

### The God of Endurance, Encouragement and Hope – Romans 15:1-13

1. The strong and the weak in faith both must \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Romans 15:1-3, 8-12; 2 Corinthians 8:9; 1 Peter 2:21-23; Hebrews 2:10-13, 5:8, 4:14-16).

2. The Ultimate \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 15:4; John 16:33; Romans 12:9-21; Ephesians 4:25-32; James 3:13-4:10).

3. The personal commitment and \_\_\_\_\_ of the Designer (Romans 15:5-7; Hebrews 13:20-21).

4. History has one direction - the \_\_\_\_\_ of all nations (Romans 5:8-12; Psalm 67:4)

5. The God of \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 15:13; Hebrews 6:16-17, 12:1-2).

#### Application:

- **Believe/Trust** the Words of Hope, given by the God of Hope, so that you can **be a giver of Hope** to others wherever you are!
- Romans 15:14 - Get **equipped** to know His Word better so that you can counsel His Word well.

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## 1 The God of Endurance, Encouragement and Hope – Romans 15:1-14

*Opening Passage: Psalm 119:92 -- Pray*

In July, 1913, 25 men set sail on a ship called *The Karluk* under the leadership of Nordic Canadian explorer William Stefansson to explore and discover new lands in the Arctic. And yet shortly after setting off from Alaska, the ship became stuck in the ice. Not wanting to wait, Stefansson, under the pretense of going hunting for seals, took a party of men and never returned to the ship, leaving the remaining men under the care of Captain Bartlett. The world was captured by their story fearing that all would be lost. After a short period of time, the ice eventually crushed the ship, and it sank, leaving the men stranded on the ice with limited supplies of food, some sleds and sled dogs. The ice floes were constantly moving and shifting beneath them. Under Bartlett's leadership, all who would follow his lead eventually made it by foot across the ice to Wrangel island where eventually those men were rescued, in Sept 1914. In total, only 14 men survived the expedition.

In August, 1914, Irish explorer Ernest Shackleton, set out to be the first to navigate across Antarctica. In total, 22 men joined him in this expedition, and his ship, *The Endurance*, enroute to Antarctica was likewise frozen fast in the ice. After some time, the *Endurance* also sank, leaving the men with only 3 lifeboats which they used as sleds to push across the ice to open water. After an amazing journey through the roughest ocean currents on the planet, they made it safely to an island. Then Shackleton and a crew of men, navigated again the rough seas to another island where they hiked over glacial peaks to reach a whaling station where they found help to return and rescue the other men. It total, it took over 2 years for them to get back to civilization, though the whole world had left them for dead.

Both of these expeditions were incredibly challenging and took place in the most extreme weather conditions on planet earth. Conditions such as these are quite revealing when it comes to strengths and weaknesses of a character.

- Strengths tend to become stronger, and perseverance the outcome.
- Weaknesses on the other hand, tend multiply, apathy and despair set in, and passivity leads to quitting.
- When that happens, tempers flare presenting additional challenges - manage, submarine, plan, maximize.

Greatest contrast between these two stories is in their leaders: One led and protected, the other was consumed w/himself & quickly abandoned his ship out of self-interest.

The other contrast is found in the reasons the men embarked on the journey: The men on the *Karluk* were inexperienced, and few of the men trusted Stefansson, but they wanted the adventure. His reputation of poor leadership and foolish decisions preceded him, but they disregarded it. Even before the ship sailed, supplies and resources were said to be 'at the next port', but they never made it. In the end, they were in it for the wrong reason, and it cost them.

The men on the *Endurance* were experienced and trained, AND they trusted Shackleton. They read his experience and saw that he was trustworthy. Shackleton was committed to the security, health and unity of his crew. And even though the suffered equally, and even longer than the men on the *Karluk*, they endured.

We may not be challenged at sea like those men, but Paul describes the reality of a huge gale force of wind raging against the Gospel and the wisdom of God in the world. He wrote in Eph 4:14, that we are under the threat of being 'tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.' Social media and the internet is full of competing agendas; it's promoting alternative purposes of how we should live, and alternative destinations for life. It can erode our confidence and arouse suspicion of God when we suffer.

