

Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Session 15

Romans 15:13-29

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Keener, Romans, Session 15, Romans 15:13-29, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Craig Keener **explains** Romans 15:13-33, focusing on **Paul's prayer** for the Roman church, emphasizing **hope, joy, and peace** rooted in faith. Keener **connects** Paul's prayer to recurring themes in Romans, particularly the **importance of faith** and the **power of the Holy Spirit**. He also **discusses** Paul's missionary journeys and his **emphasis on ethnic reconciliation**, using personal anecdotes to illustrate the significance of bridging cultural divides. Finally, he **highlights** Paul's boasting about his missionary work and its connection to **miracles and signs**, emphasizing the role of these in spreading the gospel.

2. 25 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Keener, Romans, Session 15 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Romans).



Keener_Romans_Session15.mp3

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Craig Keener's Lecture 15 on Romans 15:13-33:

Briefing Document: Dr. Craig Keener on Romans 15:13-33

Introduction:

This document summarizes Dr. Craig Keener's lecture on Romans 15:13-33, focusing on key themes and insights he provides regarding this section of Paul's letter. Keener emphasizes the importance of this later portion of Romans, often overshadowed by the earlier chapters. He explores Paul's prayer and blessings, his missionary zeal, and his vision for ethnic reconciliation, all while drawing connections to broader theological concepts found throughout Romans and the rest of Scripture.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. The Importance of Hope:

- Keener highlights "hope" as a major theme in Romans, second only to Psalms and Isaiah in its prominence. He stresses that Biblical hope is not merely wishing but rather *expectation* and *waiting on God*.
- He traces the theme of hope through Romans, citing examples like Abraham's hope (4:18), the hope in God's glory through tribulations (5), creation's hope for liberation (8:20), and the idea of being saved in hope for the future (8:24-25). He also notes Paul's prayer that they will "abound in hope" (15:13), which stems from his quotation of Isaiah 11:10 (15:12) where "in him the Gentiles will hope."
- Keener states that this emphasis on hope would have been particularly relevant for the Roman church, and remains essential for us today.

1. Joy, Peace, and Believing:

- Paul's prayer in 15:13 for the Roman believers to be filled with "joy and peace as you believe" is a central theme, echoing similar ideas found in many parts of Romans. Keener notes that Paul is praying for them to understand and appropriate the things he has been saying to them.
- He connects "joy" to themes of rejoicing in hope (12:12, 5:2-4), rejoicing with others (12:15), and the kingdom of God being joy in the Holy Spirit (14:17).

- "Peace" is also identified as a major theme, citing numerous references such as 1:7, 2:10, 3:17, 5:1, 8:6, 12:18, 14:17, and 14:19. Keener also mentions how "the God of peace" will appear later in Romans (15:33, 16:20). He connects the concept of peace with unity amongst believers.
- The theme of "believing" is also explored in depth. Keener provides numerous references (e.g., 1:5, 8, 12, 16-17, 3:3, 22, 25-31, 4:3, 5:9, 11-14, 16-20, 24, 5:1-2, 9:30, 32-33, 10:4, 6, 8-11, 14, 16-17, 11:20, 12:3, 6, 13:11, 14:1, 2, 22-23, and 16:26). He points out that many of these passages discuss justification by faith, while others highlight how God apportions faith for different gifts and applying faith rightly.

1. **The Power of the Spirit:**

- Keener emphasizes the connection between hope and the Holy Spirit, noting that "hope will not make us ashamed... because the Holy Spirit is in us" (referring to 5:5).
- He explores how Paul often connects power and the Spirit, referencing how the Spirit raised Jesus (1:4), his reliance on the Spirit and power during his preaching (1 Cor. 2:4), and how the Spirit empowers believers (Eph 3:16, 1 Thess 1:5).
- He highlights the significance of "signs and wonders in the power of the Spirit" (15:19), which he sees as not just a miraculous sign but as a demonstration of God's power associated with mission.

1. **Paul's Ministry and Boldness:**

- Keener notes that this section of Romans, particularly 15:14-22, displays strong emotional appeal (pathos) from Paul, similar to his opening in 1:8-15.
- Paul acknowledges the Roman believers' "goodness" and "knowledge," contrasting this with the "unrighteousness" and "evils" he described in chapter one (1:18-32). This is an encouragement and affirmation, and also a form of gentle teaching, where he says they are able to admonish each other (a term meaning "instruct").
- He uses the concept of "boldness" to describe how he has written, contrasting it with "flattery". Keener stresses Paul's ministry is done with both truth and sensitivity.

