

Romans 15.1-13 Christlikeness, Glory of God (3) 192-195  
Ray Mondragon

[Romans 15.16, Psalm 69, Responsibility of Christlikeness 192]

Apparently this is something we need to understand—probably there was an issue about Christian Liberty in Rome because Paul spends a chapter and a half on it. He is not dealing with clear-cut rights and wrongs but things that arise because of culture and backgrounds that can divide believers. Restraint of one's liberties to help other, weaker brothers is Paul's theme. Christian liberty is the overall subject in 14.1-15.3.

### Context

1. 14.1-15.13 Preventing conflicts in questionable areas
2. 14.1-12 - Acceptance of other with differing convictions
3. 14.13-23 - Restraint of one's own convictions for others
4. 15.1-6 - Responsibility of Christlikeness

Overall in this sección the idea is to *prevent* conflicts in the questionable areas. In 1Corinthians 8 we saw the problem also. Again, Paul is not dealing with absolute rights and wrongs, the things that the Scriptures are clear on, but rather some areas that are questionable, and in this case, arise because of culture and backgrounds.

The first 12 verses of chapter 14: the main theme is the *acceptance* of one another, regardless of these differing convictions. Accepting where people are in their spiritual growth, the different levels and backgrounds that may slow them down in their grow—we are to accept them, especially in these questionable areas.

The last part of 14, verses 13-23 is primarily addressed to the stronger in faith, the one that has a better grasp on Christian liberty. Paul asked them to *restrain* that liberty, not abandon it—we don't lose it—in the midst of those that might be offended as a result of not having that freedom. This is the restraint of one's own convictions for the benefit of another.

Now we are looking at a third major area, looking at it from a different perspective. Now he motivates us along the same lines, preventing conflicts in questionable areas, but now it is based on our responsibility of Christlikeness. So he is using Christ as an example.

- I. Introduction 1.1-17
- II. Provision of God's Righteousness 1.18-8.39

- III. Vindication of God's Righteousness 9-11
- IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.3
  - A. Application to God 12.1-2
  - B. Application to Church 12.3-21
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    1. Reception of Differing Convictions 14.1-12
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    3. Responsibility of Christlikeness 15.1-6
      - a. Pleasing Encouragement 15.1-4
        - 1) Exhortations 15.1-12

In the first 4 verses we have more encouragement, and the main theme—from a word that occurs 3 times in those 4 verses—is the idea of *pleasing* the fellow believer. Again, it is primarily addressed to the stronger believer or the one that has a better on Christian liberty—to please the other believers, and even thinking in terms of building them up.

There are a multitude of exhortations—few in doctrinal section, chapters 1-11—but this is the application section, about taking certain attitudes or certain actions.

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

'Now we who are strong': notice that Paul includes himself, aligning himself with those that have a good understanding of Christian liberty and there are several passages, eg, 1Corinthians 9 where Paul uses himself as an example of restricting his own liberty in order to better minister to others.

### Terms

1. Strong - δυνατός (doo-nah-tós) possible, able, strong, mighty, powerful
2. Bear - βαστάζω (bahs-táhd-zo) carry, put up with, bear  
literal - pitcher, purse, coffin, stones, sandals, burdens, persons  
here - not just tolerance but active help

We look at the words here. 'Strong', the first time it occurs in Romans. It is a pretty common word. What word is related to this word, δυνατός (doo-nah-tós)? 'Dynamite' which has the idea of power or strength. In some contexts it is the idea of something *possible* because there is the ability to accomplish something, or in other contexts, the ability to do something, to be able, or as in this

context be strong, mighty or powerful. When we talk about the ones without strength, it is essentially the opposite of this one.

The other major word here is to 'bear'. Actually the verse says we 'ought to bear...' We saw this word 'ought' in chapter 13 in the context of 'owing' something: owe no may anything except love, and has the idea of obligation; it is a strong word, and in that context even the idea of loving one another. So here the strong have the obligation to bear the weaknesses of those without strength.

To 'bear': if you do a word study on it, more often you will see it translating into the word 'carry' and, in fact, very commonly has the idea of carrying something. It is used in this literal sense of carrying a variety of things, for example, in Mark 14.13, Jesus sent 2 of His disciples to go into the city and meet a man *carrying* a pitcher of water.

So it is used in the literal sense of picking something up and carrying it, transporting it from one place to another. Similarly, in Luke 10:4 Jesus encourages, 'Carry no purse, no bag, no shoes and greet no one on your way.' He sends them on their mission saying, depend solely on me and the HS. In Luke 7.14, the carrying of a coffin: the bearers of the coffin came to a halt. Again, picking up something and carrying it; in fact it refers to carrying a burden itself in other contexts. Even Christ Himself, in John 19.17, they took Him out, carrying His own cross, some say it 'bearing' His own cross. Then John 20.15, supposing Jesus to be the gardener...sir, if you have *carried* Him away from the tomb.

