



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

“Why Jesus”

October 4, 2020

Romans 15:8-13

Clint Pressley

⁸ For 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, ⁹ and 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.”*

¹⁰ And again it is said,

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”

¹¹ And again,

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

¹² And again Isaiah says,

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

¹³ May 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.

(Pastor prays)

One of the great things about the South is that we have idioms for almost everything. I found that to be especially true for the almost 8 years I lived in southwest Mississippi. For example, to

emphasis that a favorite cow had died, you might say, “that cow is graveyard dead.” Or if someone was especially dressed up you might say he was “Sunday casket sharp” ... and maybe even an open casket! If Mr. Harry Wells was telling me a story that seemed particularly hard to believe, to emphasize its truthfulness, Harry would say, “Preacher, If I tell you a rooster dips snuff, then check under its wing,” or “If I tell you a rooster can plow, then hook him up!” Those idioms are exclamation points, put there to strengthen the argument being made. Here in this passage, Paul does this with an idiom of sorts. “For I tell you” – That’s a rhetorical device signifying that what follows is an especially solemn and doctrinal declaration to the Christian church about the greatness of the Lord Jesus and the beauty of this mixed church...(a declaration of) how Jesus has saved and sustains this interracial, interethnic church and how He alone brings the differing people together to create one new race whose unifying and glorious theme is that Jesus is Lord! And in that simple theme there is real and life-giving hope.

So, for you, all my tired and burdened and fearful friends, all my confused and sinful and guilty friends, all my stressed out and worn out brothers and sisters, Jesus has come and in Him there is always hope.

This passage points over and over to Jesus, the burden bearer and life giver! And in this last great push, Paul wants us to hear why we preach and trust and depend on Jesus.

Jesus Came to Save and Sustain Sinners Just Like You and Me

Jesus came to show God’s truthfulness

Paul is going to address both races in this mixed church, and in verse 8 he begins with the Jews. Look what he says: *⁸ For 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.* Jesus became a servant, *Diakonos*, to the circumcised. The Jews are God’s covenant people and He did so to display that He was the long-awaited Messiah hinted at in Genesis 3:15 and pointed at in Genesis 22 and symbolized in the sacrifices of the temple. Verse 8 says He came to confirm that what the religious people had always heard about a redeemer was true. He is the one that was symbolized by David, idealized by Daniel, and realized by the prophets. And He did that to show God’s truthfulness and fulfill God’s promises. And that beautiful, doctrinal truth has devotional applications. Allow me to offer up just a few.

God's truth is truth. Truth is not subjective. It is not *your* truth and not what is true for *you*. We have a revealed, absolute truth in the Bible that tells us that the sin that is within us has separated us from God to such a degree that we need a savior. And that Savior is Jesus who lived perfectly, died on the cross in place of sinners; God raised Him from the dead, and anyone who believes that will be saved. The Bible gives us that truth. God is in perfect order with reality and you can set your life by Him.

God can be trusted. Even when it feels lonely or you feel forgotten or life feels ruined, God's word reminds us that He's not done. God's not still writing your story! He's written it, He's just not done reading it to you yet!

Our God is the triune God. You have God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. There is great security in that when you are a Christian. Here's what you can know: God the Father has *planned* your salvation; God the Son has *accomplished* your salvation and God the Spirit has *applied* your salvation. And that cord of three strands will not be broken.

God saves those who think they are already saved. Paul is writing to the Jewish Christians who, before they became Christians, already thought they were saved. But they were relying on their own righteousness, not realizing that before God their righteousness is like filthy rags. God saves young men and women who come up in the church and know the church lingo and have good manners and obey their parents but have never given their lives to Christ. Have you given yourself, your *good* self to Jesus? God saves those who think they are already saved. Jesus came to show God's truthfulness. That truth is found at the cross of Jesus.

