

Romans

Chapter 15

Romans 15:1-2

“We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.”

The Mature Believer

- Paul includes himself among the **we who are strong** mature believers and tells **strong** believers that they are to **bear the failings of the weak**.-Vs.1
- The word for **obligation** literally means to **owe a debt**.
- We saw this in **Romans 13:8**, “**Owe** no one anything, except to love each other... ”
- If you consider yourself a **strong mature believer** in comparison to your brother or sister then we are to use our **maturity** to **serve** our brothers and sisters in Christ.

- **We** as believers are to **owe nothing** except to love one another instead of seeking to **please ourselves**.-Vs.1
- This does not mean that the Church is ruled by the whims of the immature.
- The word for **bear** describes the **bearing up** the immature brother or sister by supporting them.
- Paul was not a man pleaser but he also knew that we are to **bear up** one another in the faith instead disputing with each other that causes division in the Church.
- “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if you **bite** and **devour** one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another...**Bear** one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”-**Galatians 5:14-15;6:2**

- The word for **strong** describes an excellent **supernatural** kind of **strength**.
- Often in the New Testament it is used for God's **strength** and then it turn it is also used to describe the **strength** of the believer.
- "But Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are **possible**.'" -**Matthew 19:26**
- "I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is **able** to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me." -**2 Timothy 1:12**
- Paul prayed "that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be **strengthened** with power through his Spirit in your inner being". -**Ephesians 3:16**
- Therefore this is a **strength** that is not of character, not of personality, nor of the flesh, **but of God**.

- In our passage, one believer has it, one believer does not. One believer is **strong**, one believer is **weak**. One is a **mature** believer another believer is **immature**, and yet we are all unified as one in the body of Christ.
- God calls His people to live in unity with one another and it is essential for all believers to make every effort to live together in harmony with one another.
- Regardless of beliefs and differences the Lord commands believers to **love one another** because the church of God was purchased with **His own blood** (**Acts 20:28**).
- "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment... **Is Christ divided?** Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" -**1 Corinthians 1:10;13**

Build Up One Another

- The word for **please** here and in **V. 2**, is the same as we saw in **Romans 14:18**, where we were seen as **acceptable to God** as we **served Christ**.
- If as a mature believer we **do not** consider ways to **build up** the weak believer then we would be **self-centered** and would be only **pleasing** ourselves.
- The goal of believers in the body of Christ should be the other person's spiritual edification (**1 Cor. 9:19-23**) and thus **his good**.
- This goes against the whole nature of modern culture which directs people to **look out for number 1** and spurns those people who live their lives for the sake of others.

- “To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the **sake of the gospel**, that I may share with them in its blessings.”-**1 Corinthians 9:22-23**
- “Paul sought to win people to Jesus Christ by being sensitive to their needs and identifying with them. We should try to reach people where they are today and expect to see changes later.”-Smith, Chuck
- Paul did it all for the **sake of the gospel** that he might **share** with fellow believers **in its blessings**.
- The Lord is the One Who will deal with the failings of the weak believer. The strong are to **build them up** which is the message of the gospel not **beat them up** as the world so often does.-**Vs.2**

Romans 15:3

“For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.’”

Our Example

- The main and only reason we do not seek to **please ourselves** is because our Lord Jesus provided for us His example and **did not please Himself**.-Vs.3
- Jesus showed the world the difference between being a people-pleaser and being a people-lover.
- In pursuing the welfare of others it did not make Him acceptable to everyone but it did make Him **pleasing** to His Father.
- “I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are **pleasing to him**”-**John 8:28b-29**

- Paul quoted David here regarding his zeal for God's house (**Psalm 69:9**).
- This statement then shows how even under extreme adversity and oppression our Lord Jesus Christ did not seek to **please** Himself.
- Jesus, denied Himself, and took the **reproach of those who reproached** His Father.
- Paul uses the **self denial of Jesus Christ** to illustrate a pattern in Him that we can follow when in conflict with fellow believers.
- “And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, **help the weak**, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but **always seek** to do good to one another and to everyone.”-**1 Thessalonians 5:14-15**

Romans 15:4

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

The Scriptures

- Paul had just quoted from the Old Testament in **Verse 3**, to establish a principle taught from the Scriptures.
- The Scripture **was written in former days** but can be used in the present day in order to build **endurance** and provide **encouragement** for believers.-**Vs.4**
- The **Scriptures** are a living and active organism to be used by the Holy Spirit to dissect the **thoughts** and **intentions** of our heart when we submit to **transform** and **conform** believers into the image of the Son (**Heb. 4:12;Rom. 8:29**).