I stress this because in this context, Romans 15.1, and in many others, I think the sense is not just to *tolerate, or put up with*, but be involved with *helping* them, that is, picking up and helping them with the burden of not understanding the full idea of liberty. Doing what you need to do to encourage people to grow, not telling them directly what they need to do or not do, ie, adopt your convicción. At that time you could not expect the Jews to overcome the years and years of tradición, so you would have to restrain using some of your liberty when around them.

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

The 'weaknesses': we already saw that word, in chapter 14, translated 'without strength', using a different word. Since he used δυνατός (doo-nah-tós) at the beginning of the verse, now he uses ἀδύνατος (ah-dóo-nah-tos), the 'a' at the beginning making it the opposite of the original word, like we use 'un' to negate or give the opposite of an idea. And it is just one word for 'without strength'

### Terms

1. Strong - δυνατός (doo-nah-tós)
2. Bear - βαστάζω (bahs-táhd-zo)
3. Without strength - ἀδύνατος (ah-dóo-nah-tos)

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

'...not just please ourselves': the first time the word for *pleasing* occurs.

15.2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

'Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good': Another word here, the central word, to 'please', ἀρέσκω (ah-réhs-ko). We might think, doesn't the Bible discourage us from pleasing men? Here are some passages:

### Terms

1. Strong - δυνατός (doo-nah-tós)
2. Bear - βαστάζω (bahs-táhd-zo)
3. Without strength - ἀδύνατος (ah-dóo-nah-tos)
4. Please - ἀρέσκω (ah-réhs-ko)

not pleasing men Galatians 1.10 *For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would.*

Paul is contrasting the man-pleaser, one that does things to gain favor with me, instead of God. The encouragement is *not* to please men in that context. So there are areas in which we are tempted to please one another, but the Bible encourages us against it. A lot of times in order to resolve conflicts we will compromise the truth and in those contexts I think the Bible encourages us not to please men, 'soften' the gospel or any doctrine that some may take offense at. But there are several passages that encourage us to please God: pleasing God 1 Thessalonians 2.4 *but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.*

So we don't please men, but pleasing God in a clear gospel presentation.

4.1 *Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more.*

By our lives we please God as well. One of the main themes is pleasing God rather than men...

pleasing men Romans 15.2

Now this passage encourages us to please men in terms of relationships, and particularly fellow believers, and in this context, it is in these areas of questionable customs or background issues. So there is a context in which we do please men and by doing that we also please God.

15.2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

On the occasion that we do please men, it is for his edification. The things that will promote his spiritual growth, his building up—and we have already seen that word.

So those are the exhortations, in the first 2 verses.

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a. Pleasing Encouragement	15.1-4
1) Exhortations	15.1-12
2) Example of Christ	15.3

Now we have the example of Christ—by way of motivation, the implication being that if we want to be Christlike, follow His pattern, reflect Him, then this is further encouragement along the lines of pleasing one another.

15.3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.”

Verse 3, ‘for even Christ did not please Himself’: the third occasion where we have the word ‘please’, in this context referring to Christ. And Christlikeness is a person that doesn’t first think of their *own* needs but thinks in terms of the needs of those around us, for even Christ did not please Himself.

**Terms**

1. Strong - δυνατός (doo-nah-tós)
2. Bear - βαστάζω (bahs-táhd-zo)
3. Without strength - ἀδύνατος (ah-dóo-nah-tos)
4. Please - ἀρέσκω (ah-réhs-ko)
  - not pleasing men Gálatas 1.10
  - pleasing God 1Thessalonians 2.4, 4.1
  - pleasing men Romans 15.2
  - Christ pleasing God Romans 15.3

We have some examples:

John 5.30 “*I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*”

Christ not doing what He would want, not pleasing Himself, the will of Him who sent Him.

8.29 “*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.”*”

So pleasing the other in this context is pleasing to God and that is Christlikeness.

14.31 *but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me.*

So He does what the Father commands, He is pleasing God.

15.3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.”

‘But as it is written’: This is in the OT, from a Messianic Psalm. We look at it not just to see how messianic it is, but also some of the verses we will look at give us lots of examples of the reproaches that were cast upon Christ and illustrate what this passage quoted says.

15.3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.”

