

Romans (89)
Call for Mutual Acceptance for the Strong and the Weak,
or, All to the Glory of God
(Romans 14:1-15:13) (Part 3)

Recently President Obama awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor to 24 servicemen who had served in one of three wars--WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. These men should have received years ago the honor that was due them, but apparently because they were Hispanic, Jewish, and African American, they had not received the honor for their valor and sacrifice. Only three of the 24 were still living and they were personally awarded their medals by the president. There were family and friends present at the ceremony. Some of these had lobbied long and hard to obtain the recognition, the glory, on behalf of these heroic servicemen. These family and friends longed for the day, and then rejoiced on the day, that these soldiers received the honor what was due them.

The apostle Paul had a similar motivation, but to a far greater end when writing this epistle. He desired to see God the Father, and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, receive the glory that was due His name. This desire for God to be glorified through Jesus Christ is what motivated the apostle through His ministry to make known the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentile world. Paul wanted others to see the glory that God the Father deserved for having brought to realization His promises and purposes in history. Paul desired that God the Father would be glorified for having achieved all that He had promised to His people through His Son. The passage before us, Romans 15:1-13 may be better understood upon comprehending the apostle's desire and aim. As we read this portion of Scripture, let us consider the apostle's attention to and desire for the glory of God through Jesus Christ. Here is Romans 15:1-13:

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³For Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." ⁴For 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. ⁵May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

⁸For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."

¹⁰And again it is said,

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people."

¹¹And again,

"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
And let all the peoples extol him."

¹²And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,
Even He who arises to rule the Gentiles;
In Him will the Gentiles hope.”

¹³May 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.

This passage is the concluding section of the epistle that includes Romans 14:1 through 15:13. The major issue that the apostle was addressing was the matter of church fellowship. Here Paul gave instruction for the church members to develop and maintain fellowship between them. This was not an easy matter to achieve, for there existed deep differences of opinion about how Christians were to live according to the will of God. There were some whom Paul referred to as “strong” Christians, who had contempt for the “weak.” The “weak” Christians tended to pass judgment upon the “strong”, refusing to extend fellowship to them. The matters that separated these two groups were their different convictions on the foods they ate and the religious days that they observed. We have shown that the problem was most likely due to the different convictions of the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. In Romans 14 and 15 the “strong” Christians were Gentile Christians and the “weak” Christians were Jewish believers who retained their sensibilities to the dietary laws and observance of feast days of the Mosaic covenant.

This “problem” of disrupted fellowship was a major issue for the apostle. It was not simply his concern that Christians were able to get along with one another and that there would be less tension and difficulty between the people of God for having done so. Paul viewed the fellowship of the church, particularly between Jews and Gentiles, to be the realization of the purpose of God in history that results in praise and glory given to God. I read this comment several weeks ago when we began to address this section of the epistle, but I wish to read it again as we come to these verses before us.

The resolution of this division is crucial, for it relates to God’s saving purposes and promises. Indeed, in 15:7-13 the theological center of Romans emerges once again. For the driving force of Paul’s ministry was not the inclusion of the Gentiles and the folding in of the Jews into the people of God, although these were crucial to him. The reason for the salvation of the Gentiles and the Jews was so that God would be glorified (v. 9). The same idea is expressed in verses 9 and 11. Gentiles have been included so that they will praise God along with the Jews. Glorifying God and praising him are two different ways of expressing the same idea. Paul’s passion for the Gentile mission, as we saw in 1:5, was motivated by the desire to bring glory to Jesus’ name. The recurrence of that theme here, along with the emphasis on the fulfillment of God’s saving promises in the Scriptures, demonstrates that 15:7-13 not only functions as the conclusion to 14:1-15:6 but also draws attention to the major theme (the glory and praise of God) of the entire letter.¹

It was with this motivation for the people of God to glorify God that Paul urged these Christians to foster and maintain true biblical fellowship among them. This major theme continues to inform us as we consider the first paragraph, which is Romans 15:1-6. Let us work through these verses.

First, Paul summarizes his instruction of Romans 14 in the first two verses. ***“We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.”***

Paul had been concerned about both the “strong” Christians and the “weak” Christians in the church at Rome. We have shown that the “strong” were most likely those Gentile believers in the church who did not have scruples regarding distinctions between clean and unclean foods and were not

¹ Ibid. p. 704.

accustomed to observe the holy days that Israel had observed for centuries. The Jewish believers in the church, however, were probably the ones who were “weak” in that they retained in their thinking and practice of extending fellowship with those who observed the dietary laws and special days of Judaism. But the Lord Jesus had abolished those things that formerly distinguished and separated Jews from Gentiles. Paul could say in Romans 14:14, “I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself.” This freed His people not to view these matters as reasons to divide the brethren.

