

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 3RD - 4TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

## HARMONY (ROMANS 15:1-6)

### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STRONG

Paul makes it clear that "strong" Christians have a responsibility to help "bear the weaknesses of those without strength." **A strong Christian is one who has matured over time in their faith through prayer, study, and servitude.**

- **Christians are to not just tolerate people with weaker faith, but show empathy and help them grow stronger.**

### IT STARTS IN THE HEART

If we are to not live a selfish life of whatever pleases us, but to follow the Bible and "please [our] neighbor" and "build [them] up," we must first submit our heart and desires to Jesus.

- **It is only by a miraculous heart change that we can follow the deep commands of the Bible. Without Jesus we live for self.** Are we not seeing the effects of selfishness?

### HOW DO WE LIVE THIS OUT?

Paul is referring to how Christians treat each other, but the principle applies to how we treat non-Christians as well.

- We cannot be condescending or critical, but **empathetic and patient**. We need to get out of the habit of just pointing out mistakes and move to **encourage people to make better choices.**

### "THE INSULTS...HAVE FALLEN ON ME"

Of course, the best example is always Jesus. Jesus divested Himself of His privileges as God to come and serve mankind on earth. He not only served, but Jesus took the bad attitudes of the world and still pushed forward.

- **We must remember that our time on earth isn't to accumulate, but to receive and distribute.** This is the model of Jesus.

### WE LEARN THIS FROM THE WORD

Paul says that through having a relationship with Jesus and "through the encouragement of the Scriptures" God gives us endurance and encouragement.

- **We need the Word to guide us. We need endurance and encouragement because people can suck really bad, especially when they should know better.**

### THIS IS ALL LEADING TO A GREATER MESSAGE

The reason we are to be patient, empathetic, truthful, and encouraging to others is because **harmony within the church honors God.**

- This goes back to knowing the majors of the faith, honoring authority, respecting others, and living holy lives. When we do this we sow harmony, and that honors God.

### HARMONY IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE

Though Christians are to live harmoniously, we are to also know that **the teachings of the Bible are what offer us true harmony.**

- **When we relent on biblical teaching we actually sow seeds of destruction and dishonor God and others.** We are to love and honor, but the only way that is possible is through the truth of God's Word.

## LIGHT IN THE DARK (ROMANS 15:7-13)

### WE HAVE AN IMPORTANT MISSION

The church has to be based in the Word and in harmony because we live in a dark world!

- V7-9a reminds us that Jesus came and accepts us into His family if we admit we need Him. **We as His followers are to go out and continue the mission of bringing people out of darkness by knowing their Creator.**

### GOD PROMISED LIBERATION FOR THE WILLING

V9b-12 is an Old Testament outline of the promise that God made through Jesus to save anyone on earth that would accept Him. This started with the Jews, but by God's grace it has extended to the Gentiles (us).

- Paul quotes 2 Sam. 22:50, Deut. 32:43, Psalm 117:1, and Isaiah 11:10 to show that the Gentiles were not an afterthought.

### THE LOST WERE NOT AN AFTERTHOUGHT!

Reading in the OT that God had a plan to reach people outside of the Jews reveals an important trait about God and us, the Church.

- The lost are vitally important to Jesus, that's why He came. **We, as the followers of and ambassadors for Jesus, should not make loving and reaching out to others an afterthought.**

## **WE CAN'T DO THIS IF WE'RE SELFISH AND DIVIDED**

Because many "Christians" are self-centered we're more divided, broken, and less like Christ. **We cannot reach the world for Christ if we don't model Christ.** We must read the Word to know what is major and what is disputable.

- **We learn from the Word that treating others with respect, grace, truth, and love is our job.**

## **"OVERFLOW WITH HOPE"**

Loving both Christians and non-Christians in a way that honors Jesus is only possible by "the God of hope." True peace and joy come from knowing Jesus, and **through knowing Jesus we can build harmony and peace.**

- We are also to "overflow with hope," but this is also only possible "by the power of the Holy Spirit."

## **A HEART THAT GLORIFIES GOD**

- We must be honest and periodically evaluate the state of our heart.
- **Are we looking to be affirmed in what we already think, or are we searching for the truth?** How will we respond to the truth?
- Do we desire the things of God?
- Will we follow the instruction of the Bible even if it is counter-cultural or uncomfortable?

## **WELCOMING ALL PEOPLE**

- If we love God, we must also love people. Loving people should lead to the gospel, so **we must create an environment, both personally and corporately, for ANYONE to hear the truth.**
- This does not mean we condone sin, but that we do not bring condemnation so others can experience salvation.

## **BEARING EACH OTHER'S BURDENS**

- We are to not only welcome others and share the truth, but we are to also get our hands dirty in their lives. Gal. 6:2 tells us to "bear each other's burdens."
- People are messy and complicated, but **we are to model the effort Jesus put into us so we can see others saved and changed.**

## **GROWING A KINGDOM**

- We build a relationship with Jesus, frequently check our hearts, and love others well because **everything is on the line.**
- On the other side of this life we will all eternally live in God's kingdom or be eternally separated from it. **If we don't bring the hope of Christ to others, there are eternal ramifications.**

## **TAKING AN INVENTORY**

- Where is our heart? Or, where does our time, money, and energy go?
- Are we working towards building a stronger relationship with God? Are we asking God to fill us with His Spirit?
- Are we working to build bridges with all kinds of people?
- Are we speaking and living the truth in love?