



ROMANS 15:8-16

Devotional

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⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹ and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

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

¹⁰ And again it is said,

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”

¹¹ And again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples extol him.”

¹² And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope.”

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

¹⁴ I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. ¹⁵ But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Day 1

ROMANS 15:4, 8-12

⁴ *For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

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In these verses we see God's word exalted. We are told it is truthful, written for our instruction, endurance and encouragement.

- Do you ever stop and think about how radical the truth of God's word is? We believe in the resurrection of the dead! We believe that weakness is the precursor to strength. Savor the radical, life-changing truths of God's word.
- God has given us his word for our instruction and encouragement. What a resource! How are you doing cherishing this resource?

In these verses we see quotations from the Law, one from the Prophets and two from the Writings, which are the three divisions of the Old Testament. Each of these quotations is pointing to the truthfulness of the story that we are in.

- How important is it that all of the Scriptures tell the same story?
Note the trajectory of the OT leading to its fulfillment in the NT.

Prayer

Father thank you for your word which is alive. As Martin Luther said, it speaks to us; it has feet, it runs after us; it has hands, it lays hold of us! We pray today that you would lay hold of us by the power and truthfulness of your word. We thank you that it tells one story from beginning to end, a story about a big-hearted God who continues to pursue a rebellious people. Encourage our hearts. Grant us endurance for this race that we run. That together with all the redeemed we may glorify your most Holy name!

Day 2

ROMANS 15:8-12

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Gentile is a Christianese word that means, the nations or the people of the nations. From verses 9-12, Paul includes four quotes from the Old Testament all pointing to the inclusion of Gentiles in the family of God. Sometimes people make a false dichotomy that the Old Testament is for Jews, and the New Testament is for everyone else. This passage reminds us that God's heart for the nations rings loud and clear throughout the whole bible!

- For all of us that are not ethnically Jewish, we are those Gentiles who have been included. God's name is praised among us. God has written a story for the world, and that story includes you! Take a moment to reflect on that amazing truth.
- Many early Christians had a hard time conceiving how Jesus, a Jewish man, could be the Messiah for Jew and Gentile alike. Unfortunately this spirit of division is alive and well in modern society. How does God's big heart for people of all backgrounds challenge you today?

- This passage paints a picture of “all the peoples” joyously praising God under the reign of the root of Jesse, who is Jesus. The diverse nations of the earth become one as they join their voices together in praise for Christ. Have you ever experienced that? If so, how did it impact your faith? If not, how could you take a step towards experiencing the diversity of the family of God?

Prayer

Father in heaven, I praise you that you are the Creator of all nations. Thank you for writing me into your story of salvation. Though I was once separated from Christ and a stranger to the hope of the gospel, you invited me--an outsider--into your family. Help me to cherish that gift today. Would you use me as your ambassador, so that Jesus would be praised more and more among the nations? By your grace, use my small voice to join that beautifully diverse heavenly chorus. For the glory of Christ. Amen.

Day 3

ROMANS 15:12-13

¹² *And again Isaiah says,
“The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope.”*

¹³ *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so
that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

Looking at 12 and 13 together we can see the ideas of kingdom and hope come together. In 12 the Gentiles have hope because they are included in the rule of the Jesus, the root of Jesse. When Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father he was given authority over the whole of creation, including all the nations of the earth.

... when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. Ephesians 1:20-21

Jesus is the king that rules the nations with an iron scepter (Psalm 2, Revelation 12) but it is in this rule that the Gentiles have hope because Jesus has provided a way for them to be adopted into God's family, to merely to be ruled but to serve and minister in that kingdom.

Although verse 13 doesn't mention the kingdom directly it does reflect the kingdom language used in chapter 14.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17

In 14:17 the kingdom of God is defined by righteousness, peace and joy that come from the Holy Spirit and 15:13 reiterates those themes. The God of Hope gives us the kingdom blessings of peace and joy through our faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Too often, though, we identify with other kingdoms and powers and this robs us of our peace and joy. What are the other things that we trust in? How do they draw us away from God's kingdom?

