

Romans 15 - Importance of Unity; Gentile Obligations to Jews; Paul's Passion for Ministry; Future Plans

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Romans 15

- (C) Strong must help the weak (15:1-6)
 - (a) Obligation stated (15:1-2)
 - (i) Specific (15:1a)
 - (ii) General (15:1b-2)

1 Now we who are strong ought to **bear the weaknesses** of those without strength, and **not just please ourselves.**

1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not **just please ourselves.**

1 Now we who are strong ought to be patient with the weaknesses of those who are not strong and must stop pleasing ourselves.

1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

- Paul says that there are many in the body of Christ who have not attained full knowledge yet. They are in the learning process, but there are still a number of things that they are

unaware of about how to live the Christian life, thus those more mature believers ("we who are strong") should...

- "...bear the weaknesses" - have an attitude where you're trying to help the weaker brother, not cut them down; don't be annoyed by them, but instead have an attitude of service toward them
- Mature believers are to take the initiative in resolving the tension with weaker believers
- They need to be willing to limit their Christian liberty, if by doing so, they can reduce the problems of their weaker brother
- The weak need knowledge and maturity; the strong need love
- Strength means not only accepting those who differ as brothers, but also a readiness to take responsibility for their right to hold a different view
- Paul is not saying that the strong must determine to put up with the weak; he meant that those who are strong must accept as their burden the tendernesses of the weak.
- Our liberty in Christ is constrained by love for others
- "...not just please ourselves" - so many problems in the church would go away if Christians today would follow this instruction

The message of Christian liberty is more loving than avoiding wrong: don't do what may harm your brothers and sisters in Christ (14:13,15,21). The message is more powerful than the indifference of a "live and let live" worldview ("you be you"). Paul explains what it means to "make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification (14:19). We are to "bear with the failings of the weak," patiently and without finding fault (1 Cor 13:4; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 5:14; 2 Tim 4:2), as God does with us (Ex 34:6; Ps 78:38; Rom 2:4; James 1:5; 2 Peter 3:9). Putting others first requires we stop living to please ourselves (Matt 16:24; 1 Cor 13:5; 2 Tim 3:1-5).

- 2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to **his edification**.
- 2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.
- 2 Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building him up.
- 2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

- "...edification" - an important word to Paul because edification is what we are to be about in the church
 - We are to be in the business of building people up, not tearing them down (Cf. Eph 4:29)
 - Paul is not saying we should be "people pleasers" and do whatever anyone wants us to do, simply because it will please them (Cf. Gal 1:10,19; Eph 6:6; Col 3:22; 1 Thess 2:4)
 - We should not please others rather than God, but we should please others rather than ourselves

(b) Obligation illustrated (15:3-4)

- (i) Christ (15:3a)
- (ii) OT (15:3b-4)

3 For even Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written: "THE TAUNTS OF THOSE WHO TAUNT YOU HAVE FALLEN ON ME."

3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."

3 For even the Messiah did not please himself. Instead, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

- Quoted from Ps 69:9b...

— The NT quotes seven different verses from Ps 69 (v4,9,13,21,22,23,25)

- Christ was obviously not all about Himself, but always about others. If Christ was all about Himself, the Incarnation would've never happened.

— This quote from Psalms speaks to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ

— Jesus did not come into the world to please Himself, but rather to fulfill a divine blueprint that was written before the foundation of the world

— He came into the world to bear the reproach (sin) of people that rightfully did not belong on Him

— In Christ, we can see the difference between a "people pleaser" and a "people lover"

— Sacrificing his own preferences for the welfare of others did not make Him acceptable to everyone, but it did make Him acceptable to His Father

- One of the tragedies in the church today is the lack of teaching from the pulpit on biblical doctrine. There is a devaluing of doctrine in the church today. People say I want to go to church and I want it to be relevant, I want application, I want it to be topical, and I want it to relate to a particular problem I have at work, in my marriage, with my kids, etc.

— But we have to get to a point where we value doctrine. Doctrine tells us how to live for God. If we don't understand doctrine, we don't know how to relate to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

— In this verse we see how practical Paul views doctrine, here he's speaking of Christology. We think of that as some heavy academic subject, but when Paul introduces it, it's in the context of shepherding and relational skills. In Paul's mind, doctrine is one of the most practical things you could give your mind to.

4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

4 For everything that was written long ago was written to instruct us, so that we might have hope through the endurance and encouragement that the Scriptures give us.

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

- Although we are currently in a different dispensation than the OT, it doesn't mean that we can't learn from and take instruction from the OT

— The OT is revelatory but not regulatory on a NT Church Age believer

— Paul says the very reason the OT was written was to instruct us today and give us hope

— All Scripture is *for* us, but not all Scripture is *about* us. We may receive the same instructions from God that He gave in the OT (kill all the Canaanites), but we can draw applications from the OT that are relevant to our lives today.

— Everything ("whatsoever things were written") in the Bible is useful; it is more than the helpful books found in bookstores today. Many books are inspirations, only God's Word is inspired.

— Nothing in the Bible is without value. Words, stories or entire books that seem useless at one point will be proven valuable when our needs, desires and willingness to obey meet the Holy Spirit.

— Paul teaches two points in this verse:

1. the permanent value of the great moral and spiritual truths of the OT

2. the witness of the OT to Christ

- Keep in mind that the context here is the attitude of the stronger brother toward the weaker brother. So Paul, can you give me some examples? Paul says sure...first, look to the doctrine of Christ and also look at the OT.