This is a Psalm written by David and it reflects some of the life of David, but it goes beyond David. The context is that David was trying to escape Saul who was attempting to kill him; oftentimes there were enemies that surrounded him. The experience of David was that those that hated God and poured reproaches upon God, they reproached David since he was a representative of God. That is, David experienced some of the hatred for God, and since it is a messianic psalm—Paul attaches Christ to Psalm 69. In the context of Psalm 69, the enemies of God take out their hatred and wrath upon David and it is a foreshadowing of the

hatred that mankind has for God which is poured out on Christ Himself who is God even though they only recognized Him as a false messiah. 15.3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.”

So THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU [God] FELL ON ME [the writer of the Psalm, David—foreshadowing Christ].”

That is the application Paul draws from that psalm.

### Reproaches (Psalm 69)

- 4 - Hated and slandered: *Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; Those who would destroy me are powerful, Those who would destroy me are powerful, being wrongfully my enemies; What I did not steal, I then have to restore....* (Mark 14.55-59: similar hatred for the Lord Jesus Christ and slander)
- 7 - Dishonored (mockings, crucifixion): *Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Dishonor has covered my face.*  
Again the experience of David, but also of Christ Himself.
- 8 - Estranged by brothers: *I have become estranged from my brothers And an alien to my mother's sons.* (John 7.2-5)  
Even the brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him, and tradition tells us that James and Jude believed after the resurrection.
- 11 - Made proverb: *When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them.* (John 1.46 “*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*”, a common saying of the day)
- 12 - Criticized by rulers: *Those who sit in the gate talk about me,...* (Matthew 27.40-44)  
Those who sit in the gate are usually leaders or prominent people. Christ was criticized by rulers. This, at the crucifixion.
- 19-20 - Surrounded by enemies: 19 *You know my reproach and my shame and my dishonor; All my adversaries are before You* 20 *Reproach has broken my heart and I am so sick. And I looked for sympathy, but there was none,*  
David's experience and foreshadowing Christ's as well leading up to the crucifixion.
- 21 - Gall and vinegar: *They also gave me gall for my food And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.* (Matthew 27.34)

The reproaches in Psalm 69 foreshadow what Paul is quoting in Romans 15.3. The hatred that was on God, fell to Christ Himself,

even before the crucifixion but very vividly illustrated by the events that followed—in the allusions of Psalm 69.

So Christ is the example: He did not have to bear all the abuse, but He did it to not please Himself, in order to accomplish the greater goal of becoming the sacrifice that would satisfy the holy requirements of God that you and I may be justified, have a relationship with Him.

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2) Example of Christ	15.3
3) Examples of OT	15.4

Now we have examples beyond Christ, from the OT:

15.4 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.

‘For whatever was written in earlier times’... Part of what he is getting at here, like Psalm 69, ‘was written for our instruction’. So the Old Testament has tremendous value; we are not under the law, so we do make this distinction, but the law and the entire OT has tremendous value for those of us who live in this era, and in fact, there is a purpose that Paul brings here: Part of the purpose of the OT for us, the things that were written before the 1st Century, ‘was written for our instruction’. We can learn, we can grow from the OT and it kind of reminds us that the NT wasn't completed until 95 AD. In the NT ‘it was written’ always refers to the OT. In fact, the earliest book of the NT wasn't written until 15-20 years after the crucifixion while the church was still primarily Jewish.

We need to note that there are prominent preachers today that are minimizing the OT. In fact some are blatantly saying that you can take the OT out of your Bibles, minimizing the OT. But there is tremendous value in it. So there is a distinction between no being under the legal requirements of the law and its value. Paul uses it often in his teaching, so you can't really eliminate it from the Bible. You can't even

understand many of the passages with OT quotations unless you understand the OT. There really wasn't a real understanding of the church until Paul, in Ephesians 3, wrote about the mystery of the church.

15.4 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.

'So that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures'...referring to the OT. As you read the stories and see the saints persevering and how God encouraged them, and you read of miracles and answered prayer, examples in the life of God's people and how God acts on behalf of them, and you see their endurance—

15.4 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.

—'we might have hope'—in a God that not only performs miracles; we believe in a God who has our best interest in mind, who has a plan. The OT saints didn't have it easy, some of them went through extreme suffering. But we also know the outcome of their faith because we have assurance from the OT which should also give us hope. Now keep in mind the Biblical idea of hope is not just 'wishing' for something to come about but relying on the reality with confident expectation. We are given assurances and sometimes He enters into covenant with men. Hope is an aspect of faith that looks forward, and faith is trusting in what God has done and what God has said which gives us a future perspective, having confidence in the outcome or where God is taking us.

That gives us the first 4 verses where pleasing others is encouraged and particularly from Christ's example and the encouragement from the OT as well.

