

Men to Men Ministry - Lesson 46 of 52 on Paul's letter to the Romans.

Serve as Jesus Serves

Teacher: Just Larry

Phone: 916-337-2648

Web address: <http://theoinsight.com>

Email: ljmonson@hotmail.com

Scripture – Romans 15:8-13 NASB

For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision in behalf of the truth of God, to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written:

*“Therefore, I will give praise to You among the Gentiles,
And I will sing praises to Your name.”*

Again he says,

“Rejoice, you Gentiles, with His people.”

And again,

*“Praise the Lord all you Gentiles,
And let all the peoples praise Him.”*

Again Isaiah says,

*“There shall come the root of Jesse,
And He who arises to rule over the Gentiles,
In Him will the Gentiles hope.”*

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.

REVIEW Scriptural context

Major points from Romans 15:1-7

- Recognizing that we have differences of feelings, convictions, or opinions on the different issues involving the Christian walk. Paul said, "Those who are strong in the faith can eat meat, those who are weak in the faith have convictions against eating meat so they eat vegetables." We need to recognize **that people have different convictions and that not everybody is going to see things the right way as 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. If we disagree, we disagree agreeably, that we should not split over issues and get into a big controversy over these little issues. Paul is asking the Roman church 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 upon them when they see the liberty that you have. So walk in love.
- We then that are **strong [strong in the faith] ought to bear the infirmities of the weak**, not to please ourselves (Romans 15:1).
- **Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up** (Romans 15:2). So rather than being willing to please myself, I should live to please others. As Christians, 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 me, but living to please the others, walking more rigid than I would if I was just following my convictions. Paul gives us, then, the example of Jesus Christ.
- 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 to 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 offend.

Outline

- 1) For I say (Paul's authority)
 - a) Christ has become a servant to the Jews (Christ's actions)
 - b) On behalf of the Truth of God (The reason for Jesus)
 - (1) To conform to the promises given to the fathers

- (2) To the Gentiles to glorify God for his mercy
- 2) As it is written: (The authority of Scripture)
- a) The Gentiles will hear the praise of God
 - b) The Gentiles will rejoice
 - c) The Gentiles will praise
 - d) The Gentiles will have hope.
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Phrases of importance in Romans 15:8-13

For I say – Paul was making his argument in the first person. I affirm, or I maintain. Paul as a Jew, showing that his work had reference to the Jews, further, Paul had a direct ministry to the Gentiles.

That Jesus Christ – When asked what Jesus' last name the response is is often Christ. Christ is a synonym for Messiah. It is the name of his “office;” and to “a Jew” the name “Messiah” would convey much more than the idea of a mere proper name.

Was a minister of circumcision – The exercise or content of his office of Messiah (Christ), his among the Jews, or concerning the Jews, for the purposes which he immediately specifies. He was born a Jew; was circumcised; came “to” that nation; and died in their midst, without having gone himself to any other people.

For the truth of God - To confirm or establish the truth of the promises of God. He remained among them in the exercise of his ministry, to show that God was “true,” who had said that the Messiah should come to them.

To confirm the promises. - To “establish,” or to show that the promises were true. The “promises” referred to here, are those particularly related to the coming of the Messiah. By thus admitting that the Messiah was the minister of the circumcision, the apostle conceded all that the Jew could ask, that he was to be peculiarly “their” Messiah.

Now the God of hope, May the God of this hope God who caused both Jews and Gentiles to hope that the gracious promises which he made to them should be fulfilled and who, accordingly, has fulfilled them in the most punctual and circumstantial manner.

Fill you with all joy, - Give you true spiritual happiness; peace in your hearts, and unity among yourselves; in believing not only the promises which he has given you, but believing in Christ Jesus, in whom all the promises are yea and amen.

That you may abound in hope — That you may be excited to take more enlarged views of the salvation which God has provided for you and have all your expectations fulfilled by the power of the Holy Ghost, enabling you to hope and believe; and then sealing the fulfillment of the promises upon your hearts.

Paul's references to the Old Testament

The Old Testament was quoted often by Paul. I am truly awed by his ability to quote the scripture at hand as if he had memorized it all. He was the Bible answer man of his time.