It is shocking but true that the ministry of the writing prophets, which composes so much of the OT, was quite ineffective in their own day (Cf. Is 53:1; Jer 7:13; Ezek 3:7). The religious reformation that did take place were fairly superficial (Cf. 2 Kings 22:8-20).

When Hezekiah began his reform, it took 16 days simply to carry the accumulated rubbish out of the temple (2 Chr 29:17). In Josiah's day, not even one copy of the Law was available —until someone discovered one among the debris in the temple. When the people heard it read, they were completely unfamiliar with it (2 Chr 34:14-21). It was as though all the copies of a country's constitution had been lost.

He who has no hope of eternity has no purpose in time. —Thomas Carlyle

(c) Obligation's benefits (15:5-6)

(i) Unity (15:5)

5 Now may the God who gives **perseverance and encouragement** grant you to be of **the same mind** with one another, according to Christ Jesus,

5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

5 Now may God, the source of endurance and encouragement, allow you to live in harmony with each other as you follow the Messiah Jesus,

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

- Paul now begins to lay out the benefits that will be realized in the church when God's principles of shepherding and relationships are embraced
- What will begin to happen in the body of Christ when I have a service mentality instead of a serve us mentality?
- What will begin to happen in the church when I begin to see that my role is not to serve myself, but to serve others?
- "...perseverance and encouragement" - where do we get this perseverance and encouragement from? The OT (v4)
 - Paul wished that his readers, both strong and weak, would appropriate these gifts and apply them in their interpersonal relationships. The result of doing this would be unity in the Church.
 - "...the same mind" - when we begin to walk out these principles, the first thing we'll have is unity within the body of Christ
 - When people go to church and seek to please others rather than please myself, they begin to walk in the same mind and become unified. The biggest thing that destroys churches is self-centeredness (James 3:16).
 - Jesus prayed for the unity of His church (John 17:20-23) that just as there is perfect unity within the Godhead, Jesus prayed for that same unity within the church. Then Jesus points out something even greater: that this unity is how the unsaved world will know and understand the message of the cross.
 - We may have the apologetics down for creation, for the authenticity and inerrancy of Scripture, you may be able to defend the faith from Genesis to Revelation, and that is great...but by and large the world will sit up and take notice when there is unity in the body of Christ.
 - Paul called out the disunity of the Corinthian church in 1 Cor 6...they were suing each other over piddly things, and taking their cases before unsaved judges to rule. And Paul tells them that they are defeated already. What is this unsaved judge going to think when you people can't even work out your own squabbles amongst yourselves?
 - How could you talk to someone about their way to heaven when there is so much division and acrimony within the church? Backbiting and disunity damages the church's

witness in the world.

(ii) Glory (15:6)

6 so that with one purpose *and* one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

6 so that with one mind and one voice you might glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah.

6 That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- The second benefit that occurs when we walk out God's principles of shepherding and relationships...God is glorified

— The context that Paul is dealing with here does not include doctrinal departures...if someone wants to deny the trinity, salvation by faith alone, the virgin birth, the inerrancy of Scripture...then we should separate from such individuals. The context here is with personal squabbles between believers, that do not revolve around foundational doctrinal issues.

— When the world recognizes and sees that the church is unified and in one accord, God is glorified. He is glorified when we walk together in the same mind, in one accord, with the mentality of Jesus Christ.

— When we glorify God, we're fulfilling our purpose in life, since the purpose of every human being is doxological (for the glory of God)

(D) Exhortation toward mutual acceptance (15:7-13)

(a) Exhortation stated (15:7a)

(b) Exhortation illustrated (15:7b-12)

(i) Statement (15:7b)

7 Therefore, **accept** one another, just as Christ also accepted us, for the glory of God.

7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

7 Therefore, accept one another, just as the Messiah accepted you, for the glory of God.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

- You're going to run into all kinds of Christians who have all kinds of strange ideas...one maybe came from an alcoholic background and thus thinks that a Christian should not touch alcohol at all. Accept them.

— Someone may have come from a background that really reverenced the sabbath, where you go to church and you go home and spend the rest of the day with family, and do absolutely no work and no travel. Accept them.

- "...accept" - present tense, imperative mood: keep on accepting or receiving one another; it means to welcome not just to tolerate
- Paul now goes back and gives us another example, and again of Jesus Christ...
- The more you grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ, the more you realize that you are a recipient of the grace of God, the more you understand how to treat other people.
- You start to give people a little more slack than you used to. Why is that? Because I've recognized how much slack God has given me, and who am I to treat someone with justice when that's not how the Lord has treated me.
- If we manifest the same Christlikeness that God has manifested to us, God is glorified (which, by the way, is your purpose in life)

Some Christians have ignored Jesus Christ as an example, reasoning that we need a Savior more than an example. However, those He saves also need His example! How else may we become more like the Savior we love and long to serve? The NT repeatedly points to our Savior as our example (John 13:14-16; Eph 5:1-2; Col 3:13; 1 Peter 2:20-22; 1 John 2:6; 3:15-16). In this passage, Jesus' example shows us how to live to please God and how we are to accept others with love. Christian unity that brings God glory is our goal.