- Paul's ministry is also described as a priestly offering, serving the Gentiles and offering them as a gift "acceptable... made holy by the Holy Spirit" (15:16), connecting to the idea of presenting ourselves as living sacrifices in 12:1.

1. **Ethnic Reconciliation:**

- Keener emphasizes Paul's ministry to the Gentiles as a key example of ethnic reconciliation, comparing it to Jesus's ministry to both Jews and Gentiles.
- He highlights Paul's upcoming collection for the church in Jerusalem from the Gentile churches as a practical demonstration of this reconciliation.
- Keener makes the important connection that if God overcomes the Jewish/Gentile barrier, he calls us to overcome all barriers that humans put up. Keener provides several personal anecdotes regarding his own experiences with racism to further underscore this point.

1. **Paul's Apostolic Mission:**

- Paul's boasting in 15:17-21 is justified because he's boasting in what Christ has accomplished through him among the Gentiles, not in himself. Paul never boasts beyond his sphere of ministry.
- His goal is to bring about the "obedience of the Gentiles" (15:18), which involves both confession of faith and lived obedience.
- Keener emphasizes the importance of signs and wonders in Paul's mission, linking them to the breaking of new ground for the gospel, which connects to the Old Testament accounts of Moses and the Exodus, where God worked miracles and wonders. He notes that these things also occur in the book of Acts. This power is not limited to apostles.
- He shares examples of these things from his research, such as the Korean revival of 1907, the experience in Nicari Suriname, and a story from Watchman Nee. Keener notes that healings and exorcisms were a significant cause of conversion in the 4th century and in more recent times.

1. **Paul's Travel Plans & Missionary Focus**

- Paul's ministry stretched from Jerusalem to Illyricum. Illyricum was on the western coast of the Balkan Peninsula or eastern coast of the Adriatic. Paul most likely visited Illyricum during the period between 2 Corinthians 2:13 and Acts 20:1, before he wrote Romans.

- Paul's focus is on breaking new ground, not building on others' foundations. He is driven by a desire to reach unevangelized regions, and is not seeking to claim the work of others. This is why he hasn't already come to Rome (15:22).
- He is planning a trip to Spain, which was often considered the end of the earth, highlighting his passion for spreading the gospel to all regions.
- Keener highlights that Paul understands the need to break new ground in different geographic regions, among different peoples, as well as the need for ongoing ministries in established places.

1. **The Urgency of the Great Commission:**

- Keener passionately concludes with a call for a renewed focus on the Great Commission.
- He expresses concern about the amount of time Christians spend on entertainment rather than on seeking God and serving others.
- He stresses the importance of the heart of God, that God wants to serve and love people. We should immerse ourselves in the things of God not out of obligation but out of love.
- He calls for a generation that is “sold out to Jesus” and actively seeks to fulfill the command to make disciples of all nations. He believes that we have an opportunity to see the second coming if this is achieved.

Quotes:

- "Hope is not wishing. Biblical hope... it's not talking about wishing. It's talking more about expectation, and waiting on God."
- "As you are growing in faith, you'll be filled with joy and peace."
- "It's not only a confession of faith, but it's also obedience. It's lived out in word and in deed."
- "If God brings together Jew and Gentile in Christ's body, surmounting a barrier that he himself had established in history, how much more does he summon us to surmount all other cultural barriers that we humans have established?"
- "A really honorable person doesn't have to stoop to boasting. They let somebody else boast about them."

- "The leading cause of conversion in the 4th century...healings and exorcisms in the name of Jesus."
- "We need to listen to what God has for each of us, and minister whatever is placed before us, whatever we can do, but some of us, at least, will be sent."
- "May we be finally the generation where the good news of the kingdom has been preached among all peoples and the end will come and we will see our Lord return."

Conclusion:

Dr. Keener's lecture provides a rich exploration of Romans 15:13-33, revealing key themes and ideas that are not just important for understanding this specific passage, but are crucial for our understanding of the Christian life. He emphasizes the importance of hope, joy, peace, and faith, the power of the Holy Spirit, the urgency of the Great Commission, and the need to break down ethnic and other barriers. His insights challenge believers to a deeper commitment to God and his mission in the world.

