

The Strong

6-20-21

Romans 15:1 (ESV)

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

The Strong believers, those who understand Chapters 1-14, especially chapters 1-8, have an obligation to help the weak believers. As Paul closes this book, he openly aligns himself with these Strong believers who are to come along side and help the weak. Paul confirms this responsibility by referring to the example of Christ. This is the first time in this letter that Paul puts forth Christ as an example.

Romans 15:3 (ESV)

For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.”

We serve as a witness for Christ. In Philippians, we are further encouraged to have the mind of Christ.

Philippians 2:5–9 (ESV)

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him.

All Scripture was written for our instruction so that we can endure with encouragement and confidence.

Romans 15:4 (ESV)

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.

Endurance – literally means “a remaining under”.

Encouragement – means “a calling to one’s side”.

This means that we will remain under the truth as we are called alongside that truth as revealed in the Scriptures having confidence that God will do what he promised. Through the Scriptures we have endurance and encouragement, and it is God who actually gives us endurance and encouragement.

The function of the Scriptures and God are the same. We may say, “God speak to us.” However, God says, “Read the Scriptures; I am speaking to you!”

Romans 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,

By understanding the Scriptures, Chapters 1-8, the Strong believers are empowered to live in harmony with other believers especially the weak in accord with Christ.

Romans 15:13 (ESV)

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.

The expression “the God of hope” means the God who inspires hope and imparts it to his children. *Hope does not operate apart from trust; in fact, it is the forward-looking aspect of faith.* God can be expected to enable his people to increase in the manifestation of Christian graces “by the power of the Holy Spirit” who indwells and fills the inner life. *By the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope. Once more, it is the Spirit who enables believers to experience in this life the blessings of the life to come. We learned this in Chapter 8.*

The Strong those who understand Chapters 1-8, God gives the power through the Holy Spirit to live in harmony with other believers especially the weak. Therefore, we may glorify God with one voice.

Romans 15:6 (ESV)

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

The Strong are the key to having Harmony, One voice, to glorify God. The Strong are the key because they understand Chapters 1-14 especially chapters 1-8. “Therefore” and this is a big “Therefore” the Strong are to welcome one another including the weak as Christ has welcomed for God’s glory.

Romans 15:7 (ESV)

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

What a sweet place and the Strong are the key to make that sweet place happen through the power of the Holy Spirit. We welcome one another as Christ welcomed us. Ephesians makes a very similar statement.

Ephesians 4:32 (ESV)

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

The Strong are key to promote the heart of God:

John 3:16 (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.