(ii) Explanation (15:8-12)

(a) Jews (15:8)

- 8 For I say that Christ has become a **servant** to the circumcision in behalf of the truth of God, **to confirm** the promises *given* to the fathers,
- 8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises *given* to the fathers,
- 8 For I tell you that the Messiah became a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God's truth in order to confirm the promises given to our ancestors,
- 8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:
- Paul is talking about Christ's acceptance of national Israel (Cf. Rom 9-11). Paul takes God's program with Israel and turns it into a practical application here by saying that because Christ will unconditionally manifest grace to national Israel one day, so who are we who are seeking to imitate Christ not to display a fraction of that same grace to the weaker brother.

In Rom 9-11, many OT passages (Deut 32:21; Is 1:9; 8:14; 10:22-23; 28:16; 65:1; Hosea 1:10; 2:23; Joel 2:32) proved Paul's point: God had promised a future Gentile salvation but remained faithful to His promises to the Jews (11:17-32). Now, four OT texts add a crucial fact: the Messiah "has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth." Christ

fulfilled God's promises to the patriarchs so "that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy" (v8-9).

(b) Gentiles (15:9-12)

9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written: "THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING PRAISES TO YOUR NAME."

9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles, And I will sing to Your name."

9 so that the gentiles may glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "That is why I will praise you among the gentiles; I will sing praises to your name."

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

- Quoted from 2 Sam 22:50; Ps 18:49...

- Paul told us in v4 that the OT was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now Paul quotes the OT that predict the manifestation of the grace of God to the Gentiles.

— Israel will be the recipients of the grace of God in the future; Gentiles today, in unprecedented fashion, are recipients of God's grace

- Now Paul says that God will not display His grace only to the Jews, but He will also with the Gentiles (Cf. 11:32)

— For an application, Paul says that this grace of God being manifested today upon the Gentiles, spoken of in the pages of the OT, and which will be manifested one day to national Israel, should ooze right out of us as we interact with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

— If that grace of God is not flowing out of you to other believers, in particular the weaker brothers and sisters, then Paul says go back and read Rom 1-11 because there is something in the doctrinal portion of this book that you didn't understand properly.

— If you really understood Rom 1-11, how could that not affect your shepherding and relational skills?

10 Again he says, "REJOICE, YOU GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE."

10 Again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people."

10 Again he says, "Rejoice, you gentiles, with his people!"

10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

- Quoted from Deut 32:43...

11 And again, "PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM."

11 And again, "Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, And let all the peoples praise Him."

11 And again, "Praise the Lord, all you gentiles! Let all the nations praise him."

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

- Quoted from Ps 117:1...

12 Again Isaiah says, "THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM WILL THE GENTILES HOPE."

12 Again Isaiah says, "There shall come the root of Jesse, And He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, In Him shall the Gentiles hope."

12 And again, Isaiah says, "There will be a Root from Jesse. He will rise up to rule the gentiles, and the gentiles will hope in him."

12 And again, Isaiah saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

- Quoted from Is 11:10...

Gentiles Rejoice

A progression of thought can be traced through these four quotations:

- In the 1st (Ps 18:49), David praised God "among the Gentiles" (v9)
- In the 2nd (Deut 32:43), Moses exhorted the Gentiles to praise God with the Jews (v10)
- In the 3rd (Ps 117:1), the Gentiles "praise the Lord" on their own (v11; Cf. v7)
- In the 4th (Is 11:10), Isaiah predicted that the Gentiles will have hope because Jesus is the Savior, not only of the Jewish people, but of the entire world (v12)

(c) Conclusion (15:15)

13 Now may the **God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the **power of the Holy Spirit**.

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

13 Now may God, the source 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.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

- In v6-7 Paul gave us two benefits that we will realize when we begin to walk in mutual acceptance (when the strong accept the weak): unity (v6) and God is glorified (v7)...now

here he does the same thing here, outlining the benefits when we begin to imitate Christ by accepting the weaker brother:

— The benefits described here are a "filling" of joy, peace and hope, through the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit

This verse concludes the section dealing with the practice of God's righteousness (12:1–15:13), and effectively ends the doctrinal part of the epistle to the Romans. The remainder of the letter contains personal remarks and two more benedictions (15:33; 16:20), plus a doxology (16:25–27)

VII. Summation (Rom 15:14–16:27)

(1) Motivation in writing (15:14-21)

(A) Paul's persuasion of their maturity (15:14)

14 And concerning you, **my brothers and sisters**, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are **full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.**

14 And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

14 I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are filled with goodness and full of all the knowledge you need to be able to instruct each other.

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

- Paul begins this last section of the book by expressing his confidence in the maturity of his readers

— A book like Romans could not have been written to immature believers, because they have no capacity to digest truth (1 Cor 3:2; Heb 5:13-14)

— Paul then describes the traits that he has noticed (heard) in the Roman church that have "convinced" him of their spiritual maturity:

- "...my brothers and sisters" - "brethren"; Paul is writing to saved individuals. Unbelievers could not begin to understand what Paul has wrote in this book because they have no capacity to digest or understand spiritual things.

- "...full of goodness" - one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)

— Paul's audience could understand and apply what he is saying because first, they were believers, and second, they were at a maturity level in their relationship with Christ that they were manifesting the fruit of the Spirit. Christ-like character was exuding from their lives.

