

Sent: Wednesday, April 25, 2018 10:10 PM

Subject: --coming Last Nite's MOB Study on Romans 15:1-13

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

So ends the Apostle Paul's teaching aspect of his awesome treatise in the book of Romans! On a note not only of salvation and eternal life, but also on the fullness of joy and peace--and a "blessed hope"! In addition, it all comes, as John MacArthur is quick to recognize, through the Scripture (God's Word) which was written and applied to every believing heart by the Holy Spirit!

"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope!" (Romans 15:4)

Without the clear and certain promises of the Word of God, the believer would have no basis for hope! (A la MacArthur)

Paul would later write as a prisoner in Rome, of all places, to the church of Ephesus: "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation--having believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory!" (Ephesians 1:13-14)

Paul's discourse of how God has worked in salvation history to bring His salvation to both Jew and Gentile, is a key theme of the entire letter and, as he closes his letter, another reminder--coming back to square one--of how the "gospel of Christ" is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes--to the Jew first and also to the Greek!" (Romans 1:16)

Therefore, God's redemptive plan has always been to bring together both Jews and Gentiles into His kingdom! Moreover, for them to come together, and to accept each other (with open arms!) "So that with one accord" they might "with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"! (15:6)

This is clearly what Jesus had in mind when, just prior to heading to the cross (in John 17), He "lifted His eyes to heaven and prayed to the Father that those who would believe in Him "would all be one, even as You, Father, are in Me and I in you, that they also may be in Us, so the world may believe that You sent Me!"

Paul puts it this way: "The God who gives perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures grant you to be of the same mind with one another, according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Kirk Streitmater closed his presentation of this lesson last nite with a reading of Philippians 2:1-11--which seems the best way to capture the tenor and tone of Paul's final teaching in the book of Romans, about how, as believers, we are to love one another:

"Therefore, if there is an encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose! Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others! Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!"

Hope we all get it!

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