



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?"