Rant for tonight:

There is a current Christian habit that must be overcome. When we are trying to explain or even understand the entirety of Scripture, we often take shortcuts. As if our lives will be wasted on the study of the whole. As we read our portion tonight it is easy just to say Paul was just spitting out Old Testament passages that to him made sense for the moment. But the problem that comes with the citation of Old Testament verses is we soon tune out. Sure, it is a proof text for Paul at that time and in those circumstances, but I don't have time to look them up and learn the context, the authorial intent, and the cultural norms of the time. I tune out as soon as I hear someone teaching something that's kind of complicated. It takes too much energy. We seem to think, "I know it is in there somewhere. We tend to throw away 75% of the Bible because we're only going to believe or understand what comes naturally and easily to us. When a biblical writer quotes from the Old Testament we simply accept it and know it is there somewhere and we go no further. It is sometimes referred to as the diminishment of Scripture.

The logic is this:

1. I have only so much time and I should focus on the most important.
2. The most important must be prioritized for my understanding and encouragement.
3. When I compare the Old Testament and the New Testament I have to put one in a higher priority. I proclaim the Old Testament is not as relevant to me today as a born-again Christian. The Old Testament in the advent of the new isn't as important.
4. Now I have to again prioritize. In the New Testament, I again must put a ranking of interest and study.
5. I am a Christian so I have to put the Gospels first.
6. Then we take an additional division. I will only study the words of Jesus. That should do it.
7. I will be a red letter Christian of those sayings that make sense to me today all the others will be put aside.

Each of these narrowing points of study will ultimately diminish the truth until there is no truth but what each individual feels is appropriate. You may well think Jesus died for everyone but discount the Homosexual next door.

The Old Testament and the New Testament are inextricably tied to each other.

In our studies together there have been many occasions to find inspiration and challenge in the words of Paul. But Paul was a Jew and he saw everything through his window of time and time has changed. But I would submit to you that there is great value in understanding the why of Jesus through the eyes of a Hebrew of Hebrews.

These three quotations from 2 Samuel 22:50, Psalms 117:1, and Isaiah 11:10, all make mention of the Gentiles. Each is included in the logic of Paul for the **UNITY** of the church

without division between Gentile and Jew. God's purpose always had envisioned the redemption of Gentiles as well as Jews. Paul did not hesitate to pile verse on top of verse and to marshal scripture after scripture in support of his thesis. Both Jesus and Paul used the Old Testament scriptures liberally salted with verses from the word of God.

Why Jesus became a servant?

As we read this section the first thought that came to my mind is that **WHY** Jesus came. We can argue with other religions and historians about his appearance. For me, it is a foregone conclusion. Jesus was a historical and documented fact. But the hard question is Why? The portion goes on to say He came to become a servant. Not some grand, all-knowing, omnipotent being that was above all others, but a servant.

Jesus turned water into wine. Jesus drove out an evil spirit. Jesus filled nets with fish. Jesus raised a widow's son to life. Jesus healed a withered hand. Jesus cast demons into a herd of pigs. Jesus walked on water. Jesus restored sight to the blind. Jesus washed feet. Jesus fed the hungry. Jesus healed the sick. Jesus taught the learned and the unlearned. But the greatest gift to the world was he came to be a servant. To provide for our needs and give us the grace to live in the lack.

The second question I have is why he came to the Jews first.

Servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God, to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy

Jesus became a servant to the circumcision because of an absolute truth. A truth that was given in the form of a promise. ***If my people who are called by My name, shall humble themselves before God, then I will come and heal their land.*** Somewhere in the distant past God decided to choose a people. Not a perfect people. Not a family which had a predilection to follow anyone or anything. A people that needed God. That is why he came to the people of Abraham. God was a part of the covenant between Himself and Abraham. God's truth would count Abraham and his family, from generation to generation as blessed. So, Jesus came to the Jews because of Abraham. God came to restore a personal covenant. Jesus's servanthood was first and foremost pointed to this very special group. Jesus came as a servant to the Jews. He accepted all the laws of the Jews upon himself as a way of serving others Jesus became a servant of the circumcision because they needed Him.

Jesus was the example that Paul used to explain the reasoning of putting aside the strength of your conviction to be a servant to the weak. Jesus served others so we should seek to selflessly serve others who have different convictions than us, by taking on their convictions not in every scenario of life but at least in our interactions with them.

