

1) Because Christ did not please himself but bore reproach for others, Paul commands the strong to build up the weak, so that the church may be united in giving glory to God (Romans 15:1-6).

i) The strong are obliged to edify their neighbour rather than please themselves (Romans 15:1-2).

¹ Now we who are strong [δυνατοί, able, mighty] have an obligation [PAI, to owe, financially, indebted]

1.) to bear [PAN, carry, take up] the weaknesses [a scruple of conscience, infirmity] of those without strength [δυνατοί, able, mighty, possible],

2.) [P] and [I] not to please [PAN, to be agreeable, to seek to be agreeable] ourselves.

[I] ² Each one of us is to please [PAM] his neighbour [close by, fellow] [for his good], [to build him up [οικοδομήν, edification]].

ii) The pattern for this obligation is Christ, who did not please Himself, but took the insults meant for others (Romans 15:3).

[G] ³ For [I] even a.) Christ did not please [AAI] himself.

b.) [Adv] On the contrary, as it is written [RMI],

The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me. [Psalm 69:9]

iii) Christ's pattern gives us hope that through God given endurance and unity we may glorify God (Romans 15:4-6).

[G] ⁴ For whatever was written in the past [API]

[C] was written [API] [for our instruction],

[E] so that we may have [PAS] hope [confident expectation] 1.) [through endurance [patience, steadfast]]

2.) [S] and [through the encouragement] from the Scriptures.

[C] ⁵ Now may the God who gives

1.) endurance

2.) [S] and encouragement

grant you [AAO, prayer or wish] to live in harmony [be of the same mind] [with one another], [according to Christ Jesus],

[E] ⁶ so that you may glorify [PAS] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ [with one mind [one accord] and one voice].

2) Because Christ confirmed God's promises to the Jews, Paul demonstrates from the Old Testament that Gentiles were always intended to join in praise, and therefore prays that the Spirit would fill the church with the hope that overflows from this reality (Romans 15:7-13).

i) Christ's ministry to the Jews confirms God's promises, ensuring that Gentiles will glorify Him for His mercy (Romans 15:7-9a).

[I] ⁷ Therefore [I] welcome [PMM, receive, take unto] one another,

[I] just as Christ also welcomed [AMI] you, [to the glory of God].

[G] ⁸ For I say [PAI] that Christ became [RMN] a servant [διάκονον] of the circumcised [on behalf of God's truth],
to confirm [AAN] the promises to the fathers,

[P] ⁹ and so that Gentiles [ἔθνη] may glorify [AAN] God [for his mercy].

ii) This unified praise was God's intention all along, demonstrated throughout the Old Testament (Romans 15:9b-12).

1.) As it is written [AMI],

Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,

and I will sing praise to your name. [Deuteronomy 32:43]

2.) ¹⁰ Again it says [PAI],

Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people! [Psalm 18:49]

2.) ¹¹ And again,

Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;

let all the peoples praise him! [Psalm 117:1]

3.) ¹² And again, Isaiah says [PAI],

The root of Jesse will appear,

the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;

the Gentiles will hope in him. [Isaiah 11:10]

iii) So Paul's prayer is that God would fill His people so that they may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

¹³ Now may the God of hope [C] fill [AAO, prayer or wisg] you with all ^{1.)} joy ^{2.)} and peace as you believe [PAN],

[E] so that you may overflow [PAN] with hope by the power [δυνάμει] of the Holy Spirit.