But it's not only 'out there' where we feel pressure. It's in the church as well. Paul warned the Colossians to beware of others passing judgment upon you re: food or drink or certain festivals, or certain regulations, or promoting self-made religion (2:16ff). Besides false teaching, there are also just the challenges presented by varying levels of spiritual maturity. Some have deep faith and conviction. Others are new, or just coming to faith. They still are trying to figure out what is pleasing to God, and what is not. And as such, it's not uncommon to find division and judgment over certain issues, hindering the experience of God's intended Gospel joy in our midst.

So how do we navigate all of these challenges without getting lost at sea, killing each other, or just waiting it out? How do we endure in hope, and bless others as we make the journey?

Follow the right Leader, and don't forget Who He is or What He has said when we're uncertain. Trust Him. He's prepared us for the journey, and has equipped us with what we need to make it safely home.

Jesus knew our sanctification and growth toward genuine love would take time. We WILL learn how to love as we've been loved, and we WILL learn to walk as His followers. His redemptive work on the cross secures both our salvation from sin and judgment, as well as our sanctification -- The re-creation or restoration of His original design in us...the new birth, as Jesus calls it in John 3.

Paul explains in Eph 3:10 that when the Church loves and lives like Christ, the church is putting on display to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realm, that the Gospel, the wisdom of God, has done its work – reversing the curse of self-love fueled by the doubting of God.

But it doesn't happen instantly, but rather through the process of God's transforming our mind and creating within us the mindset of Christ.

This morning we're going to look at some of the most practical examples of what that looks like in Romans and we'll discover that the **God of encouragement and hope** has given us a sufficient source of wisdom for working out the messes we find ourselves in, as well as navigating the storms of life.

Open your Bibles to Rom 15. Writing from Corinth, he is warning the church in Rome to be careful of divisions there as well, just like he was doing in Corinth. After giving a great amount of explanation about the wonder of our salvation in the first 11 chapters of Romans, in chapter 12 and following Paul turns to the practical outworking of our faith. It is not surprising to discover that much of what is included is:

- how to work out conflicts,
- how to develop unity,
- how to love others when they let you down,
- how to rest in God's timing of reconciliation instead of exacting your own revenge,

- and how to love when your enemy does not humble themselves and return the same love you are giving;
- how to use your God given gifts to serve and care for others,
- how to interact with governing authorities (even when they fail to be just and upright).
- This should be incredibly encouraging! 1: B/c He is writing to Believers with the same kind of problems we find amongst ourselves. 2: B/c God doesn't abandon us at moments like these but directs us. He is not surprised by what He finds, He walks out for us how wisdom in His Kingdom works.

It is an amazing treasure chest of wisdom that describes their true reality (as well as ours), with perceptive accuracy and real answers that can be applied and truly experienced.

And then in a fashion so common with Paul, lest we get lost in a list of rules to keep, he reminds us of what motivates all of this one another consideration....Let's read Romans 15:1-2

**2**1. **The context: The strong and the weak in faith both must look to Christ.**

Romans 15:1 - *We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please (accommodate) ourselves. <sup>2</sup> Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.*

Taken from the context of Paul's argument begun in 14:1-5 (read) – weak in the faith. (issues of conscience and application of the Gospel in life of dietary restrictions in 14, but the principle may apply to a variety of issues).

- Some Christians have varying convictions regarding the use of alcohol, what kind of entertainment they watch, or music they listen to.
- Some Christians view debt as a sin... others think it's a wisdom issue
- Some vote Democrat... and others vote Republican or something else
- Some teach their kids about Santa Claus or participate in Halloween... and others don't
- Some are passionate about homeschooling... and others have chosen to partner with the public school or Christian school or charter schools
- Some have their children vaccinated... but others have great concerns about it
- Some Moms work outside the home... others stay home full-time
- And some families are committed to only eating organic food and eating clean... while others are handing out Pop-Tarts and Fruit Loops... to the glory of God!

Coming to Christ is a process. Nobody comes to Christ with everything understood and figured out. Our spiritual growth takes time, and we all grow at different rates. We all come from different backgrounds, with different vices and previous commitments that are sometimes hard to leave behind. They are so much a part of our makeup; habitual patterns of thought and action. But they are things which God transforms and renews.

But sometimes in the church, we experience conflict & friction, disappointment & judgment because we make assumptions based upon our experience or understanding. But that's not the way of Christ.