- The **Scriptures** are **written for our instruction**. As believers we need to learn the **Scriptures** so that we can be **instructed** by them and **structure** our life to them.
- If we are not learning the **Scriptures** then we will live our lives according to our experiences, our feelings, or our thoughts.
- The Scriptures are **written** to give **endurance**. In learning the Scriptures we get to know the character of God which provides an **endurance** in the face of suffering.-**Vs.4**
- The Scriptures are **written** to give **encouragement**. How many times over the years have we found **encouragement** by reading the Scriptures during difficult times?

- The **Scriptures** are written that we **might have hope**. We do not **hope** in ourselves but the **God of hope** (Vs. 13). The Scriptures point our lives towards the **God of hope**.
- “It is **written** in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be **taught by God**.’ Everyone who has heard and **learned from the Father** comes to me”-**John 6:35**
- “In my opinion, the greatest sin in the church of Jesus Christ in this generation is **ignorance** of the Word of God. Many times I have heard a church officer say, 'Well, I don't know much about the Bible, but ...' and then he gives his opinion, which often actually **contradicts** the Word of God! Why doesn't he know much about the Bible? These things were written aforetime for our **learning**. God wants you to **know** His Word.”-**McGee, J. Vernon**

Romans 15:5-7

“May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,

that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”

Harmonious Living

- The God Whose essence and character reflects **endurance** and **encouragement** grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus.-**Vs.5**
- We are told here in **verse 5**, that God is **able** to **grant** us this because He is the God of **endurance** and **encouragement**.
- “Perseverance and encouragement come to us through the Scriptures, but they are **gifts from God**. Paul wished that all his readers, both the strong and the weak, would appropriate these gifts and **apply them** in their interpersonal relationship. The result would be unity in the church.” -Constable, Thomas

Living In Harmony with One Another is Characterized	
By Comforting One Another	Philippians 2:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Corinthians 1:4
By Loving One Another	John 13:34-35; 1 Peter 4:8
By Encouraging One Another	Hebrews 10:23-25; Colossians 2:2
By Bearing Up One Another	Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:11
By Rejecting Self and Empty Conceit Towards One Another	Philippians 2:3
By Forgiving One Another	Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; Matthew 6:14
By Seeking Peace with One Another	Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:18
By Having the Attitude of Christ for One another	Philippians 2:5; 1 Corinthians 2:16
By Rejoicing with One Another	Romans 12:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:16

One Voice

- The main purpose for living in **harmony** with one another is to **glorify** the Lord with **one voice** together in unified praise to Him.- **Vs. 6**
- “United vocal praise of God in the assembly would be an evidence of unity among the strong and the weak. Christians who do not love God and one another often have difficulty praising God together in church meetings.” -Constable, Thomas
- “Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name **give glory**, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness” -**Psalm 115:1**
- “Praise the LORD, my soul; **all my inmost being**, praise his holy name. **Praise the LORD**, my soul, and **forget not** all his benefits.- **Psalm 103:1-2**

Welcome One Another

- Believers are called to **welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you** and this for the **glory of God**.-Vs. 7
- The word for **welcome** in the original Greek describes **to receive fully with kindness** and fellowship. **To receive without reservation** or hesitation.
- The standard for this acceptance is **just as Christ** welcomed us to the **glory of God**.-Vs. 7
- “Christ did not receive us because we were perfect, because he could see no fault in us, or because he hoped to gain somewhat at our hands. Ah, no! But, in loving condescension covering our faults, and seeking our good, he welcomed us to his heart; so, **in the same way, and with the same purpose, let us receive one another.**” -Spurgeon, Charles

Romans 15:8-13

“For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

As it is written, 'Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.' And again it is said, 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.' And again, 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him.'

And again Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope.' May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."