Sermon preparation worksheet

Passage: Romans 15:1-13

1. How has the author organised this passage? a) *An outline*, b) *Tools*, c) *The emphasis*.

- a) 1) Because Christ did not please himself but bore reproach for others, Paul commands the strong to build up the weak, so that the church may be united in giving glory to God (Romans 15:1-6).
- i) The strong are obliged to edify their neighbour rather than please themselves (Romans 15:1-2).
 - ii) The pattern for this obligation is Christ, who did not please Himself, but took the insults meant for others (Romans 15:3).
 - iii) Christ's pattern gives us hope that through God given endurance and unity we may glorify God (Romans 15:4-6).
- 2) Because Christ confirmed God's promises to the Jews, Paul demonstrates from the Old Testament that Gentiles were always intended to join in praise, and therefore prays that the Spirit would fill the church with the hope that overflows from this reality (Romans 15:7-13).
- i) Christ's ministry to the Jews confirms God's promises, ensuring that Gentiles will glorify Him for His mercy (Romans 15:7-9a).
 - ii) This unified praise was God's intention all along, demonstrated throughout the Old Testament (Romans 15:9b-12).
 - iii) So Paul's prayer is that God would fill His people so that they may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).
- b) I identified Romans 15:1-13 as discourse, and used grammatical syntax analysis. I took note of repeated words (strength/power, and hope) which helped me identify the outline. Verbs (especially the imperatives, please/welcome, and the optatives, grant/may) which helped me understand the tone and identify the outline. Conjunctions (especially the δε in Romans 15:1, 13, and the inference, Διὸ, in Romans 15:7), which helped me identify the outline. The Διὸ in Romans 17:7, pivots from exhortation to please one another to application to glorify God together.
- c) The church's unity in bearing with the weak is grounded in Christ's mission to unite Jews and Gentiles in praise, promised in Scripture and empowered by the Spirit.

2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage? a) *Literary*, b) *Historical*, c) *Cultural*, d) *Biblical*.

- a) In Romans 14:1-23, Paul addresses conflict between the weak Jewish believers and the strong Gentile believers. In Romans 15:14-33, Paul shifts to his missionary ambitions to preach where Christ is not named. This matters because Paul isn't command generic harmony, but the specific reconciliation of Jewish and Gentile believers, grounding Christ's saving work.
- b) In the church in Rome, Jewish Christians, likely including those expelled under Claudius and recently returned, were scrupulous about the law. In the church in Rome, Gentile Christians, now dominant, were proud of their freedom in Christ. This led to mutual contempt. This matters because Paul commands concrete reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles, grounded by the mission of Christ.
- c) Greco-Roman culture of the first century was built on a system of patronage, honour, and shame. The strong looked down on the weak, using their position for their own benefit and pleasure. This matters because it highlights how counter-cultural the command to live in harmony is. A radical, shame-defying act of service. Unity is forged not by following cultural norms, but by rejecting them in favour of the pattern of Christ.
- d) 1) Romans 15:3 quotes Psalm 69:9. David suffered intense opposition because of his zeal for God's house and was insulted by enemies who ultimately hated God. Paul applies this messianic psalm to Christ grounding the command to bear the weak in Christ's pattern of self-denial.
- 2) Romans 15:9 quotes Deuteronomy 32:43. God will vindicate His people and extend His salvation to the nations who will rejoice with them. Paul quotes from the Law to demonstrate Gentile inclusion was always God's intention.
- 3) Romans 15:10-11 quotes Psalm 18:49 and Psalm 117:1. David vows to praise God from among the nations. Paul quotes from the writings to demonstrate that global praise for God was always God's intention.
- 4) Romans 15:12 quotes Isaiah 11:10. Isaiah prophesies about the Root of Jesse, who stands as a signal for the nations who seek Him. Paul quotes from the prophetic books to show that Gentile hope in the person of Jesus Christ was always God's intention.

3. What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?

Christ's inclusion of both Jew and Gentile compels us to glorify God together in harmony.

4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

The gospel announces that Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, has fulfilled what the Law, Writings, and Prophets anticipated. That through his self-denying ministry He has confirmed God's promises to Israel and extended mercy to the Gentiles. The result is a worshipping community of Jews and Gentiles which glorifies God together with one voice.

5. What is the main point you will argue to your audience?

Christ's welcome enables our worship.

6. What applications will you make? a) *To believers*, b) *To unbelievers*.

- a) We are to actively welcome into our hearts and fellowship fellow believers whom we are naturally inclined to avoid or look down upon. We can do this by identifying one such person and intentionally inviting them to share a meal or coffee, with the goal learning how Christ is at work in them.
- b) You are to cease from every attempt to make yourself acceptable to God through your own efforts or goodness. You can do this right now by admitting to God that you have been trying to earn His favour, and receive the mercy that Christ secured for you.

7. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? a) *Sermon outline*, b) *Sermon title*.

- b) How we can glorify God together despite our differences
- a) 1) Christ's pattern of self-denial for weak people like you (Romans 15:1-6).
- 2) Christ's purpose to unite all people like us (Romans 15:7-13).

Pray

Read Romans 15:1-13

¹ Now we who are strong have an obligation to bear the weaknesses of those without strength, and not to please ourselves. ² Each one of us is to please his neighbour for his good, to build him up. ³ For even Christ did not please himself. On the contrary, as it is written, The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me. ⁴ For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures. ⁵ Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one mind and one voice.

⁷ Therefore welcome one another, just as Christ also welcomed you, to the glory of God. ⁸ For I say that Christ became a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises to the fathers, ⁹ and so that Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and I will sing praise to your name. ¹⁰ Again it says, Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people! ¹¹ And again, Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples praise him! ¹² And again, Isaiah says, The root of Jesse will appear, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; the Gentiles will hope in him. ¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Introduction

A lion does not carry a lamb. A lion devours a lamb. That is the way of the world. The strong consume the weak. They please themselves. They use their power for their comfort. Their honour. Their pleasure.

But imagine a Roman Colosseum. A lion paces. A lamb trembles. The crowd roars for blood. Now imagine the lion lies down. And lifts the lamb onto his back. And carries him to safety.

Absurd! Impossible! Yet that is exactly what our King has done. He did not please Himself. He bore the insults meant for you. He carried the weakness you could not carry. He welcomed you when you deserved the death.

And because He welcomed you, you can welcome others. That is the gospel. That is the argument of this text. **Christ's welcome enables our worship.**

We will see this in two movements. First, Christ's pattern of self-denial for weak people like you. Second, Christ's purpose to unite all people like us. Let us begin with the pattern.

1) Christ's pattern of self-denial for weak people like you (Romans 15:1-6).

Paul draws a line in the sand. Two groups. One strong. And the other weak. The strong understand their Christian liberty. An idol is nothing. They eat a pork chop with a clear conscience. They have freedom. The weak are bound by scruple. The same meat feels tainted. They fear dishonouring Christ. So they abstain. And watch the strong with suspicion.

¹ Now we who are strong have an obligation to bear the weaknesses of those without strength, and not to please ourselves. ² Each one of us is to please his neighbour for his good, to build him up. Obligation is a debt. The strong owe something. They don't owe anyone an explanation of their rights. But they must bear the weaknesses of others. They must carry it. Take it up. But note, not as a burden you tolerate. Carry them as a person you love. The goal is not to just endure the weak. It is to edify him. Build him up. Romans believed the strong got to please themselves. They used their power for their own comfort. Their own honour. Their own pleasure. But the way of Christ is different.

³ For even Christ did not please himself. Think on that. The Son of God. The one who made all things. The one eternally delighted in the Father's presence. Jesus Christ did not please himself.

On the contrary, as it is written, The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me. Paul reaches back to Psalm 69. David is a shadow. Christ is the substance. David suffered for his zeal for God's house. Christ suffered for the sins of God's people. All the insults hurled at God by all sinful men. The blasphemy. The contempt. All land on His Son. Every curse you deserved. Every slight your sin provoked. It fell on Him. Because He did not please himself. He pleased the Father by saving you.

⁴ For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures. The Old Testament is not a relic. The Old Testament is a reservoir. Every psalm, every prophecy, every promise. All of it was written to teach you. To steady you. To encourage you. To instruct you, so that you may not lose hope.

⁵ Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one mind and one voice. Paul prays. He knows we cannot do this on our own. So he asks the God to give what he commands. Harmony. Not uniformity. Harmony. Different notes, one song. One mind. One voice. Strong and weak together. Jew and Gentile together. Glorifying God together.

Think of a father carrying his child through a storm. The child is weak. The wind is fierce. The father does not hand his son an umbrella and lecture him

on how to walk. He lifts the little boy. And wraps him in his own coat. He takes the rain on his back. The child arrives dry because the father arrives wet. That is bearing weakness. That is what Christ does for you. And that is what you are to do for one another.