I have several sources that seem to teach we are to be copies of Jesus in all things. If Jesus did his ministry in servanthood, so I should be a servant. If this premise is true then we should be focusing all our efforts toward the Jews. We should be trying to feed thousands with a couple of fish and some pita bread. Jesus healed thousands so therefore should not our ministry be about healing. If we are to be copies of Jesus in Ministry, shouldn't you heal

everybody because we should only do what Jesus did. Our ministry, our service may not be a copy of the ministry of Jesus in its particulars or methods, but in our purposeful, pointed servanthood.

The reason Jesus came to be a servant to the Jews, a servant to the circumcision, is the best example of the strong having compassion, bearing up and acceptance to the most needy.

In Matthew 15:24-28 this Jesus speaking in response to a Gentile woman's cry for help:

24 But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" 26 Yet He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 27 And she said, "Yes, Lord; but please help, for even the dogs feed on the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed at once.

So, Paul is telling us that Jesus became a servant to the Jews but the Gentiles were also recipients of God's mercy.

for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy;

For Paul, scripture ended all arguments. The Old Testament promised certain things, these things came to pass, and that ended the discussion. This shows that the Bible should be treated as an authoritative book. One of the reasons Jesus came was because God had made some promises.

Romans 15:7,8 -- For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision in behalf of the truth of God, to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy;

God reaching out in servanthood to the Jews and the Gentiles.

Two major thoughts here are the promises to the Jews, and the expansion of the Kingdom to include the Gentiles.

a) Jesus became a servant because of the *truth of God.*

God made promises and Jesus came as a servant to the Jews of the world because it is the truth of God. Jesus came to prove the truth. The truth is that God always keeps his promises.

To show the Gentiles the reason for bearing with the seemingly weak Jews, Paul shows them that they were held accountable to the truth of God. I was the reason Jesus came to the Jews first. Jesus came to the Jews in the days of his earthly ministry. Christ confined his ministry to what we call the Holy Land. And by doing so he was keeping the promises given to the generations of Abraham. Paul was proclaiming that the Jews had the first right to the blessings of the Gospel. In this first reason for the Advent of Jesus as a servant, He confined his ministry to the Jews, to confirm the truth of God, all contained in the promises made unto the patriarchs. God had made promises, that for the sake of the truth kept and

kept well. Jesus, by coming according to the promise, has fulfilled this truth, by making good the promises: therefore, salvation is of the Jews, as a kind of right conveyed to them through the promises made to their fathers. But this salvation was not exclusively designed for the Jewish people; as God by his prophets had repeatedly declared.

b) Jesus became a servant because He confirmed the *promises given*.

God made some promises way back early in the chapters of the book of Genesis and littered throughout the Old Testament text. God made some promises and Paul's forefathers looked forward to those promises. They had not received the fullness of those promises. They didn't see those promises come to pass. The People of Abraham looked towards them in faith and by faith they received their commendation from God they were living for a kingdom that was not of this world.

As it says in Hebrews chapter 11, some faithful people were constantly looking to the promises of God. It states in 39,40 "***All these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.***" saying "O Lord, When Oh Lord when will you fulfill these promises look at what it says in the remainder of that verse to confirm to prove true to fulfill says in verse eight "***By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to received for an inheritance, and he went out, not knowing where he was going.***" God made promises to the fathers of the Jewish people. God made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God made promises to King David. God made promises that those men who never really saw come to fruition.

Note of context is needed here: Whenever an Old Testament writer uses the phrase "the nations" it is referring to all the nations of the world and not the singular nations of the Jews.

- **Abraham's promise**

God promised Abraham that he would make him a blessing so that he would bless all nations. When Abraham died, he had one son remaining with him. God promised Abraham the land of Canaan. But when Abraham died, he owned a few plots of land by some wells. Abraham's family, and his descendants, were to be his promised legacy. God promised Abraham's descendants to be like the Stars and yet he didn't have a son until he was a hundred years old.

Abraham believed God and God counted that to him as righteousness and so now here in our study tonight, Paul says in the fullness of time God sent His Son into the world to fulfill, to make good, on his word because his word doesn't leave his mouth and come back without accomplishing what he said.