Jesus came to display God's mercy

Let's read verses 8 and 9 together and pay real close attention to the first part of 9 and especially the words "glorify" and "mercy." ⁸ *For 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,* ⁹ *and 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."* Paul is reasoning that two opposed people groups make up the totality of Christ's church. Jesus came as Messiah for the Jews and mercy for the Gentiles – that's anyone who isn't Jewish, me and you. And we are saved by mercy. Mercy is the kind of twin sister of Grace. Mercy is guilt removed, sin forgiven, past erased, filthiness cleansed and debt paid off. Mercy is a pride killer and worship creator.

Mercy is a capital M monogrammed on your sinful heart. It's a brand in the shape of a cross that says you belong to Jesus. How do you know you have received mercy? Well the text tells us. Let's read it *forward* but understand it *backward*. Mercy leads to glorifying God. Glorify means weightiness, hurt, depression, sadness and confusion on one side and see the glory of God on the other. And the weight of His glory will tip the scales and lighten your load. And the fulcrum of that scale is the cross of Jesus where God's wrath is alchemized into God's mercy. Jesus came to show God's truthfulness. Jesus came to display God's mercy.

Jesus came to create joyful worshippers

Now to see this we've got to pan out and see what Paul does in verses 9-12. To prove his point, like any good preacher, Paul quotes the Bible. First he quotes Psalm 18 in verse 9, Deuteronomy 32 in verse 10, Psalm 117 in verse 11, and Isaiah 11 in verse 12. Stay in the wide angle here. In quoting from various parts of the Old Testament, Paul is doing something. The Old Testament is divided into large sections of Law, History, Psalms and Prophets. And Paul takes a systematic progression through every section of the Old Testament, telling us that Christ is the fulfilment of the Law, He is Lord of History, He is the subject of the Psalms and He is the point of the Prophets. But that ain't all he's saying. Come down narrow with me for a second. Go through and pick out the words and look how worship of God in Christ is defined. ⁹*and 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."*

¹⁰*And again it is said,*

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."

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*"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
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even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope.”*

Verse 9 says “praise and sing.” That’s the happy response to God’s grace and that’s the reflection of mercy given and life made better. Maya Angelou said she knows why the caged bird sings. Well I know why the burdened Christian sings, and it’s because he has new life in Christ and Him crucified.

Verse 10 says “rejoice.” Be glad. Be happy. Make merry. Gentiles, me and you, can do this when we reflect on the mercy of God. It’s why our singing ought to be less dignified and more demonstrative. You’ve won something better than the lottery! You got a rebate on your life!

In verse 11 we see again “praise and extol.” That’s praise that drank a Red Bull! It’s to enthusiastically give thanks to God for what He’s done for us in Jesus. Verse 12 says, in Him will the Gentiles hope. Hope is that great Christian word that pressed Selah Helms to write, “Do the next thing” about the life and hope of Elizabeth Elliot. Hope. And that’s where Paul picks up in verse 13 for my last point.

Jesus came to fill up empty people

Verse 13 would be worth an entire sermon by going through each phrase to pick out every beautiful tree in this spectacular mini-forest. But let’s use it like Paul wrote it, as a prayer wish. Look how it starts and look how it ends. It starts with the source of life and ends with the purpose of life. It starts with the God of hope and ends abounding in hope. From the God of hope comes all joy, all peace through believing, by the power of the Holy Spirit. So in Christ, we can abound in hope.

I want to abound in hope! I want to have hope over and above! Paul takes us not to the God of peace or joy or love but to the God of hope. And his prayer is that God would work in us through Christ that we would abound in hope. He wants us to go to the “hope restaurant” and eat our fill of hope and have so much left over that we come home with doggie bags full of hope. And that hope pushes out all the bad emotions, all the discouragement and depression and fear and anxiety and grumbling and bitterness.

And when the God of hope gives us abounding hope, He does so in the person of Jesus and His life, death and resurrection.

Jesus came to save and sustain sinners like you and me. Jesus came to show God's truthfulness. Jesus came to display God's mercy. Jesus came to create joyful worshippers. Jesus came to fill up empty people. He does that at the cross. Come to Jesus and have hope.

(Pastor prays)