But what of the “weak”? It would seem that they had difficulty incorporating in their thinking and practice these new covenant teachings and principles. We have already seen that this was the reason that Paul addressed his instruction to the “strong”, that out of love for their Christian brethren and due to concern for the glory of God in the church, they should voluntarily deny themselves of what they might have otherwise been free to do, so that the weak among them would not be troubled, so that division would not occur in the church. Again, as before, Paul included himself in the exhortation to the “strong, ***“We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.”***

The apostle then called upon the Lord Jesus as an example and illustration of what it means to “bear the failings of the weak.” Verse 3 reads, ***“For Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.’”*** Jesus Christ lived for others, and so we should live for others. But whereas He was willing to suffer the reproaches of those whom He purposed to serve, the “strong” Christian (as well as the “weak” Christian if he would be instructed) should be willing to deny himself of some of his liberties, that are not wrong in and of themselves, out of genuine concern for his brethren. “It is noteworthy how the apostle adduces the example of Christ in His most transcendent accomplishments in order to commend the most practical duties.”² Paul showed the disinterest that Christ had to serve Himself. He suffered for the well-being of others, as we should be willing to do.

The apostle Paul cited **Psalm 69:9** as a prophecy of Jesus Christ, ***‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.’*** Interestingly, this is the second half of a verse (v. 69b), of which the first half of the verse (v. 69a) was quoted in another context. Psalm 69:9 in its entirety reads,

“For zeal for Your house has consumed Me,
And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on Me.”

“For the zeal for Your house has consumed Me” was cited in John’s Gospel upon our Lord Jesus cleansing the temple for the egregious sin of the moneychangers dishonoring God in His temple, His house. We read of this in John 2:13ff.

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple He found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. ¹⁵And making a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And He poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶And He told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make My Father’s house a house of trade.” ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, ***“Zeal for Your house will consume Me.”***

The reproaches that Christ bore were the reproaches that sinners render unto God. The hatred of sinners for God has fallen on His Son.

These reproaches vented against God by the ungodly fell upon Christ. This is to say that all the enmity of men against God was directed to Christ; He was the victim of this assault. It is to this Paul appeals as exemplifying the assertion that Christ “pleased not Himself.”³

² John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Eerdmans, 1965), vol. 2, p. 198.

³ Ibid, p. 199.

How then does Christ bearing the reproaches of His Father translate as an example for Christians to seek to please their Christian brethren through their voluntary denial of privileges? It is the dissimilarity that is the point. There is

“a profound discrepancy between what Christ did and what the strong are urged to do. He “pleased not Himself to the incomparable extent of bearing the enmity of men against God and He bore this reproach because He was jealous for God’s honour. He did not by flinching evade any of the stroke. Shall we, the strong, insist on pleasing ourselves in the matter of food and drink to the detriment of God’s saints and the edification of Christ’s body? It is the complete contrast between Christ’s situation and ours that enhances the force of the appeal.”⁴

After having quoted from the Psalms, Paul made this statement regarding the abiding authority of the “Hebrew Scriptures”, our Old Testament, for Christians of the New Testament church. **Romans 15:4** reads, *“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.”* Here we read of the abiding authority and application of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. **John Calvin** wrote:

This is an interesting passage, by which we understand that there is nothing vain and unprofitable contained in the oracles of God; and we are at the same time taught that it is by the reading of the Scripture that we make progress in piety and holiness of life. Whatever then is delivered in Scripture we ought to strive to learn; for it were a reproach offered to the Holy Spirit to think, that he has taught anything which it does not concern us to know; let us also know, that whatever is taught us conduces to the advancement of religion. And though he speaks of the Old Testament, the same thing is also true of the writings of the Apostles; for since the Spirit of Christ is everywhere like itself, there is no doubt but that he has adapted his teaching by the Apostles, as formerly by the Prophets, to the edification of his people. Moreover, *we find here a most striking condemnation of those fanatics who vaunt that the Old Testament is abolished, and that it belongs not in any degree to Christians; for with what front can they turn away Christians from those things which, as Paul testifies, have been appointed by God for their salvation?*

Just as there were some in Calvin’s day (16th c.) who denied that the Old Testament was Christian Scripture, so there are those today who disregard the Old Testament in the same manner. They say that the Old Testament was Scripture that God gave to Israel, but the New Testament is Scripture that God has given to the church. They claim the Old Testament is a collection of Jewish books for Israel, but the New Testament is a collection of authoritative books for the church. But God has declared for us here in Romans 15 that He has given the Old Testament to be Scripture to His church.

