

Unity in the Body

Romans 15:1-7

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – July 4th, 2021

Intro:

- The book of Romans was written in a systematic way to explain the Gospel to people who had not heard. Our purpose statement for our church is taken from the opening lines of this book.

Rom 1:5:6 ESV

Through (Jesus Christ) we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

- First, Jesus Christ has given us grace—we must have His grace to accomplish His goals. We are just the conduits, the vessels through which God pours His grace. Apart from Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5). This place, first and foremost, is a place that grace must flow to, and grace must flow through.
- Then, we have received the Word of God through the apostles. Their ministry was to bring us God's Word. Through God's grace and God's Word, we are to bring about the obedience of faith (this is what we do), for the sake of His name (this is why we do what we do), among all the nations (this is where we do it—our scope includes the whole world). This mission extends to us because our first calling is to belong to Jesus Christ. Our lives are not our own. We belong to Him. Because we belong to Him, we are designed to do what He wants us to do.
- Paul fills this letter with line after line of amazing gospel truth, explaining that the grace and work of God in Christ are working their way throughout all time and creation, culminating in the people of God.
- Near the end of the letter, Paul the Apostle, through the grace and prompting of the Holy Spirit, prays for the church. We are going to look at this prayer and live to be an answer to this prayer, so that God will be glorified in and through our lives in this place, the place where God's people gather and then scatter to make Him known and to glorify Him.

Live in harmony

Rom 15:5 ESV

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,

- Paul gives us two titles for God in this prayer, calling God the “God of endurance and encouragement.” He then asks that God would grant us these characteristics so that we can “live in harmony.” Endurance and encouragement are what we need to be able to live in harmony. We must choose to endure each other, which means we will stick with each other as we are in the process of becoming more like Christ. Endurance is a necessary quality for us to stick together.
- We also need to be people who live to encourage one another, pointing out the good in others, coming alongside them when they are struggling, showing them when they do good, and encouraging them when they need it.
- When we “live in harmony” with each other, we are all singing that same song but we all have a different part to sing. We don't all do the same thing at the same time, but each one of us has a part to play, and with your voice and your music together we can make a beautiful song of

worship to the Lord. We sing the song that Jesus himself is singing, in “accord with Christ Jesus.” We are in “one accord” with Him, singing in harmony to His lead.

Glorify God with one voice

Rom 15:6 ESV

that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Together—with all of our differences, with all of our talents, we join them and together with one voice, sing a song that focuses in on God. Together, we glorify God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. This prayer echoes the prayer of Jesus Himself:

John 17:20-21 ESV

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

- Our “oneness” communicates to those outside of the church that Jesus is indeed who He said He is. He is the Son of God. The more diverse we are, the greater the miracle of our “oneness” is (skin color, birthplace, where we live, education level [PHD’s to those don’t know their ABC’s], ages, etc.). What binds us together is far greater than what separates us.

Eph 4:4-7 ESV

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.

- Even though we are many, we are one. Even though we have differences, we are one. We are called to the same body (Christ’s). We share the same Spirit. We all have the same hope, and we all have the same call. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is over us all, and who works through us all, and is in us all (by His Spirit).
- Our diversity is the strength of our unity, and when we sing in harmony with one voice, God is glorified and the world will recognize that only God can do this, and Jesus is truly who He says He is.

Welcome one another

Rom 15:7 ESV

Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

- We are to welcome one another—all are welcome here. All classes, all colors, all conditions, none should be turned away or marginalized. We work really hard to do that here . . . and we are to do so as Christ has welcomed you (which is come as you are, not clean up before you come . . .). We must go out of our way to welcome the “other” . . . not just those who we are the most similar to. We are to be a community that welcomes all people as Christ has welcomed us for the glory of God.

Conclusion

- We are going to say our faith together, that has been written for us in the form of the Apostle's Creed. This is the faith that has been passed down to us and these things we believe. Let's all read this together out loud in one voice:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

- What holds us together is so far greater than anything that separates us. Let us become more diverse as we become more unified. Let's use our gifts and our lives in harmony with one another. Let's receive the grace of God and the foundation of His word to encourage and strengthen us. Let's be intentional about welcoming each other into our lives, into our homes, into our hearts.
- Let's see God do His work among us, for the sake of His name among all the nations, as we follow Him in joyful obedience in the faith that we have been given. Let's again renew our faith through communion as one body.

Communion