



GOD'S VISION FOR A NEW HUMANITY | OVERFLOWING WITH HOPE (36)

May 31, 2026

Romans 15:7-13

PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships
To participate in God's mission to the world

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Discussion Question

- If you could only eat one country's cuisine for the rest of your life, which one would you choose?

WORSHIP 10 MIN

PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

RESPONSIVE PRAYER — Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith,

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand,

And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings,

knowing that suffering produces endurance,

And endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

And hope does not put us to shame,

Because God's love has been poured into our hearts

Through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 15:7-13

⁷Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

⁸For 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, ⁹and 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."*

¹⁰And again it says,

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."

¹¹And again,

*"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples extol him."*

¹²And again Isaiah says,

*"The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope."*

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

BIBLE STUDY Summary**40 MIN**

As part of our ongoing series *God's Vision for a New Humanity*, we were privileged this week to hear Bp. N.T. Wright preach on Romans 15:7-13. To understand what Paul is doing in verse 7, it helps to know that we are picking up a thread that he first laid down in 14:1. There, Paul opened a lengthy pastoral discussion about the “weak” and the “strong” within the Roman church, two groups with differing convictions about diet and calendar observance. Having worked through the theological and relational dimensions of that specific conflict, Paul now returns to where he started, though with a much broader focus. While both the command in 14:1 and the text here in verse 7 are addressed to the whole congregation, the first urges the church to welcome the weaker brother, and the second urges all church members to welcome each other. Paul grounds both of these in a similar theological basis: The weak brother is to be accepted because “God has welcomed him” (14:3), and Christians are also to accept each other just “as Christ has welcomed you” (verse 7). The entire credit for the reconciliation of the Roman community belongs to the one who took the initiative to bring them together (2 Corinthians 5:18-19), and it is on that ground alone that Paul builds his appeal.

This leads Paul into one of the more carefully constructed Christological statements in the letter. Christ's ministry, he argues in verse 8, serves a twofold purpose: first, to confirm God's faithfulness to the covenant promises made to Israel through the patriarchs; and second, to extend God's mercy to the Gentiles. Christ's ministry to the Jews (“the circumcised,” verse 8) was a matter of covenant obligation — the fulfillment of promises God had bound himself by oath to keep. By contrast, his ministry to the Gentiles was pure mercy. While the Old Testament certainly contains promises of the future inclusion of Gentiles among God's people — and indeed the promise to Abraham was that the nations would be blessed through his offspring — God had made no formal covenant with the Gentiles comparable to his covenant with Israel. Further, Paul does not use the past tense here. He says Christ “has become” rather than Christ “became.” His ministry to both groups is not confined to his earthly life or sacrificial death, but continues as its benefits are received by Jew and Gentile alike (cf. Westminster Confession of Faith 8.8). If Christ has welcomed and continues to welcome both groups at such extraordinary cost, even if on different grounds, then the strong and the weak can hardly justify refusing to welcome each other.

Paul then reaches back into the Old Testament to demonstrate that the joint inclusion of Jew and Gentile in the worship of God was never a late revision to the divine plan. He brings together four quotations drawn deliberately across the canon: one from the Pentateuch, one from the Prophets, and two from the Writings, representing all three divisions of the Hebrew Bible. Each quotation holds two elements together: the Gentiles and the worship of God. In the first, David announces his intention to praise God among the Gentiles (Psalm 18:49). In the second, Moses summons the Gentiles to participate in the worship of God (Deuteronomy 32:43). In the third, the Psalmist calls all nations to praise the Lord (Psalm 117:1). Then, in the fourth and final verse, the prophet Isaiah predicts the rise of the Messiah, descended from David, Jesse's son, who will rise to rule the Gentiles and in whom the nations will hope (Isaiah 11:10). These four verses paint the picture of a new humanity that God is forming in Christ — one in which Jews and Gentiles glorify him together, and one that is the destination toward which the whole of Scripture has been moving (Luke 24:44-45).

The passage, and the entire weak/strong exhortation which started back in 14:1, closes with a prayer that gathers up everything Paul has been arguing. He addresses God as the “God of hope,” drawing the title directly from the Isaiah quotation that has just preceded it (verses 12, 13). Paul asks that the God of hope would fill the Roman community — the weak and strong, Jew and Gentile — with the joy and peace that belong to those who believe so that they might overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 14:17). What began as a pastoral dispute about food and calendar observance has been set within the grand narrative of God’s purpose for the nations. The resolution Paul envisions is nothing less than a community so saturated with joy, peace, and hope that it becomes a living foretaste of the new creation, the firstfruits of restored humanity in which every tribe, tongue, and nation will glorify God together (Revelation 7:9-10). The root of Jesse is simultaneously the hope of the nations as well as the only ground on which a divided congregation can learn to receive one another.

1. Looking at the Bible

- Share with the group some key phrases or ideas that stood out to you from the passage.

2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Every passage not only points to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- Look at the four Old Testament passages Paul quotes in verses 9-12. What is the common theme across each of them? What might this tell us about God’s plans?
- In the ancient world, being conquered and ruled by a foreign king often meant oppression and fear, and yet the Isaiah quotation in verse 12 says that when the root of Jesse arises to rule the nations, they will find hope in him. How does Jesus’ style of kingship flip the worldly definition of ruling completely on its head?

3. Looking at our Hearts

- Paul prays for the Church to be filled with “all joy and peace in believing” (verse 13) so that they may abound in hope. When we face conflict in our everyday lives, which of those three things (joy, peace, hope) usually disappears first? Why?

4. Looking at our World

- Think about the people in our culture who represent the opposite of your political, lifestyle, or cultural preferences. What would it cost your pride, your comfort, and/or your convictions to truly welcome someone like that into your life?

PRAYER 15 MIN

Pray for each other: Share any prayer requests you have.

Pray for Central to continue to grow as a church where people from all backgrounds can love each other faithfully.