

What Blesses God, Part 2 - Romans 15:4-6 – July 28th, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part two of a series I've titled; "What Blesses God."
- Before we jump into today's text, there are two things we must know if we're to get anything out of this and apply it into our Christian lives.
- The first take away is, if I seek first to bless God, He in turn will bless me, proportionately to the measure in which I seek ways to bless Him.

- The second take away is, the ways in which I can bless God are not the ways I would think, such that God is blessed by how I treat others.
- Here in lies the problem, my ways are not His ways, and it's evidenced by how I will seek first and foremost the ways for God to bless me.
- Furthermore, my thoughts are not His thoughts, and it's evidenced by how I would never think of blessing God by my treatment of others.

- Enter Romans chapter fifteen, which is a perfect example of how it is that our treatment of others rises to the level of actually blessing God.
- So much so, it seems that God deemed this to be important enough to have the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, devote so much time to it.
- While this may answer "what" blesses God it may not answer for us "why" this blesses God. Why does my treatment of others bless God?

- I'm of the belief that we need look no further than to our own hearts being blessed when our children are treating each other in loving ways.
- Simply put, when my children are loving toward each other, it truly blesses my heart. Conversely when they fight with each other, it's not.
- How much more so is this true for our heavenly Father? When we, as siblings in Christ, honor each other, our heavenly Father is blessed.

- The reason I'm pointing this out is, it will be germane to our understanding of what we're about to see in this chapter that's set before us.
- Namely, that God is both glorified and blessed by how we treat others, and as such I found ten practical ways in which we can do this.
- So, with that as the introduction I believe we are now ready to tackle our text as we study it through the lens of a loving heavenly father.

1. Bearing with others (Verses 1-3)

- Paul says we who are strong should bear with the failings of the weak to build them up, then quoting Psalm 69:9 he uses Christ's example.

2. Unifying among others (Verses 4-6)

- v4 Paul says what was written in the past was to teach us, so that through endurance, and Scriptures encouragement we might have hope.
- v5 He then says, "may the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Jesus."
- v6 Paul sort of takes it a step further saying that it's for the purpose of being with one heart and mouth, such that God the Father is glorified.

- There's a couple of things I want to draw your attention to here in these verses, the first of which is, Paul starts praying for unity in verse 5.
- The reason I point this out is because it would seem to indicate that the only way we as siblings can truly be in unity together is by praying.
- I find it rather interesting that Jesus Who is ultimately our perfect example, would pray to the Father for us as spiritual siblings to be in unity.

John 17:22-23 NIV I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: (23) I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

As one wrote, "And so he prays that the God of endurance and encouragement will give you, together as a united church, a spirit of unity among yourselves. This happens in accord with Christ Jesus because it is the thinking that Jesus exemplified. Those who are in Christ will think like Christ. A church of men and women in Christ will behave like Christ, who did not please Himself. The result will be that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ...This is Paul's great prayer and aim in writing the letter."

Ephesians 4:2-3 NIV Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (3) Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

- The second thing I wish to draw your attention to here in these verses is that this "spirit of unity" will also come by way of the Word of God.
- Notice in verses 4-5 where Paul says that the scriptures were written to teach us this spirit of unity through patience and encouragement.
- In other words, not only do we ask for unity among ourselves vis-à-vis prayer, we learn unity among ourselves vis-à-vis the Word of God.

- I suppose you could say that in verses 4-5 we're told how unity comes, and even the way unity comes, but in verse 6 we're told the "why."
- More specifically, the reason why we ought to be in unity one with the other is because it glorifies God, and as such it's a blessing to God.
- I don't know if we can overstate the paramount importance of how that God is pleased, glorified and blessed when Christians are in unity.

Charles Spurgeon: "Among Christians there must be unity, and especially in Christian families, ...If we are jealous one of another, or use angry language, and quarrelsome words, we cannot glorify God as we ought."

Psalms 133:1 NKJV A Song of Ascents. Of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* For brethren to dwell together in unity!

- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a brief moment, as I think I'd be grossly remiss were I not to address the matter of our "unity at any cost."
- When we endeavor to obtain, and even maintain, unity at the expense of Biblical truth, we will err greatly, and we do so to our own peril.
- Actually, if you'll allow me to take it a step further, I would submit it's under this banner of unity at any cost that the global religion is birthed.

- Suffice it to say that this is not the unity that Jesus is talking about or Paul is writing about, rather, it's the unity that comes from diversity.
- By the way, this is where we get our English word "university." It comes from the two words, unity and diversity. Consider this illustration:
- All the instruments played in a band are different and diverse, yet when in their diversity, they come together in unity they are in harmony.

In closing I'll quote one writer who I think says it best this way, "This is something ...deeper than corporate singing being in tune with one another. It is when groups of humanly incompatible people join in singing God's praise together that the invisible God becomes visible as the one God of all the world, who alone can bring a broken world together under one head, even Christ."