



Sermon Growth Guide

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OVERFLOWING GOSPEL | Romans 15:8-13

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Key Verse: Romans 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"

Big Idea: God's grace and mercy are not limited strictly to certain people. It has always been God's intention to flood the world with the good news of salvation and union with Christ.

Foundations

We are coming to the end of this epistle and we will notice that Paul's emotional approach is developing. He began with a realistic description of sin and our participation in it. Then he describes the good news of salvation that is all the work of Christ. By the time he gets to chapters 9-11, his personal feelings break through as he grieves for his Jewish kin who have rejected the Messiah. Yet, he ends with a word of hope amid his grief.

From chapter 12 on, Paul instructs that believers should present our bodies as "living sacrifices." That is not just rhetoric – it is a description of the risen Jesus. So Paul goes on to declare that the Christian life is characterized by loving like Jesus.

Paul then goes back to his concern for the Jewish people, but this time he is full of praise for how God in Christ has made Jew and Gentile one in him. For not only did God make promises to his chosen people, he also made promises to the Gentiles – to all nations. He declares in verse 8, that God has kept all of those promises. Paul can hardly contain himself as he quotes Hebrew scriptures demonstrating that all along, God had promised to make one family. In the Psalms, historical books and prophets, Paul recounts the divine desire for all. A letter that began with the world's brokenness now has the hope of the redemption and unity found in union with Christ. What can he do except praise God?

Understanding God's Word

Read the following texts: 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 117:11; Isaiah 11:10.

How do you think Paul understands the relationship between Jews and Gentiles? Why do you think this realization leads Paul to overflow in praise?

Applying God's Word

In John Calvin's commentary on Romans 15, he says, "...we ought to cherish one another if we would continue in his bosom. Only thus shall we confirm our calling, that is, if we separate not ourselves from those whom the Lord has bound together." The words at the end are almost nuptial language, describing Christian unity as insoluble as marriage. *How can we live into such unity when the church is so visibly divided?*

Witnessing God's Word

The 2nd – 3rd century Church Father, Tertullian, in his *Apologeticus* 39:7, imagined pagans saying of Christians, "Look how they love each other – they are ready to die for each other." He does not say, "Look how they agree!" This next week, how might you show love to another believer with whom you disagree?"

Will there be enough water to run the city of Colorado Springs? That's something we think about a little, isn't it? The reservoirs are low, the snowpack is light and we are all banking on Super El Nino to come through for us over the winter. It is not hard to see how pre-historic people worshiped mountains. If the mountain doesn't pile up with snow, we don't get enough water. We truly are at the mercy of these weather patterns and shifts—and we trust the Lord for our provision, but it is easy to see pictures of our reservoirs and feel a little panic, isn't it? Scarcity creates panic. The car is running on fumes, just trying to make it to the next station. The phone battery has been on red for hours; I've got to find a charger. I'm getting just enough sleep to make it through the day with a solid cup of coffee, or four or five. We run on empty and running on empty produces a constant low-grade panic.

The same thing happens when we are running low on spiritual resources. What if you had a gauge, a little battery with how charged you are in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Running on red? How about faith? How about hope? What if we found a charger? What if we could run connected to the source and supply, we didn't worry how they were getting spent? What if we could overflow? Not just wring enough drops to barely keep our thirsty souls satisfied, but what if we could overflow with faith, hope and love? We are in Romans 15 in a series called Life Together. Today we talk about an Overflowing Gospel.

It has always been a clear objective in God's redemptive history to overflow the banks of the covenant with the Jewish people and

reach every nation, every people with grace and love and salvation. One of the awesome things about Jesus is how, with him, the grace of God so powerfully channeled in the covenants with Abraham with the Jewish people started lapping over the edges. It got so full it overflowed the banks, flooded the landscape, spilled over into new soil, new fields, new hearts and souls. It happens over and over: the Samaritan Woman at the Well in John 4, the healing of a Roman Centurion's servant in Matthew 8, the Syrophenician Woman in Mark 7 or the Gerasene Demoniac (not his favorite nickname) in the Decapolis in Mark 5. We don't always see how big these events are when we read them. We are used to interacting with lots of different people from lots of different countries and cultures all the time. Colorado Springs is more global than ever with military and schools and ministries bringing people in from all around, and we are used to that. But in Jesus' day it was not so. It was significant for Jesus to reach these outsiders. And in each of these moments there is a subtext, if not an explicit moment, when the Jews—even the disciples—were thinking, sometimes saying, "Hey! This is our deal. This is for us, not them."