- "...filled with all knowledge" - a mature Christian has the ability to grasp and understand what God has revealed in His Word (2 Peter 3:18)

- In today's culture, the only certainty is uncertainty; it seems like no one can definitively know anything. But that wasn't the case with the Romans...they were "filled with knowledge."
- "...able also to admonish one another" - the Romans had the ability to encourage and correct one another; one Christian correcting the doctrine of another Christian
- "admonish" - *noutheteō*, we are commanded to correct or critique fellow believers, in love, who have wandered into false doctrine (Cf. 2 Thess 3:14-15)
- This was a sign of maturity because the body of Christ in Rome was ministering to itself, which is God's design for the church (Eph 4:16)

(B) Paul's boldness described (15:15-21)

(a) Boldness stated (15:15)

15 But I have **written** very **boldly** to you on some points so as to **remind** you again, because of the grace that was given to me from God,

15 But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,

15 However, on some points I have written to you rather boldly, both as a reminder to you and because of the grace given me by God

15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

- "...written" - referring to the book of Romans
- "...boldly" - means that you are more afraid of the opinion of God than you are of the opinions of man
- Paul didn't go around hurting people's feelings; he always did whatever possible to get along with people. But when it came to truth, Paul never compromised because at the end of the day, he was more afraid of what God thought than what man thought.
- "...remind" - apparently the Roman church, which was started without the assistance/involvement of an apostle, had a lot of knowledge and understanding already, thus Paul wrote to them as a reminder
- One of the best tips you can give to a Bible teacher is to not be afraid to remind people of the truth that they already know. You don't need to come up with something novel or new, you simply need to remind people, reiterate to people, the priorities and realities that God reveals in His Word (2 Peter 1:12).
- Paul was not interested in coming up with new thoughts or ideas; he was interested in reminding His readers of what they already knew. In this verse, he's reminding them about the grace of God.
- Paul was qualified to talk about the grace of God because he was a recipient of the grace of God. Paul was one of the least deserving people to receive the grace of God in all

of human history (1 Cor 15:9), but God lavished His grace on Paul anyway.

— God not only showed Paul grace by saving him, but showed him further grace by putting Paul into His service (1 Tim 1:12-14). Not only did God bring Paul to saving faith, which was a miracle in and of itself, but on top of that, God then used Paul's life in a powerful way to expand the purposes of God upon the earth.

— None of us is worthy to be used by God. We are all unqualified to be used by God, most notably the Apostle Paul. But God qualifies us through His grace, He makes us worthy to serve Him through His grace (unmerited favor). If God could qualify Paul through His grace, God can do the same for us today.

- It is interesting that over the past 2000 years, since the birth of the church at Pentecost (Acts 2), God has chosen to use sinful mankind to spread the gospel instead of angels. The angels would certainly be better at it than we are, but God has chosen to use us instead. Why?

— Because angels know nothing of the grace of God. The plan of salvation is not open to angels (or demons). Jesus did not die for angels (or demons). Jesus did not become an angel to sacrifice Himself for sin...He became a Man.

— God has used angels in the past, and He may in certain circumstances us angels today, and we know from a reference in Revelation that He will use angels to preach the gospel in the future, but it is not normative for today. Instead, He has chosen to use mankind instead of angels because mankind has experienced something that angels have never experienced: the grace of God.

— Once you're a recipient of the grace of God, you're qualified to speak about the grace of God. Those who have never experienced the grace of God (angels) are not qualified to speak of God's manifold grace.

— Paul was a tremendous expositor of the grace of God because he lived every day of his life basking in God's favor, not only in terms of salvation, but also subsequently being used by God. This is why Paul can speak "boldly" to them...because he is a recipient of the grace of God.

- (b) Boldness defended (15:16-21)
 - (i) His appointment (15:16)

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that *my offering of the Gentiles* may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that *my offering of the Gentiles* may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

16 to be a minister of the Messiah Jesus to the gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering brought by gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

- Paul says that before I talk about my achievement in ministry, let me first tell you about my appointment in ministry

- "...a minister of Christ Jesus" -

- "...to the Gentiles" - Paul's appointed mission was to export and teach and promote the grace of God to the Gentiles (Gal 2:7-9)

- "...a priest" - someone who represents God before man, and represents man before God

— Represents God before man: the idea that we reflect Christlikeness in all of our dealings with others, and when we're alone

— Represents man before God: the ability to intercede for others before God, taking their issues, questions and requests in prayer to God on their behalf

— Since Church Age believers are priests before God (Rev 1:6; 5:10); how would you review your performance as a "priest"?

- "...gospel of God" - there are many gospels floating around today, as in the 1st century; Paul is careful to define the gospel of which he was a minister and a priest: the gospel of God

— Paul did not improvise or originate any doctrine separate or different than what he was inspired to write and teach by the Holy Spirit

- "...offering of the Gentiles" - Paul viewed those whom he reached with the light of the gospel as a sacrificial offering to God

— Paul saw those who believed in Christ because of his preaching and writing as a form of worship of God (1 Thess 2:19-20)

(ii) His achievements (15:17-21)

17 Therefore **in Christ Jesus** I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.

17 Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.

17 Therefore, in the Messiah Jesus I have the right to boast about my work for God.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

- Paul now boasts in his achievement and legacy in things pertaining to God...

— What would Paul leave behind after his ministry and life were over?

- "...in Christ Jesus" - this phrase encapsulates Paul's theology and achievements

(a) Accomplishment (15:18b-19a)

18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what **Christ has accomplished through me**, resulting in the **obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed**,

18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,

18 For I am bold enough to tell you only about what the Messiah has accomplished through me in bringing gentiles to obedience. By my words and actions,

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

- Paul was a braggart, a boaster, but if you look carefully, Paul never boasted about himself. Every time Paul recounts his achievements, he focuses on what Christ has done through him, not what he has done personally.

