

Passionate about God's Program

Text: Romans 15:5-12 “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.”

Purpose: Paul is concerned that disunity in the church at Rome is a serious hindrance to their ability to partner with him in his future ministry in Spain; therefore he reminds them of the heart of their faith in Christ which he believes will correct their misplaced priorities and pride.

Proposition: God wants us to be passionate about His Kingdom program.

Interrogative: How can we be passionate about God's kingdom program?

Fact 1: A passion for God's program flows from a healthy unified local

church culture 15:5 “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus...”

- **Paul's desire: The God of patience and consolation**
 - **Patience:** Indicates the need to endure and bear long with people
 - **Consolation:** Indicates that you will need God to come alongside you and bear you up with His daily sustaining grace
 - **Context:** Rome and the Jew/Gentile slave/citizen dynamics in the church
- **Our dependence upon God:**
 - **Grant you to be likeminded:** Indicates that this is not something that takes place by brute force or by manipulation. This like-mindedness is the result of God's mighty working in the church by His spirit and through His word.
- **Our example: According to Jesus Christ Philippians 2:5-8** “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross...”

Misplaced values that undermine unity:

- An overemphasis on our personal rights:
- An overemphasis on our personal preferences:
- An unhealthy entitlement to positions in the church:
- A preoccupation with others with whom we differ on debatable matters of soul liberty:

Summary: Unity abounds where Christ-centered/cross-centered Christianity thrives.

Fact 2: A passion for God's program flows from a local church consumed with God's glory rather than their own 15:6

"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

- **The way we think:** "One mind..."
- **What we communicate:** "One mouth..."
- **Who we really treasure:** "Glorify God..."

A church that is consumed with God's glory rather than their own:

- Will not care about who gets the credit when things are going well
- Will not hold tightly to those who God may be leading into other areas of service.
- Will not feel threatened by the growth of other ministries.
- Will not let pride get in the way of what God is doing through them.

Fact 3: A passion for God's program flows from a Christ-like love for the souls of men: 15:7

"receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

- **The standard:** "As Christ received us..."
- **The ultimate end:** "To the glory of God..." **Romans 5:6-10** "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..."

Three Thoughts:

- Christ did not receive us on the basis of our goodness
- Christ did not receive us on the basis of our ability to benefit Him.
- Christ's acceptance of us was ultimately about the glory of God and His gracious plan of redemption.

Summary: Our love for other people should be rooted in their value as image bearers and the matchless glory of God that will be displayed in their conversions.

Fact 4: A passion for God's program flows from a willingness to look past social prejudices: 15:8-12

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust..."

Some key phrases in this section:

- "A minister of the circumcision...to confirm the promises...that the Gentiles might glorify God..."
- "That the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy..."
- "I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name..."

- “Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people...”
- “Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people...”
- “There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust...”

The significance of these statements: God’s plan was always to make a united people of God from every kindred, tribe, nation, language...

This plan defies and confronts the natural prejudices we find in a fallen world:

1 Corinthians 12:13 “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit...”

Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus...”

Colossians 3:11 “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all...”

Think about the story of Redemption and the Redeemed:

- God included Tamar the devious daughter-in-law of Judah, Rahab the harlot, Ruth the Moabite, and Bathsheba in the line of Christ.
- God sent Jonah to Nineveh
- Jesus said I must go through Samaria
- Jesus ate with publican and sinners
- Jesus told the Parable of the good Samaritan to defy the prejudices of the religious elite
- The Holy Spirit commanded Philip to go meet an Ethiopian
- Paul told Philemon to receive his slave as a brother
- The Bible is full of examples of examples of the gospel going to the unlovely, and despised. The gospel humbles us, showing us our universal inability to be saved through our own merits, it levels the field, and points us to what is really most important.

Conclusion: God wants us to be passionate about His Kingdom program. If we are going to be a thriving mission’s focused church, we must: cultivate a healthy unified local church culture, be consumed with God’s glory rather than their own, cultivate a Christ-like love for the souls of men , and have a willingness to look past social prejudices!