

Topic: Together With One Voice.

Text: Romans 15:5-6 --"May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Proposition: Those who would worship God acceptably must first live in a manner acceptable to him; and this can be done only with God's help.

Dates written: March 3, 1962.

Dates and places used:

Mar. 4, 1962, Montrose,  
Colo., 11 a.m.

Dec 5, 1965 - Denver + Steamboat, Colo.

Apr. 20, 1974 Oakland Calif. P

for [unclear]

together with the other

of steadfastness and encouragement  
grant you to live in every day  
with one another, in accord with  
Great Jesus, that together you may  
with one voice glorify the God and  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

those who would worship  
of acceptably - first live in a  
manner acceptable to him, and this  
can be done only with God's help.

Notes written: March 3, 1962.

Pages and places read:

1962-1963  
1963-1964  
1964-1965  
1965-1966  
1966-1967  
1967-1968  
1968-1969  
1969-1970  
1970-1971  
1971-1972  
1972-1973  
1973-1974  
1974-1975  
1975-1976  
1976-1977  
1977-1978  
1978-1979  
1979-1980  
1980-1981  
1981-1982  
1982-1983  
1983-1984  
1984-1985  
1985-1986  
1986-1987  
1987-1988  
1988-1989  
1989-1990  
1990-1991  
1991-1992  
1992-1993  
1993-1994  
1994-1995  
1995-1996  
1996-1997  
1997-1998  
1998-1999  
1999-2000  
2000-2001  
2001-2002  
2002-2003  
2003-2004  
2004-2005  
2005-2006  
2006-2007  
2007-2008  
2008-2009  
2009-2010  
2010-2011  
2011-2012  
2012-2013



Introduction:

1. Perhaps the best-loved New Testament passage outside of the four gospels is the 13th chapter of I Corinthians. That passage is Paul's beautiful psalm to love, which has these beautiful statements, as presented in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible:

"Love is patient and kind;... love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends .... So faith, hope, love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love."

2. In our Scripture for today, Romans 15:1-13, Paul is still talking of "love," but here he speaks in less poetic terms, and is more specific and practical. He writes about a particular aspect of love: about such harmony and concord among Christians in their worship that they seem to praise God with one voice. Two verses of this Scripture in particular present this concept, verses 5 & 6, which will serve as our text.

Introduction:

1. Perhaps the best-loved New Testament passage outside of the four gospels is the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians. That passage is Paul's beautiful epistle to love, which has these beautiful statements, as I read in the revised Standard Version of the Bible:

"Love is patient and kind... Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends... Of faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love."

2. In our lifetime for today, Romans 13:1-13, Paul is still talking of "love," but here he speaks in less poetic terms, and is more specific and practical. He writes about a particular aspect of love: about each member and neighbor. He writes in their terms, and that they see to please God with one voice. Two verses of this chapter in particular present this concept, verses 8 & 9, which will serve as our text.



3. In an age when disputes and divisions seem common to almost every area of life, any note of harmony, concord and togetherness seems doubly welcome. ~~Someone has suggested~~ that the phenomenal growth in distribution of Together, the monthly Methodist family magazine, is due as much to its name as to its excellent, interesting and appealing articles and art. Unity, harmony and togetherness are words with strong appeal for us. It is our intent today, here, to seek some ~~exudes~~ guidance and enlightenment in how worthwhile unity and togetherness may be achieved with-in the framework of Christian faith. We will be guided in this by today's text.

I. It is important to recognize God as the source of steadfastness and encouragement if any difficult, worthwhile Christian goal is to be achieved.

1. In times of frustration, grief, disappointment and failure it is natural to become discouraged, as most of us know by experience.

2. In his book, "A Faith for

... in the very different and  
 divisions seem common to almost every  
 area of life, any note of harmony,  
 concord and togetherness seems  
 doubly welcome. ...  
 that the general growth in unity  
 nation of togetherness, the unity  
 the national unity, is as  
 much to the name as to its excellent  
 interesting and so-called  
 and unity, harmony and togetherness  
 less the words with strong appeal for  
 us. It is our intent today, here, to  
 seek some ~~xxxxx~~ guidance and en-  
 lightenment in how to achieve unity  
 and togetherness may be achieved with  
 in the framework of Christian faith.  
 We will be guided in this by today's  
 text.