4. Romans Study Guide: Session 15, Romans 15:13-29

Romans 15:13-33 Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences based on the provided lecture material.

1. According to Dr. Keener, what is the key distinction between biblical hope and wishing?
2. What three elements does Paul pray that the Romans will be filled with in Romans 15:13?
3. How does Paul use the concept of being "full" in Romans 15:14, and how does this relate to earlier ideas presented in the letter?
4. What is the significance of Paul's use of the word "admonish" in Romans 15:14, in comparison to stronger terms like "rebuke?"
5. What does Paul mean when he states that he has written to the Roman church "boldly?"
6. How does Paul portray his ministry to the Gentiles in Romans 15:16?
7. What is the central principle Dr. Keener derives from Paul's focus on Jew/Gentile reconciliation?
8. What evidence does Dr. Keener provide that suggests Paul's mission is accompanied by signs and wonders?
9. What are the two key reasons Dr. Keener suggests for why Paul has been delayed from visiting the church in Rome?
10. What is significant about Paul's plan to travel to Spain, and how does this relate to his mission?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Biblical hope, as explained by Dr. Keener drawing on Moltmann, is not merely wishing but rather an expectation and waiting on God; it is a confident anticipation of what God will do, rather than a passive desire. This involves faith and trust in God's promises.

2. Paul prays that the Romans will be filled with all joy, peace, and belief as they grow in their faith and relationship with God, drawing on common themes throughout the letter.
3. Paul contrasts the Romans being full of goodness and knowledge in 15:14 with the pagans being full of unrighteousness in chapter 1, highlighting the transformation brought about by faith in Christ and distinguishing between believers and non-believers.
4. The word "admonish" is used instead of stronger terms to show a gentler form of communication, implying that the Roman believers are capable of instructing each other and that he's reminding them of what they already should know. It highlights his sensitive approach.
5. Paul's boldness refers to his directness and truthfulness, a way of speaking that contrasts with flattery. It means he is straightforward in sharing the truth, not trying to please people.
6. Paul portrays his ministry to the Gentiles as a priestly service, presenting them as an offering to God that has been made holy by the Holy Spirit, relating to the concept of living sacrifices presented earlier in Romans.
7. The central principle is that if God can reconcile Jews and Gentiles, surmounting a historically established barrier, then Christians are called to overcome all other cultural barriers that humans have created, highlighting the expansive nature of reconciliation in Christ.
8. Dr. Keener cites Romans 15:19, 2 Corinthians 12:12, and other biblical examples, and the common pairing of power and the Spirit, and then offers several contemporary examples of how God's power is still used today through miraculous signs and wonders to break ground for the Gospel message.
9. Paul has been delayed due to his mission to reach unevangelized regions, to lay foundations where the Gospel has not yet been preached, and because he has been focused on finishing his work in current locations.
10. Paul's plan to travel to Spain is significant because it represents his desire to break new ground and carry the gospel to the furthest reaches of the known world at the time. The ancient world viewed Spain as the end of the earth in the west, representing a major expansion of Paul's mission.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer these essay questions with reference to specific points in the lecture material.

1. Analyze the significance of hope, joy, and peace as recurring themes in the book of Romans and explain how Paul connects these themes to the role of the Holy Spirit.
2. Discuss the tension between boldness and gentleness in Paul's communication style, and explain how he navigates this tension in his letter to the Romans.
3. Examine the concept of ethnic reconciliation as presented in the lecture, and discuss its implications for contemporary Christian life and practice.
4. Explore how the lecture's discussion of the power of signs and wonders in Paul's ministry connects to other New Testament accounts and the ongoing mission of the church.
5. Assess Paul's missionary strategy in Romans 15:13-33, considering his desire to break new ground and his vision for spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Biblical Hope:** Not merely wishing, but an expectation, confident anticipation, and waiting on God's promises and action.
- **Admonish:** A gentle form of instruction, implying a reminder of what is already known.
- **Boldness:** A direct and truthful way of speaking, without flattery, in order to communicate honestly.
- **Grace:** Unmerited favor given by God, often related to gifts or empowerment for ministry.
- **Priestly Ministry:** Paul's description of his work, offering the Gentiles to God as a sacred gift.
- **Ethnic Reconciliation:** The bringing together of different ethnic groups in Christ, overcoming cultural barriers.
- **Signs and Wonders:** Miraculous acts of God, often accompanying groundbreaking ministry to confirm the message of the Gospel.
- **Indigenous Church:** A church that is native to a particular region and culture, capable of ministering to its own people.
- **Breaking New Ground:** The act of taking the Gospel message to regions and peoples who have not yet heard it.
- **Illyricum:** A region on the western coast of the Balkan Peninsula, representing the furthest point of Paul's missionary work by the time he wrote Romans.

