**THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST**

In the early church, the church that was started by Jesus Christ, There were two groups of people in it: Converted Jews – and converted Gentiles.

* The converted Jews brought with them their dietary laws and traditions of washing, restricting and regimen.
* The converted Gentiles knew very little about washing, restricting and regimen. They were simply happy to have met the Lord. They were uncircumcised for the most part and they had even had one of the Apostles assigned to them to help them in their walk with the Lord. THAT Apostles was a Jew who was from one of the strictest groups of Jews that there was… His name: Paul.

So in the first church is this division. Two groups who do not understand each other… Do not have the same set of scruples or preferences or tastes… And the Letter to the Romans was a teaching to them both to accept one another… Stop judging one another… And in chapter 14 they were told to love one another…

In chapter 15 Paul will use Jesus Christ as an example of this… He begins by contrasting strong believers with weak ones, but I don’t hear him name who is who… Do you?...

**Romans 15:1** We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples ***(Hang ups)*** of the weak, ***(Tender in conscious)*** and not to please ourselves.

* NLT - We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. **FOOD** We must not just please ourselves.
* CEV - If our faith is strong, we should be patient with the Lord's followers whose faith is weak. ***(Sensitive)*** We should try to please them instead of ourselves.  **LOVE SHOULD MAKE US WANT TO DO THAT**
* Let’s use **PRAYER styles** as an example…
* **EXAMPLE** – When the Pastors of Simi Valley meet to pray… We NEVER discuss the differences in our theology… Though they are small, we NEVER do that. Instead we accept that some of the Pastors pray a little differently than others… Some pray louder and longer than others… Some come to the Lord almost begging Him for favor while others DEMAND that Satan get his hands off of Simi Valley… We DO NOT correct one another in these differences… We **LOVE one another** We… **“bear with the scruples of the weak…V1”**

*Whose way of praying do I prefer? MINE😊*

**BE KIND!**

2 Let each of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good, leading to edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "THE REPROACHES ***(Offenses)*** OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED ***(Offended)*** YOU **(THAT’S US)** FELL ON ME." **PSALM 69:9**

Remember the prayer of Jesus?

**“Not My will but Yours be done.”**

*Luke 22:42*

**BE ENCOURAGING**

4 For whatever things were written before ***(Scriptures)*** were written for our learning, that we through the **patience** and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.  **GOD ALWAYS WINS!**

* Paul loved to quote the Old Testament to show the Gospel message in the New Testament… He found Jesus in the Law… In Isaiah, the Psalms, The Prophets… Cover to cover…

**THE REST OF ROMANS SOUNDS LIKE A LETTER…**

5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be **like-minded** toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with **one mind** *and* **one mouth** glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore receive **(LOVE)** one another, just **as Christ also received us**, to the glory of God.

**THE GOSPEL FROM THE PROPHETS**

8 Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision ***(Jews)*** for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers, **BY THE PROPHETS** 9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written: "FOR THIS REASON I WILL CONFESS TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, **US!** AND SING TO YOUR NAME." **PSALM 18** 10 And again he says: "REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE!" **DEUTERONOMY 32** 11 And again: "PRAISE THE LORD, ALL YOU GENTILES! LAUD HIM, ALL YOU PEOPLES!" **PSALM 117**

12 And again, Isaiah says: "THERE SHALL BE A ROOT OF JESSE; AND HE WHO SHALL RISE TO REIGN OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM THE GENTILES SHALL **HOPE**." **ISAIAH 11:10** *“Hope” is mentioned 134X*

***LISTEN TO THIS SWEET BLESSING…***

13 Now may the God of **hope** fill you with all **joy** and **peace** in believing, that you may abound in **hope** by the **power of the Holy Spirit.**

**PAUL THE MINISTER TO THE GENTILES**

14 Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. **YOU GOT THIS!** 15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on *some* points, as reminding you, because of the **grace** given to me by God, 16 that I might be a minister of **Jesus Christ** to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of **God**, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the **Holy Spirit**. **SEE THE TRINITY?**

**PAUL: “I WILL GO FIRST”**

17 Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things *which pertain* to God. 18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—19 in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum (Ill-ear-ee-come) **(Europe)** I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20 And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, 21 but as it is written: "TO WHOM HE WAS NOT ANNOUNCED, THEY SHALL SEE; AND THOSE WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND." **Isaiah 52** PAUL LOVED TO INTRODUCE JESUS TO UNBELIEVERS

**PAUL'S PLAN TO VISIT ROME**

22 For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. 23 But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, 24 whenever I journey to **Spain**, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your *company* for a while.

* **Why Spain**? Because Paul had heard that nobody had gone to preach there yet…
* WE SHOULD ask: Where can we go to introduce Jesus to people? Who in MY sphere of influence hasn’t heard yet? A neighbor? Coworker? Niece or nephew? An enemy?....

25 But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.

26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are ***(Suffering)*** in Jerusalem.

* The church that had started out with a love-fest… Communal living and giving… Was now the object of Governmental persecution…

27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

* The church at Jerusalem had **NOT** supported the Gentile church… BUT the Gentile church **is** here supporting the Jerusalem church…
* This is an act of forgiveness on the part of the Gentile church. SO… Who is the weaker believer now? Hmmm…

28 Therefore, when I have performed **(Delivered)** this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. 29 But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

**PRAY FOR ME…**

30 Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord **Jesus Christ**, and through the love of **the Spirit**, that you strive ***(Agonize)*** together with me in prayers to **God** for me, 31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, **(Paul’s enemies)** and that my service ***(Offering)*** for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.

* Paul WILL make it to Rome… It won’t be while on vacation however… He will arrive as a prisoner… After spending years as an inmate…

33 Now the **God of peace** *be* with you all. Amen.

In chapter 16 Paul will get personal and we will take a look at the people to whom he sends some personal greetings… And then, Paul will give the Romans his final instructions…

Now the **God of peace** *be* with you all. Amen.