Paul gets right to the motive behind our tension...we do what we do because its most convenient for us...it's to our advantage. Or as he says here, to 'please ourselves'. This is really the core of the problem. I'm hardwired to look out for myself. That is the DNA of sin. Like Paul wrote in 2 Cor 5:15,

'Christ died so that we no longer live for ourselves, but for Christ'. Even in the faith, even when something seems so 'obvious' to you, Paul would remind us of the humility of Christ...it's not about your perspective of how life ought to be! It's about God's design of life, and sharing in His glory of abundant joy as you concern yourself with the needs of others first. Remember why you're in this...not for yourself...but for Christ and others!

**3a** *Let's continue Romans 15:3:*

<sup>3</sup> *For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."*

Christ, who although God in human flesh, took upon himself the insults and disdain. Isaiah says he was despised and rejected (53:2), bore away our griefs (53:3), and was of no esteem.

**3b** Phil 2:5-8 -- <sup>5</sup> *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,* <sup>6</sup> *who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,* <sup>7</sup> *but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.* <sup>8</sup> *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Paul is wanting us to **remember** how Christ did not exalt Himself though He is the only ONE truly deserving, but humbled Himself in serving others. He is the pattern for life when living in the context of enduring the weaknesses of others. He drew near to the broken and disenfranchised! He ate with them, touched them, defended them, provided for them, restored them, was not embarrassed by their brokenness, nor self-righteous in His approach!

The strong and the weak both look to Christ. He is the model of wisdom in the flesh. Follow His example of humility, submission, compassion and service to others.

Paul takes a brief pause to remind us of the big picture of God's redemptive work -- It's all about forbearance, restoration, reconciliation - grace!

**42. The Ultimate User's Manual** – Going back to Rom 15:4.

Romans 15:4 - *For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement (sufficient/trustworthy) of the Scriptures we might have hope. (at that time the Scriptures in Paul's mind were the OT, but in ours now it includes the NT as well).*

"God defines what it means to be human (all of what we are and what we suffer and why). He knows what is wrong with us and diagnoses this in His word...and prescribes the solution (the Gospel) to our problems." (H. Lambert TBC p. 17). We are who God says we are. [Everything you buy w/value has a troubleshooting guide b/c things tend to break. This is provided by the creator/designer of the product.] We, have the ultimate life manual in God's Word!

- **5a** Comprehensive help – **Whatever** was written, from former days. Let me point out that our need for counsel and instruction is not part of the fall of man, but rather part of our design!
- **5b** Specific and practical – **'for our instruction'** (No matter how distant the text - cf. 1 Cor 10:6, 11-13;). [Job -- "The ability to endure what we suffer does not come from knowing why, but rather from Who we already know God to be."](#) (Pastor in AZ).

- **5c** Realistic for our context. What we find in Scripture corresponds to the world we live in. Describes us! Especially as it refers to suffering: **'through endurance'** of what? Suffering! Whether self-inflicted or the cause of another, we all experience the brokenness described here. Disappointment. Failures. Being hurt and abandoned. Attacked and forgotten. *John 16:33 Even Jesus endured suffering AND silence, but He did so in faith!*
- Why does the Scripture speak so frequently about these things? Why is it so difficult to endure? Because it is part of our experience. But God is unwilling to leave us in the mess. It's been a **Challenging year. Unresolved conflict, loved ones fighting deep depression, other receiving conflicting counsel compounding their problem, yet we're not permitted to speak into that. I've had pronounced moments of...**

**6**

Self-righteous anger	Pride b/c of Disrespect	Argumentative/manipulative
Over-indulgence (false comf)	Greed	Indifference to others
Critical spirit	Unrighteous judgments	Imputing motives
Anxiety/Worry/Fear	Sensuality/Idolatry	Depression
Bitterness	Jealousy	Gossip
Gluttony/Addictions	Laziness	Selfishness
Disobedient to authorities	Maligning one another	Seeking revenge
Dishonesty - not as direct	Despising one another	Unforgiveness

*\*\*This list is mostly taken right out of Romans, but also from other NT letters to the church. This IS our experience that we are sorting through as believers. God rescues us all the time.*

- **7** Give us courage; through **encouragement**; embolden us to keep doing the next right thing. Turn back with me to Romans 12:9-21 where he gives a list of practical insights. I'll just highlight a few. vs. 10, 11, 13, 16b, 17 - All portrayed in the life of our leader - Christ! Our faith is not a list to be kept, but a life to be lived and a Lord to be loved!