— Paul never boasted about his natural abilities (of which he had plenty); he never boasted about his education (he had the best); he never boasted about his academic skill or intelligence (although he had plenty)

— "...Christ has accomplished through me" - distinguish carefully...Paul is not saying what he accomplished "in Christ" but rather what Christ accomplished "through him."

— Paul understood that he was simply the willing vehicle that God chose to do His work through. Paul was the sock puppet and Christ was the hand operating it.

— Anytime pastors or others talk about church growth, they will always have a 5 or 10-point plan to grow the church, and often every single one of them will be tasks or marketing ideas that will be accomplished in the flesh. They are just manmade efforts to get ministry done, and there is no room remaining for the glory of God.

— Paul gave no energy of the flesh resulted in his achievements, no strategies, no efforts, no tactics, no techniques...the glory for every single one of his accomplishments goes back to Christ

— 1 John 2:16 talks about the characteristics of the unsaved world, specifically the "boastful pride of life." Paul boasted only in Christ; the world boasts only of itself.

— 2 Cor 10:17 says that he who boasts should boast only in the Lord

— "...obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed" - Paul led the Gentiles to Christ by faith alone; he taught that people were saved only by God's grace

— But Paul didn't leave his converts in that position. He then began leading his new converts in the principles of sanctification: how the principles of divine grace that led us to Christ can now be used in our lives so that we can become the type of people God wants us to be in our thoughts, conduct and behavior.

— Paul taught that it is the grace of God that saves us, then after we're saved, it is that same grace of God that allows us to move on beyond justification into the realm of sanctification. The same Holy Spirit that was at work to bring you to Christ is the same Holy

Spirit that is now operating in you to help us live the type of life that God would have us to live.

— Paul was not just interested in getting people saved, although he knew that was the most important thing, but he was interested in getting people to live the type of life that God would have them live. He was not just interested in people believing the gospel, but he was interested in those same people live out the gospel in their daily life.

— Today, most Christians understand salvation very narrowly...just believing in Christ by faith, and you're saved. But that chops off the other two facets/phases of salvation: sanctification and glorification.

— God has something much more for our lives than having our fire insurance paid up, us having a get out of hell free card. He teaches us divine principles by which we can live for Him, under divine grace, and begin to produce the type of fruit that is of eternal value.

— Paul's accomplishment here is that when you look over the entire Gentile world, you will find people who are saved, and walking in obedience in word and deed

19 in the power of **signsandwonders**, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and all around as far as **Illyricum** I have **fullypreached** the gospel of Christ.

19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

19 by the power of signs and wonders, and by the power of God's Spirit, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of the Messiah from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum.

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

- "...signs and wonders" - signs, wonders and miracles were evident in Paul's life, as well as the lives of all Christ's apostles (2 Cor 12:12)

— The Holy Spirit used this ministry of signs and wonders to lay the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20)

- "...Illyricum" - located on the west coast of present day Bosnia/Herzegovina

— Paul says that his area of ministry was from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and every place in between

— In Acts 19:10, Luke describes Paul's two-year ministry from Ephesus, saying that during that time, all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Gentiles

— But Paul wasn't satisfied with his present area of ministry; in Rom 15 he tells us that his goal was to take the gospel to Rome. He understood that once the gospel reached Rome, it would go everywhere. "All roads lead to Rome."

— How satisfied are you with your ministry career? Has God done some great things through you in the past, and how you've called it a day? Are you in ministry retirement,

looking to cash in on the pension of grace from God for all the "good work" you've done in your life? Paul wasn't.

— God wants you to think a little bigger than your accomplishments in the past. Retirement is not mentioned anywhere in the NT. The Lord wants our mindset to be, Lord, You've done a lot in and through my life, but there's a lot more that needs to be done in this world, and there's a lot more that You want to do through me.

— This is how Paul thought. He didn't rest on his laurels after his ministry had spanned that huge geographic area...he wanted to go further. Paul was never satisfied with what God had done...he always looked for God to do more.

— Paul was always looking at what God could do or would do. He always had an expectation that God would do more. We need that same outlook of expectation because we serve a great God.

- "...fully preached" - Paul preached the gospel and all of its implications; he did not hold back or shun any divine truth

20 And in this way I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* known by name, so that I would not build on **another person's foundation**;

20 And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation;

20 My one ambition is to proclaim the gospel where the name of the Messiah is not known, so I don't build on someone else's foundation.

20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

- Paul's mission was to take the gospel to places where the gospel was unknown. He wanted people to hear the name Jesus in neighborhoods where children didn't know who Jesus is.

- "...another person's foundation" - many ministries today are built to siphon off believers from other ministries or churches

— Many churches reason that if we want our church to grow, we need to have better programs so that people from other churches, who may be frustrated, will leave that church and come to our church, improving our attendance numbers. This is called "sheep stealing."

— Paul was not interested in stealing believers from other ministries...he was interested in taking the gospel to those who had never heard it. Instead, he was interested in the Holy Spirit using him in a strategic way to build a new flock, not steal someone else's flock.

— Interestingly, this statement by Paul makes no sense if Peter was in Rome and was the first pope. If Peter was the first pope, what Paul says here would've been a lie because Paul's desire to go to Rome would be to build on someone else's foundation.

— Peter was not in Rome at this time, and was never a pope. Peter tells us exactly where he was at this time: Babylon (1 Peter 5:13).

21 but just as it is written: "THEY WHO HAVE NOT BEEN TOLD ABOUT HIM WILL SEE, AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD WILL UNDERSTAND."