1. It is important to recognize God  
as the source of steadfastness and  
encouragement in any difficult work  
while Christian goal is to be con-  
quered.

1. In times of frustration, grief,  
 disappointment and failure it is  
 natural to become discouraged, as  
 most of us know by experience.

2. In his book, "The Way for



Tough Times," Harry Emerson Fosdick gave a good illustration of why confusion and discouragement are so common. He wrote: "As in the old story of Sinbad the Sailor, anchoring his boat on what seemed an island, but finding it to be instead a great beast of the sea, that went charging off with him, boat and all, across the tossing ocean, so our trusted stabilities fail, and disturbed societies and nations drag us with them in turmoil."

(Gerald Kennedy, A Second Readers Notebook, Harper, 1959, #273, p.79).

3. Somehow, it does seem that we don't know where we are or where we are going. I was in a meeting <sup>once</sup> one whole day ~~recently~~, in which the whole time was spent discussing the danger of war, the need for effective disarmament, and suggestions as to how it might be achieved. We all are, or should be, concerned with this problem of the arms race, for it threatens to destroy us, in more ways than one. The danger of a nuclear war is ~~perhaps~~ the most spectacular threat to our security, and ~~perhaps currently~~ <sup>once was</sup> the most widespread cause for fear, uncertainty, confus-

...gave a good illustration of why con-  
...and encouragement are as  
...common. He wrote: "a in the  
...of which the sailor, emerald  
...his boat on what seemed an island,  
...but finding it to be instead a great  
...best of the sea, had vent charging  
...off with his boat and all, across  
...the foaming ocean, so our trusted  
...established fall, and disturbed  
...societies and nations drag us with  
...them in turmoil."

World's Energy, Second Edition  
Book, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955

...3. Someday, it does seem that we  
...don't know where we are or where we  
...are going. I was in a meeting one  
...whole day recently, in which the  
...whole time was spent discussing the  
...danger of war, the need for effec-  
...tive disarmament, and suggestions as  
...to how it might be achieved. The all-  
...are, or should be, concerned with  
...this problem of the same case, for  
...it threatens to destroy us, in more  
...ways than one. The danger of a nuc-  
...lear war is perhaps the most spectac-  
...ular threat to our security, and  
...certainly the most widespread  
...cause for fear, uncertainty, confu-



ion, and discouragement, but it is by no means the only one. You have, ~~I feel sure,~~ your own list of things that seem uncertain, your list of causes for discouragement; and I have mine. No matter how hard we try to overcome these things, no matter how much others try to help us overcome them, they still seem to "eat on us." We need some source of encouragement beyond the scope of human beings.

4. <sup>You</sup> We have such a source. He is God. Paul described him, in the words of our text, as "the God of steadfastness and encouragement." He is the God of encouragement, because He is so steadfast, so dependable, so sure.

5. In George Johnstone Jeffrey's book, "The Sacrament Table," there is the story of a missionary in Canada whose area of travel was so big that he could only make visits to any settlement at long intervals of time. His last act in one visit to a settler's home was to teach a small invalid boy the text, "The Lord is my shepherd," and he did it by the method of a word to each finger,

... and encouragement, but it is  
 by no means the only one. You have  
 I feel sure, your own list of things  
 that seem to you, your list of  
 cases for discussion; and I  
 have mine. The matter now is  
 to overcome these things, no matter  
 how much others try to help us over-  
 come them, they will seem to lead  
 on us. We need some source of  
 encouragement beyond the scope of  
 human beings.

... we have such a source. It is  
 God. Paul described him, in the  
 words of our text, as "the God of  
 steadfastness and encouragement," be-  
 cause that is steadfast, so depen-  
 dable, so sure.

