

The Blessings of God Are for the Glory of God

Romans 15:1-13

Thought for the Day: The blessings of God in our lives should motivate us to pursue unity and maintain peace in the church in order to bring glory, honor and praise to the Lord.

In Romans 15:1-13, the Apostle Paul continues to encourage the Christians in Rome to pursue unity and maintain harmony in their relationships with one another. This is necessary to bring glory to God; a divided church is a disgraceful church!

Quietly tucked away in these verses, we find the motivation for pursuing unity and maintaining peace in the church: the blessings of God in our lives and His glory. As we consider all that God has done and is doing for us, it should motivate us to pursue unity and maintain peace because this brings glory, honor and praise to God.

I. God Has Blessed Us with a Church Family to Build Us Up (15:1-3)

- When we are actively participating in a spiritually healthy community of believers, one of the blessings we receive is that we will be built up, edified, in our Christian life.
- The goal of spiritual growth is to become more like Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:28-30)
- There are four things we must do to create an atmosphere for spiritual growth:
 - 1) We need to actively participate in the life and ministries of the church family. To receive the benefits, we need to be involved!
 - 2) We need to bear with (put up with) one another.
 - 3) We need to put others ahead of ourselves.
 - 4) We need to be committed to partnering with God in the process of building each other up spiritually.

II. God Has Blessed Us with the Scriptures to Teach Us (15:4)

- God has given us His Word, the Bible, to teach us, to give us encouragement and hope.
- To enjoy this blessing, we need to invest time listening, reading, studying, meditating, memorizing and putting God's Word into practice.
 - That's where endurance, patience, and perseverance on our part are necessary.
 - We must wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled and His principles to bear fruit in our lives.
 - Anyone who believes that the Christian life is going to be "a quick-fix for whatever ails you" has very unrealistic and unbiblical expectations.
 - The process of growing and becoming more like the Lord Jesus Christ is a lifelong process that requires endurance and perseverance on our part.

III. God Has Blessed Us with Endurance and Encouragement to Unify Us (15:5-6)

- God blesses His people with endurance, encouragement and a spirit of unity—not just to make us feel good—but that "with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

- It's not automatic—we must follow Christ Jesus! As each person is following Jesus, greater unity will be the result. And in unity, we bring glory to God.

IV. God Has Blessed Us with Acceptance in Christ to Humble Us (15:7)

- Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are accepted by God.
- We have seen throughout this section (14:1 – 15:13) that the great enemy to unity in the body of Christ is selfishness.
- Therefore, it requires humility on our part to accept one another just as Christ has accepted us. And in our humble acceptance of one another, we bring praise to God.

V. God Has Blessed Us with Mercy to Include Us (15:8-12)

- In the Old Testament, God never intended for Israel to hoard and keep their relationship with God all to themselves.
 - The Jews were benefactors of the mercy of God and He expected them to share that mercy with the whole world—the Gentiles. (Genesis 12:3)
 - God's desire and intention all along was that Jews and Gentiles together would enjoy and celebrate the mercy of God.
- Here is the model of worship that we seek to follow:
 - Verse 9 – we sing hymns.
 - Verse 11 – we sing praises.
 - Throughout the entire Bible, the emphasis in worship is not on the *means* of worship; the focus is on the *Object* of worship.

VI. God Has Blessed Us with Joy and Peace to Empower Us and Give Us Hope (15:13)

- To enjoy these blessings, we need to pray for one another and trust in God.
- Verse 13 is Paul's prayer for the believers in Rome.

Clearly, God wants to bless us. He sent His Son to die on the cross and rise from the dead that we might experience all the blessings of heaven and eternal life. But ultimately, it's not about us—the blessings of God are for the glory of God!

Verses 4-13 give practical expression to the priorities set forth in verses 1-3: God first, others second and ourselves last. When we are living to please God for His glory, and our neighbor for his good, we will experience the manifold blessings of God in our lives.