

MESSAGE OUTLINE

True Self / False Self – Living from God's Love Living Authentically in Community

Romans 15:1-6 (NIV)

¹ We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. ³ For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." ⁴ For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

⁵ May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTES:

Insults

In Romans 15:3, the word translated "insults" (ὀνειδισμοί) refers to reproach, public scorn meant to strip someone of honor. The Hebrew word in Psalm 69, *cherpah*, carries the same meaning: disgrace, humiliation, the loss of social standing. In the ancient honor/shame world, honor was one's public worth, and shame was being diminished before others. This is about public dishonor.

Groaning

Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. -Romans 8:23-26

Groaning is a red thread in our experience and across the Bible, but Paul goes further into a mystery that keeps faith credible for me: God groans (Romans 8:23-26). And this means that our groaning is part of a divine labor, a holy travail at the heart of reality, what Kierkegaard called a covenant of tears with all who suffer. Somehow our groaning – our embodied revolt against destruction and separation – is a wordless trace of our immortal, indestructible togetherness with God (2 Corinthians 5:1-4).

Endurance and Encouragement

We are called to be strong companions and clear mirrors to one another, to seek those who reflect with compassion and a keen eye on how we are doing, whether we seem centered or off course ... we need the nourishing company of others to create the circle needed for growth, freedom and healing. -Wayne Muller

NOTES:

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

February 15, 2026 - Living Authentically in Community - Romans 15:1-6

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message outline, resources and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Before beginning your time in the passage this week, consider an ice breaker question or share with one another your plans for serving on Community Serve Day on March 1st.

CONNECT WITH GOD (Choose the below practice (**crafted for this series**) or select a practice from another week.)

Holding Opposites (Adapted from David Richo, *The Five Things We Cannot Change*)
This practice of "Holding Opposites" can help us as we explore the themes of *True Self/False Self* and the reality of both our Light and our Shadow, as we are held in the grace of Christ.

- Take a few deep, slow breaths and ground yourself in the awareness of God with you.
- Hold both hands out, cupped, palms upward, and imagine them holding these opposites:
 - the Light of you: hopeful desires to be like Christ, things I want to do but may not do, our "best selves."
 - the Shadow of you: actions that bring us despair & take us away from God and our True Self, the things I do but might not want to do, the things about us we want to hide.
- Feel the equal "weight" of both, since our hands are empty.
- Become aware that God is holding you and both the Light and Shadow in grace. Spend a few moments resting in that grace. Take your time.
- Consider if there is one small action or response that God is calling you to in this awareness of God's grace and the reality of Light and Shadow in you.
- Relax your arms and take a few more deep, slow breaths, grounding yourself in the awareness of God with you. As you are ready, return your attention to the group.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Alone and Together: Pray that the Holy Spirit illuminate and guide you as you meditate on scripture and reflect on the passage and message.

- **Alone:** Read Romans 15:1-6 in the NIV.
 - o After the first reading, pause in stillness.
 - o Read a second time, listening for one word or image that most speaks to you as you hear the words of scripture. Pause again for quiet reflection.

- **Together**

- o Read the passage a final time together.
- o Share your word or image, without additional conversation or explanation.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the sermon outline.
- How does Romans 15 look different or similar to other Romans passages we've read through this series?
- What does Paul mean by "the strong" and "the weak" in this passage?
- How does Paul describe the responsibility of the strong toward the weak?
- How might the true self/false self series help you integrate this passage into your life?
- How would you describe Paul's vision for community?
- What does Romans 15:1-6 teach you about life together in your life and context today?
- What are some practical take-aways for how to live with one another today?
- Considering what it means to live from our true self, how might we be called to serve those facing injustice?
- What are some ways your small group or SBPC might embody the call to bear with one another?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: explore the quote below, in connection with Romans and our sermon series.

"To be in Christ is to be a living exegesis of the narrative of Christ, a new performance of the original drama of exaltation following humiliation, of humiliation as the voluntary renunciation of rights and selfish gain in order to serve and obey."

-Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*

PRAYER

Alone: Slow down after your group's conversations and spend some time in reflection. In your journal, write a prayer that reflects the themes of Romans 15:1-6 and the series of True Self/False Self. Some ideas could be:

- To help you bear with others in love and patience
- To strengthen unity and hope in your community
- To give you courage to see both your "light" and "shadow" as held by God.

Together: If comfortable, share your prayers with one another as a way to close your time together.