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## b. Prayer of Paul

### 1) Content of Prayer 15.5

Paul ends this little paragraph with what I call 'a prayer', a desire on the part of Paul. He phrases it:

15.5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

'Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement': from the previous verse, we can learn from the perseverance of OT saints and be encouraged. This word 'encouragement', also in verse 4, is related to the word παράκλητος (pah-ráh-klay-tos), paraclete, the idea of encouragement, comfort, and in relation to the HS in the Upper Room, some translations call Him the Comforter when Jesus promised Him.

So 'the God', that is, the *source* of perseverance and encouragement for the OT saints is also the source for us. This is somewhat of a prayer or a desire for the Roman believers...

15.5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

...May this God 'grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus'. Now he is returning to the main thing he is dealing with throughout this passage the relationship with one another. Don't let these cultural differences, differences in convictions, divide us. God grant us to be of the same mind—same attitude of Christlikeness, unity, the unity of the body of Christ—the main theme of all these passages.

We have to do what we can to prevent the divisions and promote unity. That doesn't mean that we agree on everything, that we have uniformity, but we have a unity of spirit and a desire to not let these things divide us or separate us. It is 'according to Christ Jesus', not only His example, but according to His desire and the power He gives us to be able to do those things.

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  - b. Prayer of Paul 15.5-6
    - 1) Content of Prayer 15.5
    - 2) Purpose of Prayer 15.6

So that is the *content* of the prayer, major things, not the questionable ones that Paul was dealing with in chapters 14 and 15. And with that content we then have the *purpose* of the prayer:

15.5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 6: ‘so that with one accord you may with one voice’...

15.5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

... ‘glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’: So this unity is going to promote the *glory* of God *and* Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Commentators are divided on how to take that, but I think it somewhat supports the Deity of Christ. The conclusion is that if we follow through on what Paul is encouraging here and what he says in a desire or prayer, that will result in the glory of the Father, God Himself.

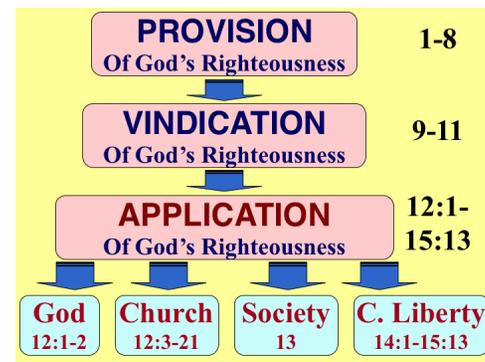
The alternative: when we are divided and don’t accept one another and don’t give up our liberty for the benefit of others, it detracts from the Glory of the Lord. But when we follow through, then God is glorified.

Pleasing believers spiritually, in this Biblical sense, brings glory to God!

[Romans 15.7-9 & Deuteronomy 33-34 The Glory of God (1) 193]

The main purpose of all things, including mankind, is the glory of God, so I think it is appropriate that God ends this whole letter with that main theme underlying this passage. Obviously we are dealing with the church at Rome, believers, applying the righteousness of God with regard to God, the church, the society and Christian liberty.

This may have been a problem at Rome; it is the only issue that Paul raises that deals with practical problems. It is the issue of unity within the body of Christ, the church—the problem of their backgrounds and how they can affect relationships, 14-15.13.



The context of this is that Paul is attempting to prevent conflicts within the body of Christ that arise from these questionable areas. There *are* absolutes in the Bible, 10 commandments (9 repeated in the NT. One of them is for the Jewish people who are under the Mosaic Covenant with the worship on the sabbath). There are other (absolute) commandments that deal with morality and relationships, so there are definitely rights and wrongs. These are issues that come primarily from these backgrounds.

There were those who came out of a Jewish background and became believers, and now that they are believers, they are free in Christ. That freedom, in terms of everyday practice, sometimes was a little fuzzy for some believers, especially because it had been drilled into their head that the observance of the sabbath is required under the Mosaic law. Other things, relating to certain foods that were prohibited, were no longer to be observed. But it was difficult for Jews to absorb these new ways.

And Sunday is not a Christian ‘sabbath’. There are reasons why we worship on Sunday, but it doesn’t carry over all those sabbath requirements. We are free—to watch football on Sundays! But there are some churches that would say it is a sin and a violation of the sabbath. That comes from the Jewish background. And there are things in our culture, such as alcohol and other issues, that are not commands in the NT and can divide us within the body of Christ. And Paul is trying to minimize or prevent that if we will abide by the instruction he gives. So that’s the whole section starting with 14.1...

