

Series Title: Truth Unashamed, Part 7- Together in the Journey

Sermon Title: Week 1: Joined in the struggle

Date: 06-30-19

✠ Approaching the finish line!

Romans in three parts:

- *Truth Unashamed. Romans 1:1 - 11:36*

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

- *How then shall we live? Romans 12:1 - 15:13 (four chaps)*

12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

– **Ended with...**

15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- **With this, Paul ends his theological teaching for the book of Romans. With the 1.5 chapters remaining Paul calls us- as believers, disciples of Jesus- people who share the magnificent truth he has just described in his letter... he calls us to see our lives differently.**
- **With his final personal requests and greetings, we see a picture emerge of a people whose lives are not about themselves, but rather a people who are...**

- *Together in the Journey. Romans 15:13 - 16:27*

- **NOW- throughout Romans, and NT, message of who we are IN CHRIST... what is true of us.. IDENTITY.**

✠ Reality! Essential to our IDENTITY in Christ is our shared PURPOSE as the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27 *Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many... ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

- **That is a famous passage, probably heard it. Message is clear- that core/inseparable to our identity as believers is being an integral part of the body of believers.**
- **In modern evangelical culture, we tend to emphasize our individual faith- our ‘personal relationship with Christ’- AND, our relationship with Christ IS PERSONAL. No one can make it for us...**
- **AND YET, the phrase “PRJ” is not in the New Testament. NOT because it isn’t true, but because it is not the EMPHASIS of the NT.**
- **KEY! When it comes to our identity in Christ, our relationship with Christ, the emphasis of that relationship is the context of our relationships – our shared life, shared purpose- with other believers.**
- **IN NT, to be a follower of Christ IS to be an integral part of the body of Christ- No other scenario.**
- **BOTTOM LINE- as believers, our lives are no longer about us. We have our individual lives, families, stories, to be sure.**
- **AND- CONSISTENT WITH THIS as we are increasingly TRANSFORMED by the RENEWING OF OUR MINDS, we will no longer see the purpose of life as building up what is best, fair-my rights... RATHER our greatest desire is the CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL. What GOD is doing, and how we are part of it.**

- **FASCINATING glimpse of this quickly share... 1 Timothy- instructions paul gives for Timothy in how he teaches, leads.**

1 Timothy 6:1 *All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered.*

- **This gives us crucial view into the perspective of NT, one that helps us understand much of NT teaching about how we live in our culture (READ AGAIN)**
- **Paul is not endorsing slavery! But if you are a slave, your greatest concern is not that you are a slave, but that IN THIS PLACE IN YOUR LIFE, God's name, teaching.. the cause of the gospel.. not be hindered.**
- **THIS IS THEME- as followers of Jesus, life isn't about us. The ABUNDANT life we discussed last time- that Christ gives us- is a life of Purpose in God's kingdom, and that purpose is a SHARED PURPOSE...**
- **THIS IS WHERE PAUL GOES... starts with...**

✠ Our shared purpose of **BECOMING** and **MAKING** Disciples.

Romans 15:14-22 ¹⁴ *I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another.*

- **Who is Paul speaking to? Mostly lower class... For that time, regular, everyday, working class people.**
- **We are ALL called to be disciples... and we are ALL CALLED to be makers of disciples. As God is growing you, maturing you- part of his plan for your life is for YOU to be invested in someone else's life, helping them to grow and mature.**
- **Paul continues, gives us the goal, why this matters!**

¹⁵ *Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me* ¹⁶ *to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

- **Gentiles- US- lives are lived before God... and we are being 'sanctified'- God's goodness being made real in our mind, wills, emotions.**

¹⁷ *Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God.* ¹⁸ *I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—* ¹⁹ *by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.* ²⁰ *It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.* ²¹ *Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."*

²² *This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.*

- **Paul says "I've been wanting to come to Rome, but It's taken me a long time, because God has given me a greater desire to share his Gospel to those who don't know it, so they too may SEE and understand"**
- **THIS WAS PAULS CALLING, and God used him uniquely. BUT IT IS ALSO OUR CALLING, as we express, live out, tell, and build each other up as increasingly mature believers.**

Colossians 1:28-29 *He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.* ²⁹ *To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.*

- **GOD HAS CREATED US ALL DIFFERENTLY! We don't all have the same gifts, talents, abilities.**
- **BUT This isn't just a calling God has given people like Paul- it is a shared calling - given his church!**
- **PAUL CONTINUES...WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE**

† As Disciples of Jesus, we are called together to provide:

- **TANGIBLE** support to God's work and His people

Romans 15:23-29 *But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you, ²⁴ I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. ²⁵ Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's people there. ²⁶ For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem. ²⁷ They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. ²⁸ So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. ²⁹ I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.*

- **Famine in Jerusalem, through his journey Paul was collecting money to take to them, provide relief. By the way, much of the NT teaching of financial generosity is in context of this mission Paul had to support the tangible/physical needs of church in Jerusalem. FOR US, it is a picture that God uses us- our hands, feet, time, talents, and our finances, to build up and support the body.**
- **NOT because of a law that says "you must give", but because it our desire- identity- part of who we are- to share in this purpose of supporting the Body...**

- **SPIRITUAL** support to God's work and His people

Romans 15:30-31 *I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. ³¹ Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord's people there...*

- **Paul has described the work he is doing... he says JOIN ME in the struggle to bring the hope of the gospel by PRAYING for me.**
- **CHURCH! When we are of one heart and mind in the work God is doing through us... when we take the time to set aside our business and consider, PRAY for each other, for GOD'S WORK IN OUR LIVES... this is a powerful thing!**
- **ALSO a picture that prayer, chiefly, in NT is not about asking God to meet our own needs, but praying that God's purposes would be carried out THROUGH our obedience, through our love, through how we live.**
- **CONSIDER! If I am sincerely praying for a friend- brother or sister in Christ- for how God is working in their life, what impact is that going to have on me? GOD! What are you doing in MY LIFE...**
- **END CHAP 15... WE SHARE IN THE**

- The continuing purpose of **REFRESHING** one another

Romans 15:32-33 ³² *so that I may come to you with joy, by God's will, and in your company be refreshed.*

³³ *The God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

- **This is such a promise, and such a calling for the church! We are to be a people who ENCOURAGE each other. Who re-fresh each other. BRING NEW LIFE to each other. TO do this we must be in COMMUNITY, present, relationship with each other.**

Hebrews 10:23-25 *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

† Joined in the struggle

- *As disciples of Jesus, friends, we are joined together in a struggle. Our own lives, families... but much bigger, of God's work to bring his goodness, hope, and life into this world. WE, together, are His plan. NOT BECAUSE of law, guilt, obligation... but because of LOVE. HOPE. JOY. (It time, TJ)*
- *Beautiful picture of this in communion*