Christ The Servant

- Paul informed us that **Christ became a servant**.-Vs. 8
- Jesus became a **servant** for two reasons:
 1. To the Jews (**the circumcised**) on behalf of the **truthfulness of God** to confirm the **promises** given to the **patriarchs**.
 2. To the Gentiles that the Gentiles may **glorify God** because of **His mercy**.
- Instead of dividing over disputable matters Jews and Gentiles should come together over the common ground of praise to Jesus, **Who became a servant**, in order to save us!

The Jews

- “Jesus **came** to His own but His own did not **receive** Him”.-**John 1:11**
- Jesus said to His disciples, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the **house of Israel**.”-**Matthew 15:24**
- Over and over in Matthew’s Gospel He says “It is **written**, that the **scripture might be fulfilled**”.
- The **patriarchs** in Scripture always refer to: **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**.
- It was to these **patriarchs** the **promise** was given of a Messiah and Jesus came to **confirm the promise** even though the majority of Jewish people missed it.-Vs. 8

- “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say “and to seeds,” as though referring to many, but referring to one, and to **your seed**, who is Christ”.-**Galatians 3:16**
- “These all died in faith, **not having received the things promised**, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ”-**Hebrews 11:13**
- “**Open my eyes**, that I may behold...that I am a **sojourner** on the earth”.-**Psalm 119:18a;19a**
- The **patriarchs** persuaded their minds and lived by their convictions in the wake of unfulfilled promises but were encouraged by the **faithfulness** of God to keep going.

The Gentiles

- We Gentiles should be in total worshipful awe of the **mercy of God** given to us in Jesus.-**Vs.9**
- “Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the **Gentiles**, and sing praises to Your name”.-**Psalm 18:49**
- “Rejoice, O **Gentiles**, with **His people**”-**Deuteronomy 32:43a**
- Jesus will glorify the Father among the Gentiles; the Gospel goes out to all peoples and was never meant to be exclusive.

- "Praise the LORD, all you **Gentiles!**"-**Psalm 117:1**
- There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall **rise to reign** over the **Gentiles**, In Him the **Gentiles** shall hope."-**Isaiah 11:10**
- All the believing Gentiles praise the Lord during the Church age that we are living in presently. In the future Millennial age Jesus will reign over the nations from His throne in Jerusalem.
- "The four quotations are taken from all three parts of the Old Testament, the Law (**v. 10**), the Psalms (**vs. 9, 11**), and the Prophets (**v. 12**). Accordingly the truth of the inclusion of Jew and Gentile in Christ through the Gospel is shown to extend through the whole range of Old Testament prophecy".-Vine, W. E.

The God of Hope

- We should not put our hope in ourselves, in our feelings, in our behaviors, in our works but **our hope** is in the **God of hope**.-**Vs.13**
- We can put **our hope** in the wrong things only to be disappointed.
- "As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to **set their hopes** on the uncertainty of riches, **but on God**, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. "-**1 Timothy 6:17**
- "We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a **hope** that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone..."-**Hebrews 6:19-20a**

- **Apart from a relationship with Jesus there is no hope:**
“remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having **no hope** and without God in the world.”-**Ephesians 2:12**
- **We fix our hope on our salvation:** “For to this end we toil and strive, because we have **our hope set** on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.”-**1 Timothy 4:10**
- **Hope** is our confident assurance **in God** and His plan. **Hope** gives us stability, confidence, and purpose in life.
- The source of our **hope is in God** and what He has **promised** to do. Our access of **hope** is by faith in what God has revealed in His Word (**Rom. 15:4**).

Abounding In Hope

- The **God of hope** works through the **power of the Holy Spirit** so that as believers we **may abound in hope**.-**Vs.13**
- Apart from the **Holy Spirit** believers will not be filled with the **joy** and **peace** that is provided to us by God.-**Vs.13**
- **Faith** in God and His Word produces **hope** in believers and it is the **Holy Spirit** Who builds this confident assurance in us.
- For through the **Spirit, by faith**, we ourselves eagerly wait for the **hope** of righteousness.”-**Galatians 5:5**
- “Now **faith** is the assurance of things **hoped** for...”-**Hebrews 11:1a**

- **Believing in God and His promises** to us regarding eternal life, our righteousness in Christ, builds an **abounding hope** in us through His perfect plan.
- As we saw in **Romans 14:17**, The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but **righteousness and peace and joy** in the Holy Spirit.
- The **joy** and **peace** alluded to here is something that only the **believer** can have and it only comes from God.-**vs.13**
- **Peace** and **joy** express our relationship to others whereas **righteousness** expresses our positional relationship with God Who **fills** us with His **hope, joy, and peace** attributes that are representative of His character.

- Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, that **my joy** may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”-**John 15:11**
- “**Peace** I leave with you; **my peace** I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”-**John 14:27**
- “In the world, **peace** is something you hope for or work for, but to the Christian, **peace** is God’s wonderful gift, received by faith. Unsaved people enjoy peace when there is absence of trouble; **Christians enjoy peace in spite of trials...**”-Wiersbe, Warren
- In **Galatians 5:22**, **joy** and **peace** are part of the fruit of the Spirit which agrees with **verse 13**, that this is achieved by the **power of the Holy Spirit**.

Romans 15:14-16

“ I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God

to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. ”

Motive For Ministry

- The motive for all ministry should flow out from the **grace of God in service of Christ Jesus**.-Vs. 15;16a
- Paul did not have a concern for the Roman Believers because he knew that they were **full of goodness**, and that they were **filled with all knowledge**, and they were able to **instruct one another**.
- Paul wrote to them to **remind** them of the reason for **serving** one another is the **grace of God** expressed in the **gospel** concerning His Son **Christ Jesus**.
- There is no other **pure motive** for being a minister of the **gospel of God** and we would do well to remind ourselves of this truth frequently.-Vs. 16

- Paul expressed that **ministry** was a **priestly service of the gospel of God** to the Gentiles.-Vs. 16
- There are a couple of things happening here in the use of the word **minister** and the words **priestly service**.-Vs.16
- The word for minister describes in Ancient Greece the man who would put up the heavy expense of a festive religious celebration. Thus **a person who at great expense to himself served others**.
- The **Priests** in the O.T. spent their time living among the people and then went before God to sacrifice for theirs and the peoples **atonement**.
- “When he defines his ministry as **ministering the gospel of God** the apostle uses a word occurring nowhere else in the New Testament which may properly be rendered ‘acting as a priest.’ So the ministry of the gospel is conceived of after the pattern of priestly offering”.-Murray, John

- A **minister** of Christ Jesus sacrifices a great service to bring people to God with the **gospel** as an **acceptable offering sanctified by the Holy Spirit**.-Vs.16
- The phrase the **gospel of God** is not limited to the salvation message only but refers to all of the **good news** we have from God proclaimed in His Word.
- Our hearts need to be changed by the renewing and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Our response is a sacrifice of ourselves as an offering to God for all that He has given to us in Christ Jesus.
- The only **authentic motive** for ministry is **serving** others from a **heart offered to God** in response to the **gospel**.

Romans 15:17-19

“In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience— by word and deed,

by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ;"

