**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*Romans Series - Chapter 15:5-19*

 ***The “Gospel of God” to the World***

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December 15th In the Year of Our Lord 2019

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS text is quoted)

**Romans 15:5** Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

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

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

Last week, we received the Word of God through the apostle Paul regarding the strong assisting the weak. We reflected upon that this is exactly what God did when He incarnated himself as Jesus Christ. God reached-out to those (all of us) who are too weak to save ourselves and made it possible for us to surrender to Him and gain eternal life with Him. The reason I say “eternal life with Him” is because the lost will also have an eternal life but with Satan, separated from God.

 “Perseverance” and “encouragement” go together as personal characteristics used to achieve the goals God has for our lives. It is God who gives these gifts; they are not of ourselves. We avail ourselves to receive God’s gifts. The living God at work in us gives us the ability to persevere. When we persevere, we are encouraged. When we win and are victorious in life, we are encouraged.

 It is amazing when a sports team wins how a whole community comes together. When the Houston Astros won the World Series a few years ago, I was in downtown Houston during the celebration parade. Thousands came down to the parade with their families. Houston is an international city. There were people from all walks of life but in one accord in their celebration of the Astro’s victory. The everyday flow of life in downtown Houston stopped for that victory parade. The Mayor and many public officials gave speeches. Everyone was in one accord. Whatever cultural, political, religious and national boundaries had existed became irrelevant on for the celebration. People were excited and all became a part of the victory. The athletes paraded the streets filled with festive fans who genuinely appreciated their victory on the field. The World Series victory is not complete without the parade and the fans. What athlete wants to win a World Series and come home to a ghost town? They want to come home to a parade where there are people in the streets shouting and cheering for them. The fans are part of the victory. There has to be one accord with the athletes and the fans for the victory to be complete.

 God has won the victory through the incarnation, through the test in the wilderness, through the teachings of Jesus, through the temporal death on the Cross, through the Resurrection and the empty tomb, through the resurrection appearances and teaching of Jesus Christ, through the Ascension and Holy Spirit empowerment of Jesus Followers, through the Acts of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts, the lives of witnesses to the life of Jesus Christ and through our lives today, Believers in the twenty-first century.

 God has won the victory and invites us to join Him in the streets of life to celebrate. In this joining the Lord, in the streets of life, we persevere; we are encouraged and become a light of encouragement to others. This is how the strong encourage the weak so they too can persevere.

**Romans 15 continued. . .**

 8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision (Hebrews) on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the **promises** given to the fathers,

[The Fathers include Abraham, Isaac, Jacob as the three foundational men and then tradition adds Joseph and Moses]

Note: Technically the term Jew did not come into use until after the Babylonian captivity due to the fact that those Hebrews were from the tribe of Judah. The area adjacent to Judah, but much smaller, was Benjamin. They too were part of the Babylonian captivity, but Jerusalem, the capital city, was in Judah.

 9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy;

as it is written, (Old Testament: Moses 15th century, David 10th century, Isaiah 8th century)

"THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES,

AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME." (Psalm 18:49)

 10 Again he says, "REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE." (Duet. 32:43)

 11 And again, "PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE

 PEOPLES PRAISE HIM." (Psalm 117:1)

1. Note: shortest of all Psalms

 2. center of the Bible (KJV)

It is the 595th of the 1,189 chapters of the [King James Version](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_James_Version) of the Bible, making it the middle chapter.

 12 Again Isaiah says, (Isaiah 11:10)

"THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE,

AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES,

IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE."

 13 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.

 14 And concerning you, my brethren,

I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

 15 But **I have written very boldly** to you on some points

so as **to remind** you again,

because of the grace that was given me from God,

 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles,

ministering as a priest the gospel of God,

so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable,

sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

 17 Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.

 18 For I will not presume to speak of anything

except what Christ has accomplished through me,

resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,

 19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit;

so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum

I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

From verses 9-19 Paul identifies the Gentiles eight times. Paul states in verse 15 that it was God’s grace given to him that sent him to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. Paul calls himself a “Priest of the Gospel of God.” This title is important to note. We often say we are pursuing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and rightfully/accurately so. To be technically accurate, as Paul is, we need to be aware that to the Jew who is transitioning to accepting Jesus Christ as the long-awaited Messiah, it is important that the naming of God be directly identified with the Gospel. We go to the beginning of Romans to see that God has Paul accurately identify Him, The God, as the authority/power that was promised beforehand, through the prophets recorded in the Holy Scriptures, that the Gentiles are included.

**Romans 1:1** Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called *as* an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,

 3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,

 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,

 6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

Previously in Romans, Paul wrote at length verifying how the Gentiles are part of the promise from God. Here, towards the end of the letter to the Roman Believers, Paul is reviewing God’s message to the Jews and the Gentiles that they are all (Jews/ Gentiles) viewed the same by the Lord regarding the path and access to salvation. Paul continues to bring forward Old Testament witnesses to prove God’s intention from the beginning of the covenant with Abraham that the Gentiles are included. Paul calls upon Moses, David and Isaiah. There aren’t any more persuasive authorities than these for the Jewish people to consider. It is of considerable note that Paul identifies God’s Holy Spirit as the power that is at work in bringing about one accord.

 It is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes it possible for Believers to abound in the hope. (v. 13)

Paul calls upon the Holy Spirit to sanctify his life work and offering to the Gentiles (v. 16)

Paul identifies the Holy Spirit as the power that enabled him to preach the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum (across the Adriatic Sea, east of Italy).

**Hebrews to Jews to Gentiles**

 Much has been said and written about how Jesus only came to be a witness to the Jews. There isn’t any doubt that Jesus makes this point in Matthew 15 but with a big addendum as He responds to the Canaanite women. From God’s covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12) to Jesus, it is obvious that God has chosen to witness to the Jews, and (in reality) through the Jews to the Gentile nations. Through the Jews, the rest of the world is blessed (Genesis 13:3). Did not God proclaim through His prophet Isaiah the truth?

 **Isaiah 49:6** He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations, So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

 **Luke 24:45-48**

 45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

 46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,

 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

 48 "You are witnesses of these things.

**Jesus, Jews and Gentiles (Canaanite woman): Matthew 15:21-28**

 21 Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.

 22 And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and *began* to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed."

 23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us."

 24 But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

**Matthew 10:5-6**

5 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in *the* way of *the* Gentiles, and do not enter *any* city of the Samaritans;

 6 but rather go 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 And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

 27 But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which 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 wish." And her daughter was healed at once.

 It is obvious to anyone who reads the Bible that God intended to reach-out to all the people of the earth. God did not plan to leave-out anyone from His plan of eternal life. This is why Romans 10:13 “Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” John 3:16 proclaims that “God so loved the world. . .” God did not say that He so loved a part of the world or only one people group in the world. The great commission recorded in Luke 24:47 proclaims that His name should be declared to all the nations beginning in Jerusalem. From this verse, we see God’s intended purpose to reach-out to all the people of the world with His foundational message implanted in the Jews/Hebrews and then through us.

**Matthew 28:16-20**

16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated.

 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped *Him*; but some were doubtful.

 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

**AMEN**