Christ did not please himself but bore reproach for others. And so Paul commands the strong to build up the weak. So that the church may be united in giving glory to God. Christ's inclusion of both Jew and Gentile compels us to glorify God together in harmony.

And that inclusion is not accidental. It is purposeful. Christ did not just set a pattern. He secured a people. Which brings us to our second point: Christ's purpose to unite all people like us.

2) Christ's purpose to unite all people like us (Romans 15:7-13).

⁷ Therefore welcome one another, just as Christ also welcomed you, to the glory of God. Therefore. Paul gathers up everything. Christ bore reproach. Scripture gave hope. God granted endurance. And now, therefore, welcome. Not tolerate. Not endure from a distance. Welcome. Receive. Take into your fellowship. Fully. Undeservedly. And here is the standard, just as Christ also welcomed you. Think of your own welcome. You were not strong. You were not deserving. You were not a prize. You were weak. You were His enemy. And yet Christ welcomed you. Not cautiously. Not conditionally. Not from a distance. He received you fully. He bore your weakness. Absorbed your reproach. Took your wrath. Therefore, because of that welcome, welcome one another. To the glory of God.

⁸ For I say that Christ became a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises to the fathers, ⁹ and so that Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy. Watch what Paul does. He takes two divided groups and shows them one Saviour. Christ became a servant of the circumcised. He was born a Jew. He lived under the Law. He preached to Israel. He fulfilled righteousness. Why? on behalf of God's truth. God made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He swore by His own name. Christ came to say, God keeps His word. His promises are, Yes! And, Amen! The covenant is confirmed. But the purpose does not stop with Israel. It expands. It overflows. So that Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy. We who were not His people become His people. We who had no claim receive mercy. Not because we earned it. Not because we deserved it. But because God is faithful to His promises. And that faithfulness spills over the banks of Israel to flood the nations. Jews have the promises confirmed. Gentiles have mercy extended. Neither can boast. Both must bow. Together.

Now Paul calls witnesses. From the Law. The Writings. The Prophets. One after another, they step forward to testify. As it is written, Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and I will sing praise to your name. Moses sang this in Deuteronomy 32. It looks beyond Israel to the Gentiles who hear and rejoice. ¹⁰

Again it says, Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people! David sang this in Psalm 18. A victorious king, delivered from his enemies, sings praise. And the Gentiles echo back. ¹¹ And again, Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples praise him! Psalm 117. The shortest psalm. With the widest vision. All peoples. All Gentiles. All praise. ¹² And again, Isaiah says, The root of Jesse will appear, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; the Gentiles will hope in him. Isaiah 11. The stump of Jesse. A shoot from the fallen tree. A ruler. Not for Israel only. For Gentiles too. Four witnesses. One verdict. God always intended to gather the nations. This is not Paul's invention. This is God's revelation. The Law saw it. The Writings celebrated it. The Prophets longed for it. And now Christ has come.

¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul prays again. He has commanded. He has demonstrated. Now he prays. Because you cannot do this on your own. The God of hope. He is not just a God who gives hope. He is the source. The fountain. The origin. Fill you. Not a splash. Not a taste. A filling. All joy. All peace. As you believe. Not as you achieve. Not as you perform. As you believe. And the result? Overflow. Abundance. Hope spilling over. Not contained. Not measured. Not controlled. Spilling over. By the power of the Holy Spirit. This is not self-help. This is supernatural. The Spirit takes the joy and peace of the gospel and pours them out until you cannot hold them in.

Think of a glass under a running tap. The water flows. The glass fills. It reaches the brim. And then, if you keep pouring, it overflows. Water everywhere. You cannot stop it. You cannot contain it. That is the Spirit's power producing hope. Joy and peace flood your life. Your spouse. Your children. Your neighbours. The weak brother. The strong brother. The one you used to avoid. The God of hope fills. And you overflow.

Because Christ confirmed God's promises to the Jews, Paul demonstrates from the Old Testament that Gentiles were always intended to join in praise. And therefore prays that the Spirit would fill the church with the hope that overflows from this reality. Christ's inclusion of both Jew and Gentile compels us to glorify God together in harmony.