God's Work

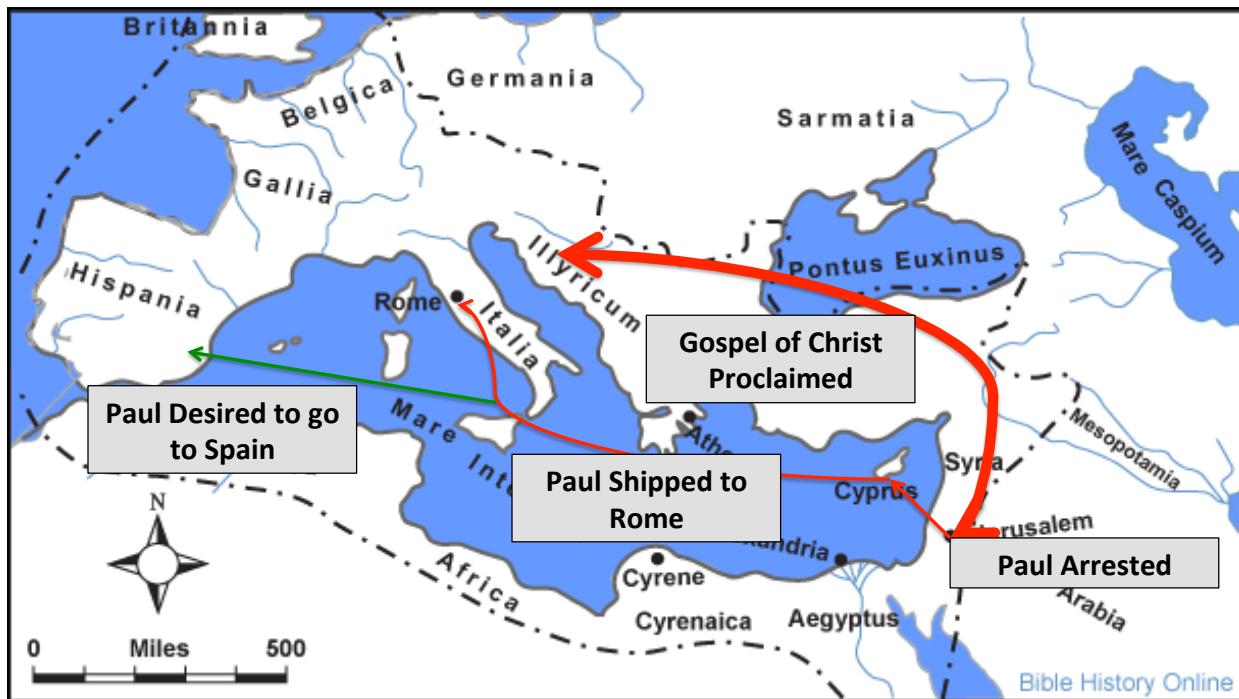
- Paul has good reason to be **proud of the work** he had accomplished **for God**.-Vs. 17
- However Paul makes it very clear that it wasn't him that was doing the work but that it was **Jesus** Who has **accomplished His work through Paul**.-Vs.18
- "Paul will glory only in what Christ has done through him. He is sure that Christ has done great things through him, and he is glad that he can draw attention to those things. But he is not trying to attract adulation. **It is what Christ has done that is his theme**."-Morris, Leon

- “But far be it from me to **boast except in the cross** of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” -**Galatians 6:14**
- The work of ministry and change cannot happen according to our own self determination or effort to accomplish something good in a person’s heart. Only by a change of heart in **being crucified of self** with all of its sin and shame will we find our **new identity in Him for accomplishing His work.**
- The **through me** used by Paul here is an important phrase to highlight because it shows the process by which all work is accomplished for Jesus. -**Vs. 18**
- Believers are instruments for God's grace and truth to be used to bring others to **obedience** by our **words** and our **deeds**. -**Vs. 18**
- **Obedience** here is referring to putting our trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. -**Vs. 18**

Signs and Wonders

- The power of the Holy Spirit **verse 13**, empowers people to make the connection between the **signs** and **wonders** and the message causing people to believe the **gospel of Christ**. -**Vs. 19**
- **Signs** and **wonders** can be a double-edged sword. Jesus rebuked the people for following after the **signs** and **wonders**.
- “So Jesus said to him, “Unless you see **signs** and **wonders** you will not believe.” -**John 4:48**

- **Signs and wonders** can dangerously lead to deception.
- “The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and **false signs** and **wonders**, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved”-**2 Thessalonians 2:9-10**
- However, we know that God definitely uses **signs** and **wonders** to accomplish His will and purposes.
- We see in both the O.T. and the N.T. that, “God also bore witness by **signs** and **wonders** and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”-**Hebrews 2:4**
- The **gospel of Christ** had spread **from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum**.-**Vs. 19**



Romans 15:20-21

“and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else’s foundation, but as it is written, “Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.”

Preach the Gospel

- Paul makes it clear that his number one **ambition** was to **preach the gospel**. The **gospel is the heart of God**, “...to proclaim good news to the poor...to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”-**Luke 4:18b-19**
- Paul stated that his **ambition** was to **proclaim the gospel** where Christ had not yet been proclaimed so that lest he **build on someone else’s foundation**.-**Vs.20**
- In order that, **those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand**.-**Vs.21**

- Paul uses a quote from **Isaiah 52:15** to show that the plan of God has always been for man to understand and know Him.
- “There is one thing that the Christian needs more than he needs any other thing. One thing on which all others rest; and on which all others turn. This, then, must be our greatest need: A true knowledge of God. ”-E.W. Bullinger
- “And this is eternal life, **that they know you** the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”-**John 17:3**