Abraham is a blessing to all the nations Jesus has descended from Abraham and through Jesus through Abraham's progeny, we have life we have blessed people who are not born of the Jews we are grafted into the people of God. That land that was promised to Abraham is still fought over to this day that land. **By faith, I believe that the land promised to Abraham has become the land of the Jews because of the kingship of Jesus**

Christ. In the Kingdom of God as administered by Jesus this be fully and completely and sovereignly possessed by God's people one day.

Jesus became a servant to fulfill these promises to Abraham's descendants that number like the stars of the sky or the sands of the seashore.

Every Christian, born of the Spirit who has called on the name of Jesus becomes a Child of God, AND an heir to the promise given to Abraham.

- A promise of books of Samuel

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel do not explicitly name Samuel as their author, although he is the first character mentioned in the story. These books provide an account of Israel's transition from a group of tribes ruled by judges to a unified kingdom under King David in Jerusalem.

Samuel was a leader and a prophet, Samuel plays a significant role throughout the narrative. The narrative continues beyond Samuel to the Saul's rise to power and subsequent failures are told in two movements (1 Samuel 8-15 and 16-31). His tragic downfall and death are also part of the narrative. It continues to tell the story of David and his rise to power (2 Samuel 1-9) is followed by his own tragic failure and the slow decline of his family and kingdom (2 Samuel 10-20). The entire story concludes with an epilogue (2 Samuel 21-24) that reflects back on the events.

Of the promises given in Samuel are the opposition to the proud and the ultimate exaltation of the humble. Of these promises, in 2 Samuel 7:11-16, there is a hope of a future Messiah. That David's seed will be the Son of God, will build a house for God's name, will reign forever, and to witness these events.

It is from this last part of Second Samuel that Paul takes occasion to quote a promise made to Israel in 2 Samuel 22:50 and is a part of David's song of deliverance. ***Therefore I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, among the nations. And I will sing praises to Thy name.***

This promise to Samuel is the one referred to in Romans 15:9

- David's Promise

Along with the prophecy from 2 Samuel, God promised King David a kingdom a throne that would endure for all ages. Yet shortly after David died and his son took over the kingdom it split into the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Consequently, both were conquered by Babylon and Assyria. To the promise of David, God would bring about someone a forever kind of person to sit on David's forever throne. That forever kind of person is Jesus the eternal son of God. In the New Testament Jesus is called the son of David because he is the fulfillment of God's promises.

Paul quotes from Psalms 117 "***Praise the Lord, all nations; laud Him all peoples! For His lovingkindness is great toward us, and the Truth of the Lord is everlasting. Praise the Lord.***"

As a side note here: **If God has been faithful in everything he has ever said, he will do then in the things that he has yet to do. God has promised and that is good enough for me. There will be a day when He will judge the living and the dead.** I can peace in the terribleness of our day. It gives me joy when all does not go well. God's got this.

This promise to David is the one referred to in Romans 15:10-11.

- **Isaiah's promise**

ISAIAH is aptly translated from the Hebrew as “*Yahweh is salvation*”. Isiah was the first of the major prophets in tin our translated English Bibles. He was the first of the what is called the latter prophets in the Hebrew Bible. It is the largest and the most universally cherished of the Old Testament prophetic books.

The prophet Isaiah is mentioned repeatedly in 2 Kings and three times in 2 Chronicles. His name appears sixteen times in the book that bears his name. The book is dated in the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Late tradition asserts that the prophet was martyred in the reign of Manasseh.

Isaiah's promise was to all the nations. The 42 chapter of Isaiah is about the Promise concerning the coming of God's servant. God starts with “***Behold, My servant, who I uphold; My chosen one in which My soul delights, I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.***”

Further in Isaiah 42:6,7, God says as a part of his promise to Isaiah, “***I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, to open blind eyes.***”

We also find another promise for the gentiles in Isaiah: **There shall come the root of Jesse, And He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, In Him will the Gentiles hope.**” Isaiah 11:10

c) Jesus became a servant because it was for all nations (Gentiles)

From the truth of God and the promises given to the Jews, Paul continues to say all these promises were never meant for the exclusion of the Gentiles. In truth, God has never excluded the Gentiles.

I must here also include several scriptures that would exclude Gentiles as found in Nehemiah 13:1-3 which emphatically commanded whenever the scriptures were read aloud, that all Ammonite or Moabite should enter the assembly of God. And in verse 3 it says they excluded all foreigners from Israel. The greater context of this scripture is specifically about the Holy Temple. At the building of Solomon's temple it included a special place for converts to Judaism, the Court of the Gentiles.