21 but as it is written, "They who had no news of Him shall see, And they who have not heard shall understand."

21 Rather, as it is written, "Those who were never told about him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."

21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

- Quoted from Is 52:15...

— This passage speaks of the coming Messiah, who would have a ministry to the Gentiles after national Israel rejected Him

— Paul bases his philosophy for ministry on the OT (Cf. v4); the OT was Paul's source of encouragement. Here Paul is showing us how his philosophy for ministry, taking Christ to where He has never been named, was fulfilling the servant passages written by Isaiah 700 years earlier.

(2) Intention to visit Rome (15:22-33)

(A) Paul's desire to visit Rome (15:22-24)

 (a) Paul's past desire to visit Rome (15:22)

22 For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;

22 For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;

22 This is why I have so often been hindered from coming to you.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

- Paul had always wanted to visit Rome (he wrote Romans from Corinth), but for some reason he had been unable to until this time; perhaps Satan hindered him? (1 Thess 2:18)

— But Paul never threw up his hands and said, Well I guess it just isn't the will of God for me to go to Rome. He never gave up on his desire to go to Rome. If God has put something in your spirit for you to do, don't give up on it because it doesn't happen right away.

— It's likely that the reason things aren't working out as you'd like is because you have spiritual opposition. Satan is working overtime to disrupt God's will for your life. In fact, the disruption that you go through when you try to do something for the Lord is oftentimes proof that you're in God's will because you are a threat to Satan, and he doesn't like to be threatened.

 (b) Paul's present desire to visit Rome (15:23-24)

- (i) His past work accomplished (15:23a)
- (ii) His desire to visit Rome for many years (15:23b)

23 but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a **longing** to come to you

23 but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you

23 But now, having no further opportunities in these regions, I want to come to you, as I've desired to do for many years.

23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

- The reason why Paul wanted to go to Rome is because he had already saturated the areas he'd been with the gospel. There was no where else for him to go.

- Everyone in the area of Asia Minor and Greece, where Paul had already been multiple times, was saturated with the gospel. Everyone had heard the gospel, churches were planted and growing, and there was no where else for Paul to spread the gospel.

- Paul's ambition was always to go to where Christ's name had not yet been proclaimed (Cf. v20)

- "...longing" - a desire of the heart that does not go away

- Oftentimes we know God's will in our lives because He gives us a nagging desire to do something for Him that doesn't go away (Cf. Ps 37:4)

- (iii) His plan to visit Rome en route to Spain (15:24)

24 whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be **helped on my way** there by you, when I have **first enjoyed your company** for a while—

24 whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—

24 Now that I am on my way to Spain, I hope to see you when I come your way and, after I have enjoyed your company for a while, to be sent on by you.

24 Whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

- Paul's goal was not simply to get to Rome, but ultimately to get to Spain

- He wanted to use Rome as a beachhead to ultimately spread the gospel to western Europe, as far away as Spain

- The geographic headquarters of the church in Acts is always shifting: it started in Jerusalem, then due to persecution it moved to the northern tip of Israel into a town called Antioch (Cf. Acts 11), then it continued to travel west to Ephesus, where Paul spent three years in the school of Tyrannus, where all who lived in Asia Minor heard the gospel due to

Paul's ministry there (Acts 19:9-10). Then God continued to push the church westward with Paul's desire (and eventual reality) of traveling to Rome, then his goal of continuing west from Rome over to Spain.

— Paul's desire to go to Rome was to take that church, which was founded and growing without the involvement of an apostle, and ground that church into correct thinking and doctrine. Paul does that largely in this book, but he would also do it once he personally arrived in Rome.

— Then once that church had a firm foundation (it was already a growing/thriving church), he would move on

— To Paul, the issue was never whether the church was growing or thriving, it was always on whether the doctrine was correct. A successful, thriving church that is not built on correct doctrine can be shifted. Satan does this all the time. Paul didn't want that to happen to the church at Rome because he wanted to use it as a beachhead to spread the gospel further, to those who had not yet heard it.

- "...helped on my way" - Paul was looking forward to receiving help from the church at Rome; earlier in Romans (1:11) he wanted to get to Rome to "impart some gift to you, so that you may be established"

— Paul says at the beginning of Romans that he wanted to help them, impart a gift to them, and now at the end of the book Paul wanted the Roman church to help him in some way
- "...first enjoyed your company" - to Paul, it wasn't always just about ministry work, but also about relationships

— Paul was very goal-driven, but he never forgot that ministry is done with relationships

(B) Paul's detour to Jerusalem (15:25-29)

(a) Detour to Jerusalem (15:25a)

(b) General purpose of Jerusalem visit (15:25b)

25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem, serving the saints.

25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

25 Right now, however, I'm going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints,

25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

- Paul has expressed his desire to get to Rome, but first God had another project for him which was already underway. Thus, he would need to travel to Jerusalem first before departing for Rome

- The purpose of Paul going to Jerusalem at that time was to serve the saints

— The mind of Paul was never on himself, but always on other people. He was always interested in investing himself into the lives of other people.

— Paul's motivation is outlined best in Phil 2, where Paul points to Christ as the ultimate model of servanthood. The theology of Phil 2 and Christ's example ruminated in Paul's

mind as he thought about the saints in Jerusalem.