- “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, **the knowledge of God** rather than burnt offerings.”-**Hosea 6:6**
- “let him who boasts boast in this, that he **understands** and **knows** me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”-**Jeremiah 9:24**
- “Do distinguish, however, between **knowing about** Christ and **knowing** Christ. We may know very much about many of our great men, though we do not know them. Now, it will never save a soul to know about Christ. The only saving knowledge is to know him, his very self, and to trust him, the living Savior, who is now at the right hand of God.”- Spurgeon, Charles

Romans 15:22-24

“This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you,

I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.”

Longing for Rome

- Paul had **longed** to go to Rome for **many years** and **now** it looked like he would be able to make it and see firsthand the work of the gospel among the people of Rome.-**Vs.22**
- The reason he was **hindered** was due to his ambition that people along the way to Rome would hear the gospel proclaimed.-**Vs.20**
- Since Paul no longer had **any room for work in these regions** it freed him to finally go to Rome.-**Vs.23**
- Paul had **formulated his plans** but the **details did not work out** according to his plans but according to God's plan.
- He would go to Rome, not as a missionary on his way **to Spain**, but Paul went to Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial before Caesar.

Romans 15:25-29

“At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.

For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.

When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.”

Spiritual and Material Blessings

- Paul was on his way to Jerusalem to provide **aid** for the **poor among the saints in Jerusalem**.-**Vss.25 & 26**
- The Believer's in **Macedonia and Achaia** gave **some contribution** that they were **pleased** to give to the poor believers in Jerusalem.
- Paul was arrested after a disruption ensued around the Temple (**Acts 21:27-36**).
- The Gentiles had received much from the Believers in Jerusalem by way of teachers and encouragement in the form of **spiritual blessings** and now in return they were willing to give to the poor believers in Jerusalem via **material blessings**.

- The Gentiles have been given the ability to participate in the **promises** that were handed down to the Jews, their **spiritual blessings**. Now it is the Gentiles duty to also to be in **service** to the Jews in the form of **material blessing**.
- “They are Israelites, and to them **belong**...the **promises**. To them **belong** the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the **Christ**...”.-**Romans 9:4a-b;5a**
- “Therefore **remember** that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh... remember that you were at that time **separated** from Christ, **alienated** from the commonwealth of Israel and **strangers** to the covenants of **promise**, having no hope and **without God** in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who **once were far** off have been **brought near** by the **blood of Christ**.”-**Ephesians 2:11a;12-13**

- “**Rejoice, O Gentiles**, with his people.”-**Romans 15:10**
- Little did Paul know that when he wrote this letter to the Romans he would eventually arrive in Rome but it would be in chains as a prisoner of Nero.
- “Many are the **plans** in the mind of a man, but it is the **purpose** of the LORD that **will stand.**”-**Proverbs 19:21**
- “I want you to know, brothers, that what has **happened to me** has really **served to advance the gospel**, so that it has become known throughout the **whole imperial guard** and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.”-**Philippians 1:12-13**
- Paul had a great attitude about God’s plan for him and rejoiced that the **gospel was advancing**. Paul gives an example for us to follow when God changes our plans for His ultimate plan.

Romans 15:30-33

“I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea,

and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. May the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

Paul Asks For Prayer

- Paul asked for believers in Rome to **strive together in prayer** for him to be **delivered from the unbelievers in Judea**.-Vs.30
- Paul wants to be **acceptable to the saints** in Jerusalem.
- This is the same word he just used in **15:16**, where he desired the offering of the Gentiles to be **accepted** by God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
- But now Paul desired and asked for **prayers** that the believers in Jerusalem who had once rejected him would now **accept** his **service for Jerusalem** in bringing the **material aid** to them.
- Paul believed in prayer and knew that God answered prayer but sometimes **God's will** can be different than **our will**.

- The word for strive describes **agonizing or wrestling** in prayer with God.-**Vs.30**
- "... 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 does into his wrestling!"- Wiersbe, Warren
- "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".-Vine, W.E.
- "A Christian's intercession is a means of sharing in the ministry of others."-Witmer, John