Not manufactured harmony. Revealed harmony. Purchased harmony. Which brings us to the gospel itself.

Connect to the gospel

Do you see what Paul has done? He has taken two divided groups. The strong. And the weak. Jew. And Gentile. And he has shown them one glorious reality. Christ. Christ did not please Himself. Christ welcomed you. Christ became a servant. Christ confirmed the promises. Christ extended mercy. All of it. Everything points to Jesus.

Without the gospel, this passage is merely moral instruction. Be nice to one another. Tolerate differences. Get along. And you cannot. You cannot manufacture harmony by self-effort. You cannot sustain biblical unity by human willpower. The flesh fails. Always.

The gospel announces something done. Something finished. Something wondrous.

The gospel proclaims that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. And He has fulfilled what the Law anticipated. Moses saw this day and sang. The Writings celebrated this day and rejoiced. The Prophets longed for this day and spoke. Now, the Root of Jesse has appeared. Now, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah has risen to rule. Not with an iron sceptre over subjugated nations. With a servant's towel wrapped around His waist, welcoming sinners as His friends.

Consider His self-denying ministry. He did not please Himself. He left the glory of heaven above. The worship of angels. The Father's uninterrupted presence. For what? To confirm promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God swore to bless. Jesus came to secure that blessing. Every promise, *Yes!* Every promise, *Amen!* For Israel. And for you.

And in that confirming, He extended mercy. Mercy to Gentiles. Mercy to us who were not His people. Mercy to those who had no claim. No birthright. No covenant. No hope. He absorbed the insults. He bore the reproach. He took the wrath. For the weak. For the nations. For you.

He died. The suffering servant. The promise keeper became the sin bearer. The Root of Jesse was cut off. Buried in the ground. But on the third day, He rose. Vindicated by the Father. Exalted as King. Seated as Lord.

The result? A worshiping community. Jews and Gentiles. Strong and weak. One mind. One voice. Glorifying God together. Not a dream. Not a distant hope. A reality purchased by blood. Sealed by the Spirit. Gathered together to glorify God.

Jesus's welcome enables our worship.

That is the gospel. That is the ground beneath every command. That is the fuel for every application.

Now. Now we must respond.

Believers

Who is that person? The one you avoid. The one you tolerate from a distance. The one whose name appears on your phone, and you hope they do not leave a voicemail. You know why. They are difficult. They are different. They vote the other way. They parent too loosely or too tightly. Their convictions annoy you. Their conscience binds them, whereas you are free. And you? You are strong. You are right. You are justified in your distance.

But Jesus welcomed you. Behold your pattern. He did not please Himself. He bore reproach. For weak people. For you. And His welcome was not cautious. Not conditional. Not from a distance. He received you fully. Undeservedly. To the glory of God. Therefore, welcome one another.

Identify your one. The one believer you naturally avoid. One you look down upon. One whose weaknesses irritate you. And invite them. Not to a committee meeting. Not to a Bible study. A meal. A coffee. A chair at your table. And when you sit together, do not defend your liberty. Do not correct their conscience. Learn how Jesus is at work in them. Discover His grace in their story. Behold His image in theirs.

This is not mere tolerance. This is an active welcome. Not a lecture. Not a project. A person. A brother. A sister. Welcomed. Because Jesus welcomed you.

Unbelievers

You have been trying. Trying to be good. Trying to be kind. You do not cheat. You do not steal. You believe in God, after a fashion. And you hope. You hope it is enough. You hope He notices your efforts. You hope your good outweighs your bad. You hope He welcomes you because you have tried so hard.

But you are exhausted. Are you not? The trying never ends. The standard never lowers. The account never balances. And deep down, you know. You know your best days do not erase your worst. Your goodness is not goodness enough. Not for a holy God. Not for the God before whom you will stand.

Cease. Cease from every attempt. Cease from every effort. Cease from every hope placed in your own two hands.

Behold Jesus. He did not please Himself. He bore reproach. He absorbed wrath. He took the insults meant for you. And in that bearing, He secured mercy. Mercy, you cannot earn. Mercy, you cannot achieve. Mercy, you can only receive.