(c) Specific purpose of Jerusalem visit (15:26)

26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

26 because the believers in Macedonia and Achaia have been eager to share their resources with the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

- Specifically, Paul's "serving" the saints in Jerusalem was for Paul to deliver funds to the church at Jerusalem to support the poor there

— Paul had been fundraising during his missionary journey for the saints in Jerusalem, specifically in the areas of Macedonia and Achaia, and he wanted to deliver those funds to that church personally

- The church at Jerusalem, where Christianity was born, had fallen on hard times. Some of the reasons for this include:

1. Their communal living arrangement (Acts 2:44-45). They began to liquidate their assets to have cash on hand so they could assist and support those from all over the world who came to Jerusalem to sit at the apostle's feet and learn apostolic doctrine. There was no NT at that time, so the only way to understand the gospel and doctrine was to learn from the apostles.

2. There was a famine in Jerusalem in 46 AD (Acts 11:27-30)

3. The church in Jerusalem was being ostracized because they were rejected by unbelieving Judaism

4. They were also being taxed twice: they paid taxes to Rome, and paying tithes to the nation of Israel, which was functioning as a nation until 70 AD

5. They were also sending out missionaries...the church at Jerusalem was the "mother church" from which all other churches were planted

— So for all these reasons, the church at Jerusalem had fallen on hard financial times. It was for this reason that Paul took up a fundraising campaign to support them.

— This offering is referenced numerous times throughout the NT: Galatia (1 Cor 16:1); Macedonia (2 Cor 8:1-5; 9:2,4); Achaia (1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 9:2)

— It's important to understand that Romans is Paul's 6th epistle. Just before writing Romans, he wrote 2 Corinthians. In that epistle, specifically 2 Cor 8-9, he devotes the most attention to this fundraising project for the saints in Jerusalem. It's also from these chapters that we develop the principles of "grace giving."

The Principle of Grace Giving (derived from 2 Cor 8-9)

1. Generously (Ex 36:3-7)
2. Regularly (1 Cor 16:2a)
3. Voluntarily (2 Cor 9:7a)
4. Joyfully (2 Cor 9:7b)
5. Worshipfully (Acts 10:1-4)
6. Proportionately (1 Cor 16:2b)
7. Sacrificially (2 Cor 8:3)
8. Quietly (Matt 6:1-4)

(d) Motivation of Gentile offering participation (15:27)

27 For they were pleased *to do so*, and they are **indebted to them**. For if the Gentiles have **shared in their spiritual things**, they are indebted to do them a service also in material things.

27 Yes, they were pleased *to do so*, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.

27 Yes, they were eager to do this, and in fact they are obligated to help them, for if the gentiles have shared in their spiritual blessings, they are obligated to be of service to them in material things.

27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

- Why should Macedonia, Achaia, Galatia, and Rome care about the saints in Jerusalem? Because Paul says they are the "mother church," the "sending church," and you have received tremendous spiritual benefit from them. So during their time of difficulty, you ought to think about them and desire to help them because of the benefit you have derived from them.

- "...indebted to them" - Paul seems to say that the Gentile believers in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia are "indebted" to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, and indeed they were

— Every Christian from Pentecost to Acts 10 was a Jew. So Paul, when referencing the struggling believers in Jerusalem, makes the point that not only are these your brothers and sisters in Christ, but they are also Jews. And that Gentiles are indebted to the Jews because Gentiles have received every spiritual blessing that they have through the Jewish nation.

- "...shared in their spiritual things" - every spiritual blessing of Gentiles came through Israel/the Jews

- The program of God for Israel was for God to bless Israel, and Israel in turn bless the world. This goes back to Gen 12:3: I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you.
- The three primary blessings that God has blessed the world with, through Israel, are:
 1. Scripture - every author in the Bible was Jewish with the possible exception of Luke
 2. Savior - Jesus was a Jew (not a Southern Baptist, not a Methodist, not a member of a Bible Church)
 3. Kingdom - to prove that God is not finished with the Jews, we will reap a future blessing from God through Israel, that is the 1000-year millennial kingdom

Gentile Obligations as a Result of Receiving Jewish Covenant Blessings

The fact that Gentile believers have become partakers of Jewish spiritual blessings places an obligation on them according to Rom 15:25-27. As Paul came close to ending his letter to the Romans, he spelled out his immediate plans. In v25, he explained why he could not come to them immediately. While he had expressed a long term desire to go to Rome in Rom 1, his desire was subject to his duty, which was to collect an offering and take it to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. This special offering is spoken of elsewhere in 1 Cor 16:1-4 and 2 Cor 8-9. In v26, Paul named the contributors and the recipients of the offering. The Gentile believers of Macedonia and Achaia had given the money, which was specifically for the poor Jewish believers of the City of Jerusalem in the Land of Israel. In v27, Paul taught Gentile indebtedness to the Jews. He clearly stated that Gentiles are debtors to the Jews and then gave the reason for this: Gentiles have become fellow partakers of Jewish spiritual blessings. Earlier, in Rom 11, ***Paul taught that the Gentiles have become partakers of spiritual blessings, but these are Jewish spiritual blessings that are mediated through the Jewish covenants.*** The very fact that Gentiles have been made partakers of Jewish spiritual blessings has put them into debt to the Jews. ***According to this verse, the way they pay their indebtedness to Jewish believers is to minister to them in material things.***

(e) Paul's travel plans (15:28)

28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

28 So when I have completed this task and have put my seal on this contribution of theirs, I will visit you on my way to Spain.

