

Romans 14-15

Chapters 1-4: the revelation God's righteousness

Chapters 5-8: the creation of a new humanity

Chapters 9-11: the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel

Chapters 12-16: the unity of the Church

The only righteous response to God making Jews and Gentiles one in Christ is for them to be unified as one in what we call the Church.

- Unifying together will come from the emphasis of love and commitment. This is revealed in chapters 12 & 13. Love will look like everyone using their gifts and talents to serve one another. When different ethnic groups join together in a community, conflict is inevitable. The only way to overcome conflict is through hard work and reconciliation.
- These fulfill the Torah's greatest commands: to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. Which means that love IS the fulfillment of Torah.
 - Leviticus 19:18 - Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.
 - Jesus reinforces this command in Mark 12.
 - Mark 12:29-31 - "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."
- The strongest divide in the Church was coming from the arguments about food laws and the sabbath. But the Apostle Paul states that these laws don't define who's in or out of God's family.
 - They must learn how to respect each other's differences.
 - Show grace on "non-essential" issues.
- **It is in THIS way that love will unify and heal Jesus' family.**

Romans - Chapter 14

Welcome the person who is weak in faith—but not in order to argue about differences of opinion. ² One person believes in eating everything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not look down on the ones who don't, and the ones who don't eat must not judge the ones who do, because God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servants? They stand or fall before their own Lord (and they will stand, because the Lord has the power to make them stand).

→ **1 Corinthians 1:4-8** - I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

→ **Romans 16:25** - Now to Him who is able to establish [plant you; keep you from vacillating/moving back and forth] you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past...

⁵ One person considers some days to be more sacred than others, while another person considers all days to be the same. Each person must have their own convictions. ⁶ Someone who thinks that a day is sacred, thinks that way for the Lord. Those who eat, eat for the Lord, because they thank God. And those who don't eat, don't eat for the Lord, and they thank the Lord too. ⁷ We don't live for ourselves and we don't die for ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to God (1 Thessalonians 5:10).

⁹ This is why Christ died and lived: so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰ But why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you look down on your brother or sister? We all will stand in front of the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ Because it is written,

*As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me,
and every tongue will give praise to God. (Isaiah 45:23)*

¹² So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. ¹³ So stop judging each other. Instead, this is what you should decide: never put a stumbling block or obstacle in the way of your brother or sister. ¹⁴ I know and I'm convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is wrong to eat in itself. But if someone thinks something is wrong to eat, it becomes wrong for that person. ¹⁵ If your brother or sister is upset by your food, you are no longer walking in love. Don't let your food destroy someone for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ And don't let something you consider to be good be criticized as wrong. ¹⁷ God's kingdom isn't about eating food and drinking but about righteousness [justice], peace [wholeness], and joy [grace recognized] in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Whoever serves Christ this way pleases God and gets human approval.

¹⁹ So let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up.

St. Augustine of Hippo [354 – 430CE]: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity."

²⁰ Don't destroy what God has done because of food. All food is acceptable, but it's a bad thing if it trips someone else. ²¹ It's a good thing not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything that trips your brother or sister. ²² Keep the belief that you have to yourself—it's between you and God. People are blessed who don't convict themselves by the things they approve. ²³ But those who have doubts are convicted if they go ahead and eat, because they aren't acting on the basis of faith. Everything that isn't based on faith is sin. [Titus NOT circumcised vs. Timothy circumcised]

Romans – Chapter 15

We who are powerful need to be patient with the weakness of those who don't have power, and not please ourselves. ² Each of us should please [consider] our neighbors for their good in order to build them up. ³ Christ didn't please himself, but, as it is written, *The insults of those who insulted you fell on me (Psalm 69:9)*.

⁴ Whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction so that we could have hope through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures. ⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude toward each other, similar to Christ Jesus' attitude. ⁶ That way you can glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ together with one voice. ⁷ So welcome each other, in the same way that Christ also welcomed you, for God's glory. ⁸ I'm saying that Christ became a servant of those who are circumcised [Israelites] for the sake of God's truth, in order to confirm the promises given to the ancestors, ⁹ and so that the Gentiles could glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

Because of this I will confess you among the Gentiles, and I will sing praises to your name.

¹⁰ And again, it says, *Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people.*

¹¹ And again, *Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and all the people should sing his praises.*

¹² And again, Isaiah says, *there will be a root of Jesse, who will also rise to rule the Gentiles. The Gentiles will place their hope in him.*

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴ My brothers and sisters, I myself am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and are able to teach each other. ¹⁵ But I've written to you in a sort of daring way, partly to remind you of what you already know. I'm writing to you in this way because of the grace that was given to me by God. ¹⁶ It helps me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. I'm working as a priest of God's gospel so that the offering of the Gentiles can be acceptable and made holy by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷ So in Christ Jesus I brag about things that have to do with God. ¹⁸ I don't dare speak about anything except what Christ has done through me to bring about the obedience of the Gentiles. He did it by what I've said and what I've done, ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, and by the power of God's Spirit. So I've completed the circuit of preaching Christ's gospel from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum. ²⁰ In this way, I have a goal to preach the gospel where they haven't heard of Christ yet, so that I won't be building on someone else's foundation. ²¹ Instead, as it's written, *Those who hadn't been told about him will see, and those who hadn't heard will understand.*

Salutations from Paul

²² That's why I've been stopped so many times from coming to see you. ²³ But now, since I don't have any place to work in these regions anymore, and since I've wanted to come to see you for many years, ²⁴ I'll visit you when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while I'm passing through. And I hope you will send me on my way there, after I have first been reenergized by some time in your company.

²⁵ But now I'm going to Jerusalem, to serve God's people. ²⁶ Macedonia and Achaia have been happy to make a contribution for the poor among God's people in Jerusalem. ²⁷ They were happy to do this, and they are actually in debt to God's people in Jerusalem. If the Gentiles got a share of the Jewish people's spiritual resources, they ought to minister to them with material resources. ²⁸ So then after I have finished this job and have safely delivered the final amount of the Gentiles' offering to them, I will leave for Spain, visiting you on the way. ²⁹ And I know that when I come to you I will come with the fullest blessing of Christ.

³⁰ Brothers and sisters, I urge you, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggles in your prayers to God for me. ³¹ Pray that I will be rescued from the people in Judea who don't believe. Also, pray that my service for Jerusalem will be acceptable to God's people there ³² so that I can come to you with joy by God's will and be reenergized with your company. ³³ May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.