



Sermon Growth Guide

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UNITY'S WITNESS | Romans 15:1-7

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Key Verse: Romans 15:7 - "Receive one another just as Jesus Christ received us to the glory of God."

Big Idea: We act toward one another as God acted toward us in Jesus Christ.

Foundations

The foundation for this text on living in unity is the action of Jesus seen through Psalm 69. This psalm is one of two major psalms, Pss 22 and 69, used to understand the crucifixion. The Gospel accounts quote Psalm 69:21 "vinegar to drink," alluding to the whole psalm in order to understand the suffering of Jesus on our behalf. Paul here even says, "In as much as this was written, it was written for our teaching." Thus we have to pay attention to Psalm 69 to understand Paul's admonition. Secondly, two words dominate this passage: "please," which occurs three times, and the pair "patience/encouragement," which occurs twice, one with reference to God and one with reference to us.

Understanding God's Word

Paul here is moving from the behavior and attitude of Jesus, God for us, to our behavior and attitude toward one another. We ought to please one another for building up; we ought to be patient and encouraging toward one another. Why? Because this is the way God through Jesus Christ acts toward us.

Applying God's Word

"Please, Please Me," sang the Beatles. This could be the theme song for our selfish generation. In stark contrast, Paul tells us, using the Scriptures as basis, that Jesus did not please himself but sought to please and encourage others to the glory of God.

Witnessing God's Word

We witness our trust in Jesus when we act as Jesus acted to please one another in building up the Body of Christ. Words from the hymn "May the Mind of Christ My Savior" come to mind,

*May the mind of Christ my Savior Live
in me from day to day By his power
and love controlling All I do and say*