28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

- Once Paul has completed his current project by delivering the desperately needed funds to Jerusalem, he planned to come to Rome to solidify their doctrinal foundation and spend some time with them, then use Rome as a beachhead to take the gospel to unknown territories as far away as Spain.
- Paul indeed eventually got to Rome, but not in the way he thought he would (as a free man). He would go there as a prisoner on his appeal to Caesar as a Roman citizen.
- God will fulfill the desires of our hearts because God put those desires there, but He doesn't always do it in the manner in which we expect. Paul did not pray that he would go to Rome in chains, as a prisoner, but that's how God got him there.

(f) Anticipation of Rome visit (15:29)

- 29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.
- 29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.
- 29 And I know that when I come to you I will come with the full blessing of the Messiah.
- 29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

- Paul says I want to get to Rome because I want to bless you

- The blessing that Paul speaks of here is apostolic doctrine. Rome was one of the few churches that was founded without the involvement of an apostle.
- There are many theories about how the church at Rome began...the best one is that likely there were Roman Jews who attended at the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given, they heard Peter and the other apostles preach, got saved, then returned to Rome and started a small church.

(C) Paul's demand for prayer (15:30-33)

- (a) Motivation for intercession (15:30a)
- (b) Nature of the intercession (15:30b)

30 Now I urge you, brothers *and sisters*, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, **to strive together** with me in your prayers to God for me,

30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

30 Now I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, and by the love that the Spirit produces, to join me in my struggle, earnestly praying to God for me

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;

- After Paul articulates to the Romans these two goals that he had (go to Rome, then on to Spain), it's interesting how he now expresses his dependence upon the prayers of God's people

- It is insightful and staggering to realize how much the great Apostle Paul was dependent upon prayer...a man with all of this education, all of his abilities, his oratory skills, all of his knowledge, particularly of the OT, and his apostleship, which was received directly from God Himself...but yet he still felt the need to request prayer on his behalf (Cf. Eph 6:19).
- "...strive together" - *synagōnizomai*, the idea of agonizing in prayer for others; it is the idea of exercising yourself in prayer, exerting effort in prayer; making prayer a priority
- "together" - corporate prayer; Paul urges them to do this corporately, as a church body

Our praying must not be a casual experience that has no heart or earnestness. We should put as much fervor into our praying as a wrestler puts into his wrestling. [Wiersbe]

Prayer is never rendered superfluous by any circumstances, not even by the knowledge of God's will and purpose. On the contrary, the revelation of that will is an incentive to prayer. See Ezek 36:37. [Vine]

(c) Content of intercession (15:31-32)

- (i) Deliverance from unbelieving Jews (15:31a)
- (ii) Believing Jews would accept gift (15:31b)

31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;

31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;

31 that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,

31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

- Paul now gives them his prayer requests...

- First, that he would be rescued from unbelieving Jews when he returns to Jerusalem/Judea

- The primary opponents of the gospel in the early church were the Jews (Cf. Acts)
- There were many Jewish converts to Christianity (3000 on the Pentecost alone), but many of the others, especially the Sanhedrin, were fierce opponents of Christ and the message of the gospel
- Paul asked the Romans to pray for his physical deliverance from these antagonists

(iii) Coming visit to Rome (15:32)

32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and relax in your company.

32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find *refreshing* rest in your company.

32 and that if it's God's will, I may come to you with joy and be refreshed together with you.

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

- Third, Paul asks for prayer for his planned trip to Rome, so that he would come in joy, in the will of God, and could relax in the company of the Roman saints in fellowship

Prayer for Protection and Provision

Paul asks the Romans to pray for his safety from the unbelievers in Judea. Paul was aware the Jews who rejected Jesus hated him intensely. They saw him as a heretic who was undermining Judaism. When Paul went to the temple in Jerusalem, a riot erupted and his enemies tried to kill him (Acts 21:27–22:22). God kept Paul safe, though not in the way he might have asked or imagined (Eph 3:20). When the riot occurred, soldiers rescued Paul. He spent the next two years in custody in Caesarea before he at last got to Rome. He spent at least two more years as a prisoner in Rome before he possibly made it to Spain.

Eventually, he was martyred in Rome.

Do I judge the effectiveness of my prayers on my personal expectations? If so, I will likely be greatly disappointed. Instead, I should trust God's promise to hear and do what is best for me.

Paul also asked the Romans to pray that the church in Jerusalem would favorably receive the contribution he was bringing them (v25-28). When Paul presented his offering from Gentile believers, the leaders of the church in Jerusalem thanked Paul and praised God for his ministry. They also reminded him that God was at work among them to save many Jews and bless Jewish Christians (Acts 21:17-20). This offering may have helped bridge the gap between Jewish and Gentile Christianity. See [Prayer: Notes on Prayer](#) for additional notes on Prayer.

(d) Benediction (15:33)

33 Now the God of peace *be* with you all. **Amen.**

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

33 Now may the God who grants peace be with all of you! Amen.

33 Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Far from being an afterthought that included only a few personal remarks, Rom 15:14-33 is key for understanding the Book of Romans and Paul's theology of missions. As such, it offers significant insights for a contemporary biblical theology of missions:

1. All missionary efforts must be dependent on God and all results must be recognized as the work of God's grace.
2. The task of missions is a priestly privilege of presenting the nations to God.
3. Missions must maintain a balance between the ultimate goal of establishing mature strategic congregations and not losing the urgency of evangelism among the unreached.
4. Those who carry the gospel to the unreached among the nations are helping fulfill the purposes of God in salvation history.
5. Reciprocal, mutual partnerships, so central to the task of missions, must emerge among churches around the world.