5. In George Johnston Jeffrey's  
 book, "The Settlement Table," there  
 is the story of a missionary in  
 Canada whose eyes of travel was so  
 dim that he could only make visits  
 to any settlement at long intervals  
 of time. His last set in one visit  
 to a settlement was to teach a  
 small family boy the text, "The Lord  
 is my strength," and he did it by  
 the method of a word to each finger,



saying finally, and suiting action to word, "Remember, always to hold on to the fourth finger -- the Lord is my shepherd." When he came back to that home two years later, the boy was not there. He had died in the dark of a winter night; and, said the mother "We found him in the morning with his hands outside the coverlet, his left hand clasped around the fourth finger of the right."

(Kennedy, Ibid., #454, p.132).

Like this little boy at the moment of death, in all sorts of difficult and unusual situations, many people have found God to be the one sure thing left. Like the mother of the boy, people who know the steadfast God find encouragement to overcome their grief and bitterness, and to enter again into a normal fellowship with other people.

6. To know that God is reliable, or steadfast, is to want to please him. The Christian sees in Christ a pattern for doing just that. But as you or I try to "follow Christ," we find ourselves slipping again and again, and doing things which are very un-christlike. Then it is that

... saying finally, and exiting action to  
word, "Therefore, always to hold on to  
the fourth finger -- the word is  
there." When he came back to that  
some two years later, the boy was no  
more. He had died in the dark of  
a later night, and, said the mother  
"I found him in the morning with his  
hands outside the coverslet, his left  
and clasped around the fourth finger  
of the right."

(1922, 1923)

... like this little boy at the non-  
out of seeing in all sorts of diffi-  
cult and unusual situations, many  
people have found God to be the one  
sure thing left. Like the mother of  
the boy, people who know the story  
and God find encouragement and over-  
come their grief and bitterness, and  
to enter again into a normal fellow-  
ship with other people.

... to worship God is reliable,  
or steadfast, is to want to please  
him. The Christian sees in Christ  
a pattern for doing just that. But  
as you or I try to follow Christ,  
we find ourselves slipping again and  
again, and doing things which are very  
un-Christian. Then it is that



II. We must recognize that we are so imperfect that it is only by God's grant, or gift, that we can at all approach accord with Christ's spirit, EVEN IN THE LEAST.

1. ~~We see Paul's words of our text in context, with the writer's meaning, when we pick out these words "May..God...grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus...". Any success we might have in our own lives in imitating Christ is only with God's permission, will, and help, Paul seems to mean. Of course, we believe that God offers such help to all people, but that people must want and try to work strongly toward it.~~ <sup>SAID IN OUR</sup> ~~work~~ <sup>FIND THIS HELP.</sup>

2. ~~Recently~~ a woman was talking with a friend whom she had not seen f or several years. At one point in the conversation she said that a short time previously she ~~had felt~~ <sup>was</sup> so bitter and discouraged that she felt the only way to get away from this feeling was to go out and get "stinking drunk," so as to sink into complete oblivion for a while. The cause of her black despair was that her brother, to whom she had been very close, had been sent to the

1. The first recognition that we are  
so limited, that it is only by God's  
grace, of His, that we can  
approach even the "white" world.

2. I have found that it is not  
that in our own, with the "white"  
world, that we are to find the  
"way... God...". It is in our  
harmony with one another, in accord  
with Christ Jesus... Any success  
we might have in our own lives in  
imitating Christ is only with God's  
commission, will, and help, that  
seems to mean, of course, we believe  
that God offers each help to all  
people, but that people just want  
and try to get it.

3. A woman was talking  
with a friend whom she had not seen  
for several years. At one point in  
the conversation she said that a short  
time previously she had been  
deter and discouraged that she felt  
the only way to get away from this  
feeling was to go out and get  
"retaining brand", so as to sink into  
a complete oblivion for a while. The  
cause of her black despair was that  
her brother, to whom she had been  
very close, had been sent to the



penitentiary for writing bad checks. She said that the thing that kept her from turning to drink was that she found herself saying silently, "I'm a Christian. I'm a leader in my ~~ex~~ church. Christ wouldn't want me to do this. With his help, I'm not." She said that for several days she had to keep telling herself this, to keep praying, to keep struggling, but that finally the temptation to get away from everything by getting drunk did pass away. She said it was only because of God's mercy that it worked out this way.

