next year or two, even of a missions conference we are hoping to host that our supported missionaries will come in for, be asking God to show you how you might be involved. What you might be able to go and be a part of. Maybe the vacation becomes a missions trip one year. Sure, you will be exhausted physically, but spiritually you will be encouraged like never before. So we want to be a

part of the kingdom of God elsewhere, but this leads me to my second sub-point, we want to be a part of the kingdom of God here.

2. Evangelism and outreach

- a. We don't want eyes and hearts that are looking so much elsewhere that we neglect the evangelistic opportunities here. Friends, the reality is that those who don't know Christ are going to hell. So let us not be so focused elsewhere we neglect the day to day people right in front of us. **It's a both-and, not an either-or.** We are called to proclaim this news, that the root of Jesse has come, and he has risen to rule all people. That God is calling all people to repent and trust in his Son! We must proclaim this here to our neighbors, coworkers, our friends and our families. Yes we support, but we don't just support with our check-books, we ask that God would do the hard work of growing us in our boldness, in our evangelism.
- b. Maybe you are frightened of this. Fear of man plagues us all in different ways. We have classes that can help. I read a book recently called, "When people are Big and God is small" that will help you think through your own fear of man. (repeat title). Likewise, Discipling and accountability relationships will help, as people are intentional about asking you "who have you been sharing the Gospel with lately?" I tell you this, the one prayer of mine that God always answers is that he would give me boldness in my evangelism. I pray it, then I meet someone at the park the next day with my family and I feel that fear of man creeping up and the Spirit is prompting me, "you were just praying for this yesterday, Ryan." The simple prayer of "God, help me to recognize opportunities today to share the good news of your son," while it might be frightening in one sense, is a prayer that the Lord answers consistently.
- c. We have awesome people on both the missions and outreach teams who would be glad to talk to you more about what they are doing. Feel free to reach out and we will get you plugged in with them.

But the repeated refrain in all of the points is that all of this is done to the glory of God. This mercy he has shown us motivates us in these truths, all to his praise and glory. And look back through the text,

V. 9 - so the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, praise amongst the gentiles, I will sing praise to your name.

V. 10 - rejoice, you gentiles, praise the Lord you Gentiles, let all people praise him

Missions and evangelism is at the heart of these quotations, that all people (both far and near, both there and here) might acknowledge God for who he is. And not only acknowledge him, but PRAISE him. Not only acknowledge that God exists but come to say yes this awesome God DOES exist and my life must reflect this reality and I seek to live for him every single day.

As John Piper famously wrote, “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church, worship is. Missions exist because worship doesn’t.”

That’s why we go, and that’s what Paul is trying to show us here. The prophecies of old speak of the Gentiles coming to faith, people from all nations coming to faith, to praise and rejoice in the things of God. When we see that big picture taking place, we get to delight in being a part of that.

3. Have Hope to the glory of God

In light of God through Christ showing us mercy, we are to accept one another, we are to be a part of God’s Gospel going to the nations through evangelism and missions, and we are to have hope to the glory of God. Why are we to have hope? 3 verses speak to this throughout this section. First, Let’s look back at verse 4, 4 For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures. We might have hope in this Christian life that we are walking through, we might have hope that even though life in a fallen world is difficult, we read God’s word and we are reminded of His truths and what he has done. .

We are reminded that All of that was written was for our hope, that we might see the wonderful works of God in the world, in the lives of his people, and we might have hope.

Second, verse 12 - 12 And again, Isaiah says, The root of Jesse will appear, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; the Gentiles will hope in him. Not just Jews will hope in the Messiah, but Gentiles will hope in Christ as well.

And third, our final verse, verse 13 - 13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Because of our relationship with God through Christ, we of all people in this world have hope. A spirit-given, Christ-assured hope. And Paul in this section wants us to see that our God is a God of hope. But the question comes, hope in what? Well the resounding answer throughout Romans and the NT is that we would have hope in Christ. He is, as

Paul quotes from Isaiah, the root of Jesse, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles, the one in whom they will hope in. And Paul can say in verse 13, you will overflow with this hope as you believe. As you have faith that Christ is truly the messiah, is truly the savior, the Spirit produces a hope in you no matter the circumstances.

So let's put the pieces together. The Christian hopes in Christ in every moment in life. They will say, Jesus Christ is my hope yesterday, today, and forever. He is my hope for eternal life, he is my hope in the midst of THIS life, he is my hope for my struggling marriage, the days I hate going to my job, the moments I feel alone and forgotten, the times I feel distant from my kids. He is my hope in all things. He is the hope of the world. And we cling to that, we hold on to it, we allow our thoughts to inform our feelings and we count it to be true. He is our hope.

Do we live in light of this hope? Or are we easily overcome with the burdens of life, the depressing news of what's happening in our culture or the world at large, the suffering of millions around the world, the difficulties we ourselves face day in and day out. Are we characterized by hope in all of that? Or have we become jaded? Not feeling much hope because our focus is on ourselves or some other problem that exists and not on Christ?

Listen, I'm not telling you to just go through life with rose-colored glasses. In a fallen world, evil is real, the effects of sin are horrible and messy, and there are legitimate struggles that many of you are walking through right now. But what Paul is telling this Roman church, who was fighting for unity amidst the Jew/Gentile division and who was feeling the persecution from the culture (and would feel it a lot more in the coming years) what he is reminding them of is to not lose their hope. Christianity is not about living in a fairy-tale fantasy. We don't just deny what is happening out there, We don't just come here as some sort of escapism from the world. No Christians more than anyone are realists because we know the truth of God and His word. We understand the effects of sin and depravity and we understand grace and love and beauty as all coming from Him.

So we look at the world around us, we look at all of it, the good and the bad, the suffering and the beauty, the moments in the valley and the moments on the mountain top, we experience all of that this side of eternity, YET, we look at it all through the finished work of Jesus Christ.. And therefore we are a people of hope because we know the God of hope. The giver of hope. The one in whom all people are called to hope in.

To the person who is not a Christian and you are gathered with us this morning, I pray you would consider where your hope lies. Maybe you think nothing happens after death and everything ceases to exist. Well God through his word tells us that “he has put eternity into our hearts.” Something within us knows that this world with its suffering and death is not how it was supposed to be. And maybe God through His Spirit is telling you that this morning, yet you have no hope. I want to tell you that this God we serve offers hope to you, but it only comes through belief in His Son Jesus Christ. That what he did is enough and that in and of yourself you aren’t good enough. None of us are. But as we turn to Christ, we realize the hope that he offers. If you have questions about that hope, talk with someone around you after the service or we will have people up front who would be glad to pray with you and answer questions about the hope that they have experienced.

And to my fellow saints here at CCC, this passage calls us to accept one another, it calls us to proclaim this Gospel to our neighbors and to those who have yet to hear, and it calls us to press on in faith so that we may overflow with hope. But if you have been struggling with hope lately, seek to remind yourself daily of the finished work of Christ, that He has promised to come again and that we will be with him for all eternity. May that motivate you in every area of life as we remember the mercy we have been shown and therefore seek to live our lives to the glory of God. Let’s pray.