So admit it. Right now. Admit to God that you have been trying. Admit you have been striving. Admit your efforts fall short. And receive. Receive the welcome Jesus secured. Receive the mercy He purchased. Receive the rest He offers.

Not by trying. By trusting. Not by effort. By receiving. **Jesus's welcome enables your worship.** Will you receive it?

Conclusion

Back to the Colosseum. Back to the Lion and the lamb. Do you see the Lion now? He carries the lamb. Not because the lamb is strong. Because the Lion is. He bore the weakness. He absorbed the insults. He did not please Himself. That is the pattern. Jesus's pattern. For weak people like you.

And do you see the purpose? The Gentile with the Jew. The strong beside the weak. One mind. One voice. Glorifying God together. Not a dream. Not a distant hope. A reality purchased by blood. Sealed by the Spirit. Gathering now.

That is the gospel. **Jesus's welcome enables our worship.**

Will you be strong? Will you bear the weakness of another? Will you welcome the one you naturally avoid? Not tolerate. Not endure. Welcome. Fully. Undeservedly. To the glory of God. Because Christ welcomed you.

And you who have been trying. Trying to be good enough. Trying to earn His favour. Will you cease. Cease from every effort. Cease from every hope placed in your own hands. Behold the Lamb who bore your insults. Who absorbed your wrath. Who secured your mercy. Receive Him today.

The Lion of Judah carries His lambs home.

Now to Him who is able to strengthen you according to this gospel. To the only wise God. Through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory forever.

Amen.

The benediction

Romans 16:25-27, Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation about Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept silent for long ages but now revealed and made known through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of the eternal God to advance the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles – to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ – to him be the glory for ever! Amen.

This is how I parse Greek verbs:

- I use a three-letter combination in square brackets (e.g. [PMI] for Present, Middle, Indicative) after a verb, which I underline.
 1. First letter indicates the tense. Tense deals both with time and kind of action.
 2. Second letter indicates the voice. The relation of the subject or agent to the action.
 3. Third letter indicates the mood, participle, or infinitive.
- Tense:
 - P: present, continuous or linear action.
 - I: imperfect, continuous action in the past.
 - F: future, both progressive and punctiliar action.
 - A: aorist, expresses punctiliar action that has happened.
 - R: perfect, represents an action that is complete but has an ongoing resultant state of being.
- Voice:
 - A: active, reflects the subject that performs the action.
 - M: middle, the agent participates in the results of the action.
 - P: passive, subject is being acted upon by someone or something else.
- Mood/participle/infinitive:
 - I: indicative, reality, that which is actually occurring.
 - S: subjunctive, likely to occur.
 - M: imperative, a command that is possible.
 - P: participle, participles are verbal adjectives that behave like a verb and an adjective..
 - N: infinitive, verbal nouns that use the preposition "to", and they can also be used with "ing".

This is how I indicate the function of conjunctions:

- I put a letter in square brackets before a clause to indicate a logical relationship.
 - [S] - SERIES, Each proposition makes an independent contribution to the whole (and, moreover, furthermore).
 - [P] - PROGRESSION, Each proposition is a further step toward a climax (then, and, moreover, furthermore).
 - [A] - ALTERNATIVE, Each proposition expresses an opposite possibility arising from a situation (or, but while..).
 - [W] [Ed] - WAY-END (ACTION-MANNER), Statement of an action and one which tells more explicitly what is involved in carrying out this action (in that, by).
 - [I] [I] - COMPARISON, Statement that clarifies an action or idea by showing what it is like (even as, as...so).
 - [-] [+] - NEGATIVE-POSITIVE, The relationship between two alternatives in which one is denied so the other is enforced, implicit in contrasting statements (not...but).
 - [Gn] [Sp] - GENERAL-SPECIFIC, Statement of a whole and one or more statements which set forth parts of the whole.
 - [Ft] [In] - FACT-INTERPRETATION, Statement and clarifying statement; does not set forth a distinguishable part of the preceding whole.
 - [G] - GROUND, Statement followed by the argument or reason on which it stands; supporting proposition follows the supported proposition (for, since, because).
 - [I'] - INFERENCE, Supporting statement followed by the conclusion drawn from it; supporting proposition precedes the supported proposition (therefore, wherefore, consequently).
 - [C] [E] - CAUSE-EFFECT (ACTION-RESULT), One action and another action which results from the first as an automatic consequence (that, so that, with the result that).
 - [C?] [E] - CONDITIONAL, Like cause-effect except existence of the cause is only potential (if...then, if, except...).
 - [M] [Ed] - MEANS-END (ACTION-PURPOSE), One action and another that is intended as the goal or purpose of the first (in order that, that, lest, to the end that).
 - [T] - TEMPORAL, Proposition and the occasion when it occurs (when, after, before).
 - [L] - LOCATIVE, Proposition and the place where it can be true (where, wherever).
 - [Adv] - ADVERSATIVE, Main clause that stands despite a contrary statement (although, yet, but, nevertheless).
 - [Q] [A] - QUESTION-ANSWER, Statement of question and answer to that question (question mark ?).
 - [S] [R] - SITUATION-RESPONSE, The relationship between a situation in one clause and a response in another.
 - [B] [L] - BILATERAL, A proposition which supports propositions in both directions, rarely used.