3. We do have many examples from everyday life, and much assurance from Scripture, that this is the way it is. We are imperfect. We can never be like Jesus. But with God's help, ~~which is a gift from him,~~ in some ways we can approach something, even ~~though only a little bit,~~ of the spirit of Christ.

III. As we come to recognize and know God's steadfastness and encouragement, as through His mercy we approach Christ's spirit, we find that we are increasingly in harmony and together with others of similar outlook.

consistency for writing had checks.  
 she said that the thing that she  
 found herself saying all the time  
 a Christian, I'm a leader in my  
 church, I don't want to  
 be this, I don't want  
 she said that for several days she  
 had to keep telling herself this,  
 to keep praying, to keep struggling,  
 but that finally the temptation to  
 get away from everything by getting  
 drunk did pass away. She said it  
 was only because of God's mercy that  
 it worked out this way.

3. We do have many examples from  
 everyday life, and much assurance from  
 Scripture, that this is the way it  
 is. We are imperfect. We can never  
 be like Jesus. But with God's help,  
 there is a gift of grace, in some  
 ways we can approach something, even  
 though it's a little bit of the  
 spirit of Christ.

4. As we come to recognize and  
 know God's steadfastness and assurance  
 that, as through His mercy we approach  
 Christ's spirit, we find that we are  
 necessarily in harmony and together  
 with others of similar outlook.



1. During World War II a young man was a pilot of a bomber, a flying fortress. In this military assignment he flew several missions in which obliteration bombing was carried out on cities so that many innocent people became war victims. After the war he continued his education, graduated and entered a profession of a highly technical nature. Even though in this job he was doing things of use for others, he was not satisfied. He kept thinking of the horrors of the war. He felt that he must do something <sup>ELSE</sup> with his life to help make up for some of the misery which ~~he~~ ~~felt~~ he had caused others in his bomber-pilot days. He concluded that the ministry was the profession in which he could best make an imprint on the minds and souls of others, and perhaps thereby plant some seeds of peace. When he ~~he~~ left his profession to enter seminary, and when later he entered the ministry, he found many people who understood his motivation and admired him for it. He ~~had~~ found a harmony and a togetherness in the church which he realized only when he ~~had~~ first found within his innerself some encouragement that, seemingly was from God. As he

THE BELIEVED

1. During World War II a young man was a pilot of a bomber, a B-29 Superfortress. In this military assignment he flew several missions in which his plane was shot down and he was captured. He was held in a prisoner of war camp in Japan. He became an aviator, a pilot, and he continued his education, graduated and entered a profession of a highly technical nature. Even though in this job he was doing things of use for others, he was not satisfied. He kept thinking of the horrors of the war. He felt that he must do something with his life to help make up for some of the misery which he felt he had caused others in his bomber-pilot days. He concluded that the ministry was the profession in which he could best make an impact on the minds and souls of others, and began to study the Bible and to pray. He decided to enter seminary, and when later he entered the ministry, he found many people who understood his motivation and admired him for it. He had found a hobby and a vocation in the church which he realized only when he was first found within his inner self some encouragement that seemingly was from God. He



sought accord with the spirit of Christ, ~~as best he could, he also~~ found accord with the spirit of Christ, at least to some extent, and this lead him to greater harmony with and nearness to others of similar faith.

2. Undoubtedly, One reason that so many strong, lifetime friendships are made between people and families who become acquainted with each other at church is because ~~here~~ ~~are~~ ~~folks~~ ~~who~~ ~~through~~ ~~different,~~ ~~personal~~ ~~experiences~~ have come to ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~and~~ similar conclusions about the things that count in life. Through Christ they are in basic harmony and ~~fo~~getherness even before they meet.