Note that while Israel was chosen as the instrument to tell and show the world of God's saving grace, salvation was always available to all people. Indeed, the Old Testament

contains many examples of foreigners becoming part of Israel, indicating that the Israelite Covenant was open to all and was never exclusive. For example:

1. Abraham's own household must have consisted of perhaps 2000 people just to be able to raise an army of 318 men to liberate Lot, Gen 14:14. Indeed, Abraham's chief servant (from Damascus) was clearly a believer and very devout as shown in Gen 24.
2. When Jacob entered Egypt, his family numbered 75 people (Acts 7:14, Ex 1:5). Some of these were not direct descendants of Abraham such as the wives of the 12 patriarchs, notably Joseph's own wife. 215 years and four generations later at the exodus, Israel's army had over 600,000 men (excluding women and children) suggesting a total population of several million people, requiring many additions. This included a significant mixed multitude (Ex 12:38) showing that Israel obviously consisted of many non-biological Jews had joined. (Note that it is biologically impossible for Israelite numbers to have grown from 75 to several million biologically without many outside additions.)
3. Moses married a Midianite (Ex 2:16-21).
4. Caleb, who represented and led the tribe of Judah was a Kennizite (Num 32:12).
5. Rahab was a Canaanite (Josh 2:1, 2, Matt 1:5)
6. Ruth was Moabite (Ruth 1:4 16, 17, Matt 1:5) – these last two make King David descended from foreigners (Ruth 4:13-16).
7. Uriah was a Hittite (2 Sam 11:3)
8. King David's elite personal regiment was Gittite, Philistines (1 Chron 18:17)
9. The Rechabites were Kenites (Jer 35:1-19)
10. Many other foreigners lived in Israel (1 Chron 22:2, 17, 2 Chron 30:25)
11. In Esther's time "many of the people of the land became Jews" (Esther 8:17, 9:27)
12. Even in NT times, many Jewish synagogues were attended by godly gentiles converted to Judaism (Acts 13:16, 26, 16:14, 17:17)
13. Many Jewish proselytes came to worship in Jerusalem (John 20:20, Acts 2:9-11)
14. Jesus quotes Isa 56:7, "My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations", Mark 11:17.
15. Further, biological Israelites could opt out of the covenant and be cut-off (Ex 30:33, 38, 31:14, Lev 7:20, 21, 25, 27).

d) Jesus became a servant to bring joy and peace in belief.

Romans 15:13 *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.*

The Christian era was ushered in with the double promise of peace and joy, the peace being prophesied by Zacharias, was, "***The Dayspring from on high shall visit us ... to***

guide our feet unto the way of peace (Luke 1:78-79). It was also as the joy having been announced by the angel of the Lord to the shepherds: ***Behold I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be to all people*** (Luke 2:10).

Every morning as I rub the sleep from my eyes I realize the greatest need for today and every day is a glorious peace and joy. I know without doubt they are available from no other source than the life of faith in Jesus Christ. These priceless gifts of the soul are the Christian's badge of eternal inheritance, his true credentials of heavenly citizenship, and his impregnable defense against all the tribulations and temptations of life. Having peace with God and the joy of the Spirit in his soul, the Christian is redeemed indeed.

The direct result of my redemption was accomplished with a sacrifice, the hearts and minds of Christians may forever be kept with the peace of God that passes all understanding. There is absolutely nothing in all the biographies of unbelievers, or rationalists, or modern skeptics, that can present any such testimony to the reality of peace and joy in the human heart as promised in the New Testament.

Robert Flint was right when he wrote, in his famous work on Theism, "The heart can find no secure rest except on an infinite God. If less than omnipotent, he may be unable to help us in the hour of sorest need. If less than perfectly benevolent, we cannot fully love him. The whole soul can only be devoted to One who is believed to be absolutely good.

e) Jesus became a servant to bring hope by the *power of the HOLY Spirit*.

In the power of the Holy Spirit ... is Paul's reminder that only God's children, the baptized true believers "in Christ" who have received the Spirit because of their sonship shall ever possess this joy and peace. People may forget to tell how they are received and accepted by God, but the apostle failed not to declare it.

Paul encourages the acceptance of one another, just as Christ accepted us, and speaks of the hope that comes from God.