*But it gets much better. He not only gives us His counsel, but He gives Himself to put it into practice.*

### **8** **3. The personal commitment and involvement of the Designer - Romans 15:5-7**

Remember he just said in vs. 4, *'through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope'*. *May the **God of endurance and encouragement** grant (cause you, put in you, produce in you) to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus (MODEL), <sup>6</sup> that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

Paul Tripp: In verse 5, Paul calls your Lord "the God of endurance.": your hope is not to be found in your willingness and ability to endure, but in God's unshakable, enduring commitment to never turn from his work of grace. Your hope is that you have been welcomed into communion with One who will endure no matter what. ... Because God will always be faithful, you can bank on the fact that he will give you what you need to be faithful too.

Why does he do this? So that we may, like Christ, **welcome** one another and live in harmony. That is the goal. Interesting to note: Context doesn't change, but their response does. Why? Perspective: Who Christ is, what He has done for us, and where He is taking us is intended to be that transforming!

For Christ, in vs. 8-12, came to serve ALL so that ALL may share in His mercy!

**9**4. History has one direction - the JOY of all nations (Romans 5:8-12; Psalm 67:4)

<sup>8</sup> 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, <sup>9</sup> and 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." <sup>10</sup> And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." <sup>11</sup> And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him." <sup>12</sup> And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."

*Christ is depicted here as the servant king bringing hope to the nations! His arrival is the ult. proof of God's care for His image bearers throughout the OT so that all will find their hope & joy in God.*

**10**As the sin bearer, he took on our sin so that we might possess His righteousness: Colossians 2:13-14 <sup>13</sup> And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (Cf. 2 Cor 5:21)

**11a**As a servant, Christ came in Humility: 2 Corinthians 8:9 - For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. (cf. Phil 2:5ff)

**11b**As a servant, Christ modeled for us how to live in submission, patience, and trust in the Father: 1 Peter 2:20-23 – ...But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

**11c**As a servant, Jesus was about Compassion and Help: 4:14-16 - Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**12**5. The God of HOPE - Romans 15:13 - <sup>13</sup> May the God of hope (The One who fulfilled every promise made through the prophets) fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

- Paul uses this phrase, 'The God of Hope' – God is worthy of such a title because that is His character! This phrase is rich with a mind full of OT proofs showing that God is our faithful, wise, loving, able and willing Father. He is the author of this story, and the ending is pure JOY.
- **13a** He fills with ALL joy and peace = state of freedom from worry and anxiety. How does He fill me?
- **13b** 'in believing' -- He fills by means of our faith/belief/complete trust in His promises preserved for us in the Word. What about the Word are we believing? How to be human, how to love, listen, serve, give, forgive, repent, rejoice at others successes and grieve over their losses, ....
- Believing in the Word also necessitates the turning away from previously misplaced hope/faith in lesser things; competing narratives of who we are and how we should live. Neither Social media nor Hollywood define the parameters of life, the source of our true joy, the nature of our sexuality, and

especially not the form and function of true faith. God has revealed Himself and His purpose for the creatures who bear His image! He shows us how to be human and redeems us to become just like Him.

- **13c** He fills by means of the Holy Spirit (at regeneration) who grows our faith and trust within us.
- **13d** He fills us in order to produce HOPE. 'About in hope' – Give us more than is needed! This is an immovable, unchanging hope! Why? Because our hope is not a proposition, a theory, or an abstract theological idea. Our hope is God Himself – The God of Endurance!
- It's tumultuous in this world. It's easy to get lost at sea. Who's the captain of your ship? the Leader of your expedition? Look to Christ! The writer of Hebrews literally calls Jesus our 'soul anchor' - Hebrews 6:19-20 - *He keeps us! That's why Paul could say in Rom 12:12 Rejoice in Hope! Be patient in tribulation. Be constant in prayer! Why? B/c God is a God of endurance, encouragement, and hope*

**14** Application:

- KNOW/Believe/Trust the Words of Hope, given by the God of Hope, so that you can be a giver of Hope to others wherever you are!
- Let's Pray - Psalm 119:92 - **Lord, If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. Write your Word on our hearts. Incline our hearts to run in your way. Fill us with your joy and peace as we by the power of your Spirit believe what you say about life, and as a result become so full of hope that others ask for the reason our hope abounds. Make us people of Your joy Father. Amen!**