Verse 4 functions as a parenthesis in the argument. The citation from the OT in verse 3 cannot be dismissed or taken lightly. The OT Scriptures were written “for our instruction”, that is, for both Jews and Gentiles. By citing the OT Paul anticipates the scriptural catena in 15:9-12. The experiences of Christ, reflected in the OT, are a pattern and a model for the church. As the prototype he should be imitated. The authority of the OT is clearly evident in this statement (see 2 Tim. 3:16). Paul never understood the newness of his gospel to nullify the OT. The gospel fulfilled the Scriptures of old (Rom. 1:2; 3:21, 31; 16:26). The Scriptures play a vital role in the lives of believers. Not only are they the source of “instruction” (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16). But also believers derive “consolation” here means that believers receive strength and comfort from the Scriptures to continue living in a way that honors God. In other words, something is wrong if one only studies the Scriptures academically and does not regularly receive nourishment and strength to live the Christian life. The purpose of the

⁴ Ibid.

Scriptures is that believers should have “hope.” Once again, the immensely practical role of the OT in the lives of Christians is unfolded. Hope is generated through carefully reading, understanding, and obeying the OT.⁵

Hope is that grace of God that He gives His people that assures them they will receive all the good things that God has promised them in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures foster that hope in the believer. If you are one who is discouraged, lacks motivation, cannot see a reason to advance or endure in the Christian life, then resort to the Scriptures. And perhaps it is in the Old Testament Scriptures that you will find your ground of hope. The hope to which the apostle Paul speaks is that God’s promises to Israel are being and will be fulfilled in the church of Jesus Christ. The New Testament teaches that the church is the beneficiary and the realization of God’s promises in the Old Testament to Israel. The New Testament teaches that the Church under its King, Jesus Christ, is Israel experiencing the kingdom blessings of the Old Testament. This is not to say that the Church replaced Israel, as those who would demonize say that we advocate “replacement theology, that the church replaced Israel. No, we say that the church is Israel, granted, as constituted under the new covenant. Paul reasons that all of the promises of God to the Patriarchs of Israel are being realized through Jesus Christ.

We next read in **Romans 15:5f**, “*May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” God is able and willing to give the grace of endurance and encouragement to enable His people to live in harmony with one another. What is meant by the words, “in accord with Christ Jesus”? He is probably speaking of being in fellowship with one another, bearing others burdens, living in harmony with one another, in accordance with the example of Jesus Christ, as the apostle already stated. The expression may also mean that when we are living in fellowship with one another in the church that we are fulfilling the will of Jesus Christ. We see the end in sight is the glory of “God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” For the apostle “no consideration could enforce the exhortation more strongly than to be reminded of the glory of God as the controlling purpose of all our attitudes and actions.”⁶

With verse 7 a new paragraph begins and continues through verse 13.⁷ Paul appeals to the church for the strong and weak Christians alike to extend fellowship to one another in the same way that God had so graciously extended fellowship to them. The primary motivation for us toward this action was so that God would be praised for all that He has done for us as His people. **Verse 7** reads, “*Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*” Christian unity and fellowship is not to the end that they merely be at peace with one another, but that believers should live for the glory of God. In other words, the life of the church should be so shaped and ordered so that will see, acknowledge, and celebrate the purposes of God being realized in His people through Jesus Christ.

The apostle then cited a number of Old Testament Scriptures to validate his teaching and perhaps to bring endurance and encouragement to the church through the Scriptures. He quotes verses from all three divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures, from the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. All Scripture looked toward the day when Israel would be joined by Gentiles in the worship of God as one people of God. But Paul first made the statement that Jesus Christ accomplished the purpose of God to fulfil His promises to Israel and the Gentile world.

⁵ Thomas Schreiner, *Romans* (Baker Academic, 1998), p. 748.

⁶ Murray, vol. 2, p. 201.

⁷ The ESV has the two paragraph divisions as verses 1-7 and verses 8-13. The NKJV has verse 7 as beginning the second paragraph, as does the Greek New Testament published by the United Bible Society (3rd edition).