Prayer

King of kings and Lord of lords, thank you for bringing us into your kingdom, for adopting us into your family. Give us wisdom in how we can serve you and refresh our belief in you that we may see you as the God of Hope and experience and peace and joy of your kingdom. Help us to see the things that draw us away from your presence and into the kingdom of darkness. May your Spirit strengthen our faith. Amen

Day 4

ROMANS 15:13-14

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

¹⁴ I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.

For forty days after The resurrection, Jesus appeared to believers who would carry on His work, teaching them about His kingdom. His rule would not be characterized by external power or propriety, but by the power to live together in righteousness, joy, and peace *in the Holy Spirit*. He instructed them to wait in Jerusalem for this promised gift, who would empower them to be witnesses in “Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The gospel would be for all people, and the Holy Spirit would be God’s witness in the world. He would not bring attention to himself, but would find every opportunity to glorify the ascended Lord Jesus Christ, who is seated in authority over all rulers, powers, and kingdoms. This Lord is the hope of both Jews and Gentiles, for He has conquered death and represents our humanity in heaven, ensuring that we will one day be with Him. Until that time, He is with us through His Spirit, who lives in us and among us. We love Him because He makes Jesus present, and patiently teaches and strengthens us. He shows us how to instruct and encourage each other, filling us with joy and “abounding” hope!

How has believing what God has done, is doing, and will do give you hope in a hopeless world?

How would that be recognized by people around you?

Is the joy of Jesus bigger than the challenges you face?

What has the Holy Spirit taught you recently through God’s Word and people?

Prayer

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, We praise you today for keeping every promise you have made. You are faithful! We exalt you, Lord Jesus, for overcoming death and all other powers. We thank you for sending us your own Spirit to enable us to understand what you taught, and to empower us to testify to what you have done. Thank you for our life together.. we are filled with joy and hope! Amen

Day 5

ROMANS 15:15-16

¹⁵ But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Paul has written some bold reminders for followers of Christ. He does this as a servant (minister) of Christ to the Gentiles (those outside God's initial covenant) *so that* the offering of the Gentiles to God "may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." In other words Paul is challenging the Gentile Christians to walk in this gospel manner. A key theme of Romans is getting idolatrous pagans to obey God (Rom 1:5; 16:26). As Michael Bird puts it, "Paul believed that the main thrust of his ministry was leading Gentiles to God through the Messiah and in the Spirit so that they would 'obey' God, and so fulfill God's law (see Rom 13:8-10; Gal 5:14; 6:2)." Paul is giving the Gentiles a gospel challenge throughout his missionary letter. A gospel challenge, or the gospel challenge is a consideration of how we then live based on the foundation of the good news that Jesus is the saving King. This truth changes everything. This gospel challenge extends, through the Spirit, to you and me. Challenged through God's "Don't you know" statements (Rom 6:3, 16; 7:1) and his concern that we are not "ignorant" (11:25) on certain matters, we, like the early followers of Jesus, must have a gospel response.

- How has Paul been challenging the Roman Jesus followers throughout chapters 12-15 so far? (Go back and reread 12:1-8; 13:8-10; 14:13-23)
- It is important to see our response to this gospel challenge as important, yet not ultimate. What aspects of "walking according to love" (14:15) as a gospel challenge is difficult today?
- We are reminded of Paul's ecumenical ministry of bringing the household of faith together. Where is God challenging you to 'broaden' your circles of Christians? Pray and consider how we can engage in cross-church/denomination/cultural ministry for the glory of God in Grand Rapids?

Prayer

Almighty Father, Maker of heaven and earth, mover of oceans and mountains, sustainer of all of life--You have given us such marvelous gifts: beauty of seasons, design of environment, the comfort of friends and families. We confess that we often take these things for granted. Forgive us. Lead us to see that, like Paul we are called to bring your people together to glorify your name. Guide us in this work, for we know that unless You build the house, we labor in vain. Help us to respond rightly to your gospel message, and walk in a manner of love towards one another. For we know that this will bring you glory to those who do and don't know you. We pray this in the name of our King and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.