This is how I use colour highlighting:

- **Orange**: structure indicator, conjunctions, and prepositions.
- **Yellow**: verbs, Greek, and Scripture reference.
- **Green**: keywords.
- **Red**: repeated words.
- **Pink**: imperatives.
- **Blue**: main idea.

On my sermon preparation sheet, these are the questions and an explanation:

1. How has the author organised this passage?

- a) An outline: The author's organization (or structure) is a way of talking about the shape or form of a biblical passage. Beneath the surface of each passage is an underlying arrangement of material and a logic that the author has used to organize the passage. And each part of the passage has a role to play in that structure.
- b) Tools: Identify the text type, and any grammatical tools used to identify the structure.
- c) The emphasis: The structure will reveal an emphasis that the author is making.

2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage?

- a) Literary context: How do the passage that comes before and the passage that comes after relate to your passage?
- b) Historical context: The historical situation or circumstances experienced by the first audience at the time when the book was written.
- c) Cultural context: The setting in the daily life of the people/characters in the book and how that will have been understood by the first audience. This is distinct from historical context in that it does not relate to a particular audience in a particular place at a particular time, but the details of life that the people/characters in the text had in common. Anything that requires extra-biblical knowledge should be treated skeptically.
- d) Biblical context: Is the author citing or alluding to some previously written Biblical passage? What connections could the author have reasonably expected his first audience to make.

3. What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?

The author's main point is a way of talking about the aim of a passage as a whole. It can be descriptive or prescriptive. It is not simply a summary statement. But rather, it is the idea of which the author is trying to persuade his audience. As you work on articulating the author's argument, please keep in mind that it needs to be specific enough to the passage that it clearly comes from the particular passage (and not any other passage), it is for the first audience, it should be one single sentence that is both short and clear, and captures the argument of the passage.

4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

What part of the gospel (the death and resurrection of Christ) is in view? Every part of the Bible, every passage of Scripture, in some way relates to the gospel of Jesus Christ. What parts of the passage connect to the gospel? The connection must be legitimate and textually driven.

5. What is the main point you will argue to your audience?

6. What applications will you make? a) To believers, b) To unbelievers.

The main point of a sermon is the fundamental statement of what you, as a speaker today, are trying to convince your audience today. It will certainly be intimately related to the author's main point for his original audience and it will consider the gospel connection. It should be well reasoned and, perhaps, articulated as the result of proof (so depending on premises and building arguments).

7. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? a) Sermon outline, b) Sermon title.

On my sermon preparation sheet, this is how questions relate to one another:

- 1 a) should be driven by the text.
- 1 c) should be driven from the outline in 1 a).
- 2) should be directly relevant to 1 c).
- 3) cannot be disconnected from 1 c), and should be clarified by 2).
- 4) must be found in the text.
- 5) cannot be disconnected from 3), and should be driven by 4).
- 6) should flow from 5).
- 7) should structurally relate to 1 a), and make the argument in 5).