5. FAQs on Keener, Romans, Session 15, Romans 15:13-29, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions About Romans 15:13-33

1. **What is the significance of "hope" in Paul's prayer and throughout the book of Romans, and how does it differ from mere wishing?** Biblical hope, particularly in Romans, is not passive wishing but rather an active expectation and confident waiting on God. It's rooted in past experiences of God's faithfulness (like Abraham's faith and the tribulation that leads to proven character in Romans 5) and looks forward to the future fulfillment of God's promises. It's a core theme, intertwined with the work of the Holy Spirit. This hope is not something we muster up on our own but rather something God imparts.
2. **How does Paul connect joy, peace, and faith, and why are these themes so prominent in Romans?** Paul links joy and peace to the act of believing and growing in faith. These are not merely feelings but rather results of a relationship with God. He references them throughout Romans and sees them as characteristics of the Kingdom of God, brought about through the Holy Spirit. They're recurring themes that emphasize the transformative power of the gospel and its effect on believers.
3. **What is the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to hope and power in Romans 15, according to Paul's teaching?** The Holy Spirit empowers believers, and this is connected to both hope and the working of miracles. The Spirit ensures that our hope will not be put to shame. The Spirit's power is also linked to the resurrection, echoing Jewish traditions, and to the spreading of the gospel message through signs and wonders. Paul frequently connects the Spirit to the gospel's power to transform lives.
4. **How does Paul's assessment of the Roman believers in Romans 15:14 contrast with his earlier assessment of gentiles in Romans 1?** In Romans 1, Paul speaks of the unrighteousness and wickedness of those who do not know God. However, in Romans 15:14, he acknowledges the Roman believers are "full of goodness and knowledge". This contrast highlights the transformative power of the gospel, showing how God's grace changes people and empowers them to live in righteousness and unity with one another. Paul is not just being kind to his audience; he sees genuine transformation in their lives.

5. **What does it mean that Paul ministers to the Gentiles through grace, and how does he describe his role?** Paul views his ministry as a gift of grace, something he is called to do because God enabled him to do so. He sees himself as a priest, offering the Gentiles to God as an acceptable offering, made holy by the Holy Spirit. This emphasizes that his work is not about human effort, but is divine service done by divine enablement. It connects back to the concept of believers being living sacrifices.
6. **How does the theme of ethnic reconciliation connect with Paul's mission, and what broader implications does it have?** Paul's ministry is deeply connected to the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. If God brought together these two groups that had a historical barrier between them, this serves as a model for how to surmount all other cultural barriers that humans have established. Paul believed that God's call for unity transcended ethnic, cultural, and even political divisions and calls believers to a deeper unity rooted in their shared faith.
7. **Why does Paul discuss his boasting and the geographical extent of his ministry in Romans 15?** Paul rarely boasts, but when he does, it's for a purpose. In Romans 15, he boasts about what Christ has accomplished through him, primarily in reaching the Gentiles. He outlines the geographical spread of his ministry, from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and describes his intention to go to Spain, representing the edge of the known world in his time. This shows the mission's ground breaking nature and his zeal to fulfill the Great Commission. He isn't boasting beyond his sphere of ministry but to validate his apostolic calling and the gospel's reach.
8. **What does Paul's desire to reach unevangelized areas reveal about his approach to missions and the urgency he feels?** Paul prioritizes breaking new ground for the gospel over building on others' foundations. This emphasis on reaching unevangelized regions highlights the urgency and scope of his ministry and a call for the church to focus on those who have yet to hear the gospel. His mission reflects a conviction that the fullness of the Gentiles needs to come in before Christ's return, and that this requires dedicated and strategic action. It is also a call for believers to prioritize the things of God and to seek his kingdom above all else.