

Romans 15:7-13

Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

Regardless of other distinctives, all believers should be able to affirm this truth. Nevertheless Christians often fail to apply this truth in the corporate life of the church.

At the heart of this truth is the chief reason for the church; the worship of God. This is something of which many in the church have lost sight.

It is not only the church in our own day that is so self-centered, but the church in Rome in the 1st Century struggled with the same problems of self-centeredness.

Summary

In Romans 15:7-13, Paul continues to counsel the battling Strong and Weak and points them to a number of Old Testament Scriptures to show them, and us, that the chief end of the church is to glorify God and worship Him.

1. Christ-like Love vv. 7-9a

Paul makes another Christ-focused appeal (**Rom. 15:7**). He grounds his imperative (to love one another) in the indicative (who they are in Christ).

Paul then appeals to the specific nature of Christ's ministry (**Rom. 15:8-9a**).

Pointing to Christ's ministry to "the circumcision," the Jews, shows that Paul wanted the strong (likely Gentiles) to serve the weak (likely Jews) who scrupled over matters pertaining to diet and the Old Testament festival days.

By His ministry to His fellow Jews, Christ was able to serve both Jew and Gentile.

Again, Paul exhorts the strong to serve the weak in the same way that Christ redeemed the weak (**Rom. 5:6-10**).

2. Divine Goal vv. 9b-13

Christ came in the weakness of a servant to save the weak so that they would worship God. This was God's intention from the outset-to redeem a people for Himself so that they would glorify Him.

To demonstrate this, Paul cites a series of quotations from the Old Testament (**Rom. 15:9b-12; cf. 2 Sam 22:50 (Ps. 18:49), Deut 32:43 LXX, Ps. 117:1, and Isa 11:10.**)

Paul's main point here is that Christ saved the Jews to glorify God and also saved the Gentiles to this same end. We have not been redeemed for squabbles over opinions and debatable matters but to praise our triune God.

Paul concludes this section with a benediction for the Roman Christians; that God would fill them with hope, joy, and peace by the Holy Spirit through the Word (**Rom. 15:13; cf. 15:4**).

Note Paul's overall argument; in particular, the context of the coming consummation of all things (eschatology).

The fact that he counsels the church to seek their hope through the power of the Holy Spirit indicates that Paul wanted them to think of the inaugurated New Age; the age of the Spirit.

As they do this, Paul wanted them to place their hope in God as they awaited the consummation of the age.

He wanted them to live in peace with God and one another. Peace, harmony, and love were supposed to be signs that Christ had unleashed the new heavens and earth and that the darkness of night was giving way to the light of day.

3. Church's Chief End

Paul had to remind the Roman Christians to be future oriented; to pursue the chief end of the church: to glorify God and worship Him; living the Christian life as a living sacrifice.

The strong were not redeemed so that they could show contempt for the Weak, and the Weak were not redeemed so they could censoriously judge the Strong.

Yet it is easy to forget this truth.

The strong in Rome pursued what they believed was the truth and forgot to love their weaker brethren. It appears that the weak did not pursue obedience for the sake of God's glory. They were trying to make their own convictions the standard of the community rather than those of God.

What is the chief end of the church? To glorify God.

This is Paul's point to the strong and weak at the congregation at Rome.

Christ was obedient to His Father's will, redeeming His people from sin and death, all for the glory of His Father.

We have been redeemed for the very same purpose-that we would live obediently, as living sacrifices, not for our own glory but for the glory of our triune God.

Christians are to pursue their calling with a future oriented mind-set; not according to their own abilities but according to the power of the Holy Spirit.

If you are strong, bear with your weaker brothers and sisters to the glory of God.

If you are weak, do not judge your brothers and sisters but instead draw near to God so that He would strengthen your faith.

Pursue truth with a love and zeal for our Lord.

Pursue your calling of obedience as living sacrifices, not for the sake of obedience or for conscience alone but for God's glory.