

Pt 49 Romans 15:1-7 Critical or Christ Like?

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Porchlight Baptist Church www.pbcknox.com

Romans 15:1-7

- 1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.
- 2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.
- 3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.
- 4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.
- 5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:
- 6 That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

As we continue in our Rooting through Romans Sermon Series, we are looking at Chapter 15:1-7. This is Paul's summation of what he has been talking about in the previous chapter concerning those "strong in the faith," and those "weak in the faith."

1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Notice Paul uses the word "**we**" here; meaning he is including himself as one that is strong in the faith.

As we have already discussed, those weak in the faith are those who have not accepted the liberties of their new Christian faith which is found in Christ. They instead wanted to continue clinging to the Law and their former Jewish traditions. They wanted to continue observing the holy days and abstaining from eating certain foods and drinks.

Those strong in the faith are those who realize their Christian liberties and the truth of the Gospel. They are studied in the Scriptures and are strong pillars of the Church. They have cast off the chains that once held them in bondage to the Law.

Here in verse 1 Paul is saying those strong in the faith needed to "**bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.**" In other words, even though we have these liberties and freedoms we should be more concerned with helping those weak in the faith and encourage them in their new walk with Christ. It is more important for the Church to be in one mind and one accord and walk in unity than it is to flaunt our liberties in Christ.

Pleasing ourselves should be the least of our concern. Lifting up our fellow Church members is above all more important.

Paul goes into greater detail about this very thing in his letter to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 10:23-33

- 23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.
- 24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*.
- 25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, *that* eat, asking no question for conscience sake:
- 26 For the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.
- 27 If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:

29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conscience?

30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

33 Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

Again, the emphasis is placed upon edifying the church and our fellow Christians and not pleasing ourselves. In fact, that is exactly what he says in the next verse of our text in **Romans 15:2** Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

Remember what we said about that word edify in our last study. It means to "**build up**" and "**to promote growth**." It seems too many people would rather tear down others instead of building them up. Most people want to lift themselves up on a pedestal and could care less about the Spiritual growth of others. But, that's not what Church is about, just as we mentioned also last time; the spiritual gifts God gives us is for the purpose of edifying the Church **1 Corinthians 14:12** Even so ye, *forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*

Do you ever find yourself sitting in a church service and passing judgment on every single thing that takes place? Hey, it's easy to do. "That person can't sing, why on earth are they even trying?" "Ooh, I could have done that much better than them." "Who ever told her that dress looked good on her?"

If you aren't careful, you can find yourself developing a critical spirit. Instead of coming to Church for the purpose of worshiping and edifying each other, we spend it criticizing and pointing out everything that doesn't meet our standards. It shouldn't matter if someone is a good singer or not, if they are singing for the glory of God that is all that matters. Who are we to sit back and critique and judge them for their "performance?"

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

If that doesn't put you in your place, then something is wrong with you. If anyone has the right to judge anyone it is the Lord Jesus, and the Bible says that even He **pleased not himself**. He could have avoided the pain, misery, embarrassment, humiliation, scorn, and ridicule that he endured, he didn't have to do it.

Remember what he prayed while in the Garden: **Luke 22:42** Saying, *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

Jesus did not come here and sacrifice himself for his own benefit. He didn't do it to get some kind of charge out of it. He gave himself as a sacrifice to do the will of the Father. Listen to what He said: **John 6:38-40** For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will

raise him up at the last day.

...but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Here Paul is taking a quote from the Old Testament Book of Psalms.

Psalms 69:9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

David wrote that Psalm in reference to how he was persecuted because of his zeal for God's house and in defense of God's honor. Unfortunately, that is one of the repercussions for taking a strong stand for the Lord. The world just doesn't get it. I read a post yesterday that Pastor Tom Hatley shared on his Facebook page which captures this thought perfectly:

Secular Person: I want to do X.
Christian: You're free to do it.

Secular Person: But you think X is wrong.
Christian: Yes.

Secular Person: Because you want to control me.
Christian: No. You're free to do whatever you wish.

Secular Person: But you think X is wrong.
Christian: Yes, but only because I want what's best for you.

Secular Person: But I want to do X.
Christian: You're free to do it.

Secular Person: But I want you to say that X is good.
Christian: I can't say that.

Secular Person: Why are you such a hateful, intolerant bigot?

This Scripture is also mentioned in the Gospel of John:

John 2:14-17 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. 17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

The truth is men hate the Lord and they will do and say anything they want against you if they know you are a Christian. It's funny how nearly every single religious group in the world is protected except Christianity.

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

This verse certainly is not a favorite of today's modernistic, worldly preachers. About 4-years ago, Andy Stanley in one of his sermons said that the Christian faith must be "unhitched" from the Old Testament. He said, "Peter, James, and Paul elected to unhitch the Christian faith from their Jewish scriptures, and my friends, we must as well."

That's funny, that's the exact opposite of what Paul is saying here in Romans 15:4. Those things "written aforetime" is meaning the Old Testament Scriptures. He says that they were "written for our learning." Wow, so should we "unhitch" from them? Listen, I know the Scriptures were written to specific groups of people and not everything in the Bible was written TO New Testament believers, but everything certain is written FOR New Testament believers.

While we may no longer be under the Old Covenant and Mosaic laws and restrictions, God's moral law is still binding and is for our good. Or as Paul says it in our text; **that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.**

I like the way Paul explained it to Timothy: **2 Timothy 3:14-17** But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou

hast learned *them*; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Make sure you notice that first word in verse 16: ALL. Not some or part of, but ALL Scripture.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: **6** That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **7** Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Our example is always Christ. If we model ourselves after his behaviour, everything will fall into place.

There is also another emphasis on being "like minded" with our fellow Church members. This is how a church should operate, with everyone having the same mind. That is the pattern of the First Century Church and one today's New Testament Church needs to get back to.

Acts 4:32-35

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

This doesn't mean the early church didn't have its problems, of course they did, that's what most of Paul's letters are about, addressing problems within the Church. But, did you notice how the early church showed such care and compassion for others? So much so that they gladly sold what they had to provide for the needs of their fellow Church members. I wonder how many Christians today would be willing to do that?

That is what is missing in most Churches – there just aren't many people with a Christ-like spirit. There are way too many critical spirits. This all comes from pride. If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times, all sin is the result of pride. Everything starting from the first sin in the Garden of Eden all the way to today.

Don't miss what Paul says about WHY we should have a Christ-like spirit. Look at verse six again: **6** That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ultimately it is all about glorifying God. So, the next time you are sitting in a Church service, and you start getting that critical spirit, ask yourself "am I glorifying God?"