We read in **verses 8 and 9**, “*For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy.*” God had given promises to the patriarchs, that is, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that He would bring them salvation through a Mediator, a Savior. Perhaps Paul was referring to the Patriarchs as also including King David. Paul had reasoned earlier that Abraham was the father of all those who have true faith in Jesus Christ. Again, it is in the church that the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham. In Romans 4 we read:

What then shall we say that Abraham *our father* has found according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” ⁴Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

⁵But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, ⁶*just as David* also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

⁷“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
And whose sins are covered;

⁸Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.”

⁹*Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised* also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. ¹⁰How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. ¹¹And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that *he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised*, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, ¹²and but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised *the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision,*

¹³For the promise that *he would be the heir of the world* was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, ¹⁵because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that *the promise might be sure to all the seed*, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, *who is the father of us all* ¹⁷(*as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”*) in the presence of Him whom he believed-- God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; ¹⁸who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that *he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.”* (Rom. 4:1-18)

The Lord has taught us through the hand of the apostle Paul that the church is the Israel of God, the beneficiaries of God’s promises, even the realization of God’s promises to the Old Testament Patriarchs.

Let us consider the verses that the apostle cited in order to substantiate his teaching to this church at Rome. The *first* Old Testament verse that Paul cites is in **verse 9**: “*As it is written, ‘Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.’*” This is a quotation from 2 Samuel 22:50 as well as Psalm 18:49. In 2 Samuel 22 we read of David’s song of deliverance that he had composed after the Lord had delivered him from all of his enemies and had established his kingdom (cf. 2 Sam. 22:1). Here is a portion of that song:

⁴⁷“The LORD lives! Blessed be my Rock!

Let God be exalted, the Rock of my salvation!

⁴⁸It is God who avenges me,
And subdues the peoples under me;
⁴⁹He delivers me from my enemies.
You also lift me up above those who rise against me;
You have delivered me from the violent man.

⁵⁰*Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles,
And sing praises to Your name.*

⁵¹He is the tower of salvation to His king,
And shows mercy to His anointed,
To David and his descendants forevermore.” (2 Sam. 22:47-51)

This song of David in 2 Samuel 22 was made into a psalm and sung and celebrated in the worship of God in the temple. It is recorded for us in Psalm 18 also. Psalm 18:46-50 are the identical words that we have recorded for us in 2 Samuel 22:47-51. David looked forward to the time when his kingdom would be expanded to encompass the Gentile nations, that He would be able to sing of God’s glory in the presence of these Gentiles who have joined with Him in praising God. The apostle Paul in quoting this passage is arguing that in the New Testament church this longing of King David is being realized. But further, it is very likely that Paul viewed David as prophetically speaking of His greater Son, Jesus Christ, and the day in which He would sing of the glory of God His Father for having brought the Gentile nations under His present rule as King of kings and Lord of lords. If this is the case, and I believe that it is, then the same idea is being suggested here that is declared forthrightly in Hebrews 1. There we read of the glorified Jesus Christ singing praises to His Father in the presence of His people.

¹¹For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹²saying:

“I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.” (Heb. 2:11f)

The writer to the Hebrews was quoting Psalm 22:22. And there King David was voicing his confidence that He would one day sing God’s praises among His people. But it is set forth as prophetic of the risen Lord Jesus declaring and singing the praises of His Father in the presence of the people He has redeemed for Himself. Back in Romans 15:9 the same idea is conveyed, in my opinion, that the words of David in Psalm 18 were prophetic of Jesus Christ, of the days of His glorification in this church age, He is seeing realized the promise, “*As it is written, ‘Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.’*”

The second Old Testament verse that Paul cites is in **Romans 15:10**, which is a quotation of Deuteronomy 32:43. “*And again it is said, ‘Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.’*” Now if we were to turn back in our English Bibles to this passage in Deuteronomy, we would find that it does not read exactly as it is worded here in Romans 15. The reason for this is that the apostle quoted Deuteronomy from the Septuagint (LXX), rather than from the Hebrew text, from which our English Bibles base their Old Testament translation. The context of Deuteronomy 32 is the Song of Moses. Moses was rejoicing over God having delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt. Moses looked forward also to the blessing of God upon the nation of Israel when its extent would encompass Gentile nations. When Paul quoted this verse in Romans 15, he was again asserting that what the church of Jesus Christ was experiencing, in that the church included multitudes of Gentile believers. The church is the realization of Moses’ longing for

the expansion and extent of the kingdom of Israel.⁸ By the way, this verse is also quoted by the writer to the Hebrews with the same idea being expressed:

The **third** Old Testament quotation cited by Paul is in Romans 15:11. *“And again, ‘Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him.’”* This is a quotation from **Psalm 117:1**. This is the shortest Psalm in the Bible (and also the shortest chapter in the Bible).

Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!
Laud Him, all you peoples!
²For His merciful kindness is great toward us,
And the truth of the LORD endures forever.

Praise the LORD! (Psa 117:1f)

This psalm was sung in the temple worship of ancient Israel. It looked forward to the day when Israel would be preeminent among the gentile nations of the world. When Paul quoted this psalm in the context of Romans 15, he was arguing that in and through the church of Jesus Christ, this Old Testament prophecy was being realized.

The **fourth** and last Old Testament verse that Paul cited to substantiate his teaching was from the prophet Isaiah, **Isaiah 11:1** and **10**. It is recorded for us in **Romans 15:12**:

“And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,
Even He who arises to rule the Gentiles;
In Him will the Gentiles hope.”

Jesse was the father of king David. The root of Jesse speaks of one coming forth from the lineage of Jesse, that being David directly, but ultimately to the Lord Jesus, the promised son of David who would rule over the Gentile world. Once again, in citing this Old Testament prophecy, the apostle was showing that in and through the church of Jesus Christ, the promise of Israel as a nation ruling and preeminent over the Gentile world, is fulfilled in the church comprised of believing Gentiles.

The apostle concluded this series of Old Testament verses with a benediction in **Romans 15:13**, effectively concluding the flow of his argument of the entire epistle. This is the culmination, the last word that Paul wanted to press upon this church.

“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.”

Paul desired that these people would be filled with hope. This hope is based upon the knowledge and assurance that they were the people of God through whom all the promises of God in history were being realized and would be realized. This church at the seat of the Romans Empire was viewed as a realization of the expansion of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, that is the restored Davidic Kingdom that encompasses the entire world, that includes in its midst Gentile believers from every place. When the fellowship of the church was being realized between Jewish and Gentile believers, they would experience the blessing of God and more fully see the realization of the promises of God to them.

⁸ By the way, this verse from the LXX is also quoted by the writer to the Hebrews with the same idea being expressed, that this current church age is the realization of what Moses had prophesied in Deuteronomy 32:43.

Let us close with a few quick words of exhortation:

1. We should see that the glory of God is principally manifested ***through the church***. We may better do this through the fellowship that we extend to one another in Christ. Accepting and embracing one another in Christ, not separating from one another over non-essential matters, brings glory to God.

2. ***The Old Testament Scriptures are Christian Scripture***. It is the Word of God for the church of Jesus Christ to every degree that the New Testament Scriptures apply to the church. The glory of God is best seen in God's fulfillment of the Old Testament promises in the church.

3. See what impoverishment of understanding and failure to render glory to God through Jesus Christ characterize ***those who fail or refuse to see the Old Testament as Scripture for the church***. Those churches that fail to view the Old Testament and teach it as we have sought to do so this morning do deny the resource that God has provided for His people for their endurance and comfort; they forfeit the grace of God's hope that He makes available to His people (cf. Rom. 15:4).

4. See ***the folly of so many whose eschatology*** has blinded them to the glory of God manifested to and through the church of Jesus Christ. Because they are looking for an earthly Jewish millennium that they think is foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures, they fail to see the glory of God through Jesus Christ in His church. We have gone through the main message of this Epistle to the Romans and there has not been one word of a future earthly 1,000 year millennium, and certainly not of a Jewish millennium or a reestablishment of an earthly Davidic kingdom of this world. The New Testament teaches that it is the church and this church age to which all the prophets spoke (cf. Acts 3:24).

5. We are the heirs of all the promises of God to the Old Testament patriarchs. Abraham is our Father. The Son of David is our King. The promised Kingdom of God is what we enjoy as we are its citizens forever.

6. Let these matters to which we have given our attention motivate us to this end: ***Let us strive to bring glory to God through our church***. Let others seek the glory that some men may deserve; that is a good thing. But there is no higher calling, there is no greater cause for joy, peace, and righteousness, for the attaining of sustaining hope and the grace of endurance, than to commit oneself, as did the apostle Paul, to commit one's church, and to bring others, perhaps many others, to see and acknowledge, and celebrate the glory of God the Father through Jesus Christ. May the Blessed Holy Spirit enable us to do so. As Paul expressed in another place, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ***to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen*** (Eph 3:21)

"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." (Rom. 15:13)