So far in Romans we have dealt with the combination of Jewish Background Believers and Roman Background Believers or Gentiles. One body. One team. We have dealt with people resistant to eating meat sacrificed to idols and those who are confident that meat is meat wherever it was resourced. One body. One team. Insiders and outsiders? No, one body, one team. Today, again, Paul is saying, "This is one church now, one mission from God, one flow of God's

grace, and it is more inclusive than you thought.” Jesus has done what is necessary for the grace of God to break the banks and reach the nations. “For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed.”

(Romans 15:8) Accept one another, it says just above this verse. Take one another into your side. Even Roman believers, even Gentile believers, even Jewish background believers, all believers, because Jesus has made this unity possible.

For the sake of both groups, Paul runs a short reminder lesson here. This work of God has always been about reaching all nations, all people, not just you, not just us. Jesus became a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth to fulfill the promises made to the forefathers. Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. The hopes and prophecies that Jesus fulfills were given through the Jewish people. Jesus is Jewish. And what God did through the covenant with the Jewish people, Abraham and his descendants, Jesus fulfilled and overflowed to all people. So, Paul says, don’t forget this was always about the Gentiles too. “...and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written: ‘Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name.’ Again, it says, ‘Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people.’” (Romans 15:9-10) Gentiles. That’s shorthand for “everyone else.” In these two verses, Paul has already quoted 2 Samuel 22, Psalm 18 and Deuteronomy 32 all saying the Gentiles will be a part of this. “And again, ‘Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him.’” (Romans 15:11) Remember, Roman Church, you were all always a part

of this. God always had the everyone else in mind. God always had you in mind. One church. That from Psalm 117. Then Isaiah. “And again, Isaiah says, ‘The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope.’” (Romans 15:12) Who’s the Root of Jesse? Jesse the father of David from whose line comes, eventually, Jesus the Messiah. This ministry is not just for the river Israel, the line of Abraham, but in him the Gentiles—the everyone else—will hope. In this quick pile of citations, Paul has drawn from the three major streams of the Hebrew Scriptures: Torah, the first five books, the Prophets and what’s called the Writings. It all says the same. Jesus is for all people.

The channel of God’s grace was always meant to overflow. Go all the way back to Abraham. God tapped on his shoulder and said “it’s time to go; you’re with me, and here’s the promise”: “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12:2-3) All peoples. All nations. All ethnicities. From the covenant with Abraham through the Prophet Isaiah to the moment when outsiders came to Jesus it is clear God’s purpose in forming a community and drawing a people to himself was to use that people to reach all people. “I’m going to use this people to reach all people.” Loop back up to verse 11. “And again, ‘Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him.’” (Romans 15:11) Let all peoples extol him. None are exempt, disqualified, left out, excluded...all people need Jesus. Jesus is for all people. And of all people, there are those who know God and those who do not. We who know him are meant to be overflowing with gospel grace to those who don’t, reaching every people we can think to reach. Where have we allowed the channels of God’s grace to get stopped up?

It is World Communion Sunday. Around the globe Christians gather at the table of the Lord. The table extends without limits or edges. Languages don't limit it. Borders don't limit it. Cultural backgrounds don't limit it. Over the banks it spills. All people. We are a gospel ministry, this church. We want to be a part of seeing those who don't know Jesus come to know Jesus. That's the heart of our missions partnerships. Our partners in Mongolia send us pictures [PICS] of kids coming to Christ in Ulaanbaatar through Young Life or through Cru college ministry and we celebrate with them. They send missionaries to countries we can't reach. Our brothers and sisters in Cairo share stories on our zoom prayer meetings of people coming to know Jesus. Our partners in Guatemala use small business development as a chance to talk about Jesus. It's about sharing Jesus. It's about a personal relationship with Jesus. The channels of grace have slipped the banks, the water of grace is spreading, down every road, every gulley, every stream in the desert—it's about people knowing Jesus. Let the gospel overflow.

What if I run out? What if my reserves run dry? "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." (Romans 15:13) How's your hope meter? I would like a personal reserve. I'd like a reservoir please. Don't you think about it that way? I want God to give me a personal reserve of hope so I don't run out. It doesn't work like that. But you can run plugged in. When I was a boy, my dad had a spring dug on his land down

by Westcliffe. Not a well, just a spring. With a spring, you can't just fill up a pool, you need it to keep flowing. It's the flow that keeps it flowing, it's the downflow, the outpouring that pulls the water from its deep reserves. Where are you overflowing hope? Where are you overflowing grace for the everyone else? If you know where it's coming from, you won't worry about running out.

We are part of a church now, the Body of Christ. Maybe today you come brimming with hope. Maybe today you come with just enough to get you through the morning. Borrow some. Share some. We are the Body of Christ. One church, and we were all meant to be here. There are others meant to be here who are not here yet. Can you be part of an overflow of hope to reach them, an overflow of love, an overflow of peace, an overflow of grace? Don't worry about running out. You are connected to the source.