3. Here in our church, as in many other churches of our land, we sing the great hymns of faith, we have periods of meditation, times for public and private prayer, activities of a social nature, and service projects. We find in ~~these~~ ~~things~~ some or all of these activities what we need, each for himself: sometimes a serious opportunity for Christian service, sometimes recreation and pleasure, sometimes a real

1. In this and other records with the spirit of  
 Christ, as well as in other records, we find  
 found record with the spirit of  
 Christ, at least to some extent, and  
 that lead him to greater glory  
 and nearness to others of simi-  
 lar faith.

2. In fact, one reason that  
 so many strong, lifelong friends  
 are made between people and  
 families who become acquainted with  
 each other in church is because here  
 the love of God is the basis of  
 personal experience and love to  
 one another and of their conclusions about  
 the things that count in life. For  
 Christ says in basic harmony and  
 forgiveness even before they meet.

3. Here in our church, as in many  
 other churches of our land, we sing  
 the great hymns of faith, we  
 have periods of meditation, times  
 for public and private prayer, so-  
 cial activities of a social nature, and  
 service projects. We find in many  
 things some of all of these activities  
 that we need, each for himself,  
 sometimes a service of ordinary for  
 Christian service, sometimes a ser-  
 vice of pleasure, sometimes a ser-



spiritual experience. In these functions we are, ~~as it were~~, giving our praise to God, together with one voice.

4. An encouraging fact of our ~~time~~ times is the increasing communication and joint activities among the various Christian churches and groups. ~~This is further evidence that~~ <sup>MANY</sup> people of varying Christian experience are realizing that they are "together with one voice" with ~~all~~ other Christians.

#### Conclusion:

1. We have been guided today by the Christian thinking of St. Paul, a s presented in Romans 15:1-13.

2. In this, and from life situations, we have been reminded that it is important to recognize God as the source of the steadfastness and encouragement which we need and can find in difficult times.

3. We have recognized that of ourselves we are so imperfect that often we can not accept the encouragement and stability which God offers. We have remembered that God does

... In these  
... giving  
... together with  
... one voice.

... an encouraging fact of our  
... the increasing communication  
... and joint activities among the various  
... Christian churches and groups.  
... to the fact that people of  
... varying Christian experience are  
... realizing that they are "together  
... with one voice" with all other  
... Christians.

Conclusion:

1. ... have been guided today by  
... the Christian thinking of St. Paul,  
... as presented in Thomas 13:1-13.

2. ... and from life situa-  
... tions, we have been reminded that it  
... is important to recognize God as the  
... source of the steadfastness and en-  
... couragement which we need and can  
... find in difficult times.

3. ... have recognized that of  
... ourselves we are so imperfect that  
... often we can not accept the encourage-  
... ment and stability which God offers.  
... We have remembered that God does



offer us the example of Christ's spirit, and that He will help us approach nearer and nearer to it, if we are willing to make our own best effort in this direction.

4. We have said that as we come nearerr and nearer to Christ's spirit we find that we are increasingly in harmony with others of similar outPook.

5. This leads us to our con-clusion, which was stated long ago by Paul: "...the God of steadfastness and encouragement get you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

6. To say it another way, those who would worship God acceptably together must first live in a manner acceptable to him, as best they can; and this can be done only with God's help, through "the imitation of Christ."

of the

... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...

of the

... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...

... the ... of ...

... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...

... the ... of ...

... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...



## PRAYER

God, help us to recognize our limitations. In times of despair this is not hard to do, but in success and victory it is sometimes difficult. We are ~~dependent~~ dependent on thee for the only sure things of life; and for all our encouragement. Help us to seek more diligently Thy mind, by trying to achieve more of the spirit of Christ. Grant that together we may realize that which we ask, and that together we may praise thee with sincerity.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

IN 1962, 1963, 1964  
with 1965  
with 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970  
with 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975  
with 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980  
with 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985  
with 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990  
with 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995  
with 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000  
with 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005  
with 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010  
with 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015  
with 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020  
with 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025