## Context Romans 14-15

1. 14.1-15.13 Preventing conflicts in questionable areas
2. 14.1-12 - Acceptance of other with differing convictions
3. 14.13-23 - Restraint of one's own convictions for others
4. 15.1-6 - Responsibility of Christlikeness
5. 15.7-13 - Resulting in God's Glory

We can break it down, verses 14.1-12, where the whole theme is accepting one another. Now we will see in 15.7 that Paul goes back, almost says 'Go back to verse 14.1, and keep in mind everything I have said up to 15.6'. So he is kind of capturing the whole thing and bringing it to a conclusion—in where it should result: in God being glorified. If we practice the principles that we have been looking at, then God, in fact, will be glorified. So the acceptance of one another with different convictions—if a new believer has certain convictions, like not watching football on Sundays, then we are careful to not flaunt in front of them our freedom to watch it. We accept them; we don't try to change them, we let them grow at God's pace.

14.13-23 looks more at the stronger believer that has a good grasp on Christian freedom and has all of these freedoms, but when in the midst of those who don't have them, Paul advises us to *restrain*. He takes the side of the strong, not removing or minimizing su freedom but we do voluntarily restrain for the benefit of those who do not have the same conviction.

Then we saw the responsibility of living like Christ who sets the example. This is the responsibility of Christlikeness who is not only the perfect example—who ultimately sacrificed everything, restrained everything for our benefit.

If all of this is followed, then that will result in God's glory. So he focuses on this unity of the body and what God has done—in fact he lays out the whole plan of God in these few verses.

The theme of glory starts in verses 5 and 6, a desire of Paul, praying something like a prayer,

15.5 *Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

So, with one voice, externally as well, not only internally, 'glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'. This theme of glory starts in the prior paragraph and now further in verse 7, *Christ also accepted us to the glory of God, y verse 9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy and then he quotes the glorification of God, not using the word 'glory', but "THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME."*

Verse 10, again, "REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE."

11, And again, "PRAISE THE LORD. All these words are related to 'glorifying', worshipping or praising God.

In outline form we are in 'Application of God's Righteousness'...

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| IV. Application of God's Righteousness | 12.1-15.3  |
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| a. Sustaining of Brothers              | 15.7       |

...receiving those of differing convictions, restraining and being responsible for Christlikeness—all of that should result in the glory of God. Verse 7:

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

Sustaining or accepting of brothers. We have already looked at the word 'accept'. Here he starts with 'Therefore', almost summarizing what he has talked about before, going all the way back to verse one of chapter 14, starting with the same words.

## Major Terms

1. Accept - προσλαμβάνω (prahs-lahm-báh-no) take to one's self, receive totally

14.1,3; Acts 18.26; Philemon 17

We don't just tolerate them, we *embrace* them, take them to ourselves.

Acts 18.26 *and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*

Apollos was speaking boldly. Priscilla y Aquila realize that Apollos needed a little refining, so they take him aside and give him instructions. That's a visual picture of the word προσλαμβάνω (prahs-lahm-báh-no), to take to one's side.

Philemon 17 *If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me.*

The same word. The idea of the passage before us, going beyond tolerance, ‘hugging’ them, bringing them close, having fellowship, breaking down these barriers that divide.

Then, he reminds us, as he did in the first 6 verses:

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

The same word, προσλαμβάνω (prahs-lahm-báh-no), for how Christ accepted us. And, by the way, there is a whole string of ‘one another’s in the immediate context. 12.5 gives us the basis for the unity that Paul is striving for throughout.

12.5 *so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

We are diverse, very different, ‘some more different than others’. And those differences have sharp edges, sometimes they get on peoples’ nerves, but there is unity, a oneness.

10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;*

Again ‘one another’. That unity is expressed in love. There should be a unity of spirit, accepting people for who they are. We have a couple of other ‘one another’s like 15.5 and 6, which we just read: *same mind with one another* in fellowship with Christ, according to what He has taught; He is the pattern here in 15.7. And in verse 6: *with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God*. When this is going on, we are accepting one another as Christ has accepted us; that reflects to everyone around y the unbelieving world can see a of the glory of God.

So what is this ‘glory’? There are different aspects we can discuss concerning the glory of God. We always start with what we might call the *inherent* glory of God.

## Glory of God

### 1. Aspects of Glory

a. **Inherent Glory** It is God and God alone that has glory and glory is the essence of who God is. The glory is something of a composite of the perfections of God, that is, the totality of God. Sometimes God displays that glory and makes it evident so that we can experience it, even visualize it. On occasion people have even seen the glory of God and we can see it with our mind’s eye as we read these passages and experiences that people have had, came into contact with the glory of God.

Moses asked God to show him His glory, and God said he would not be able to see His full glory—it will dissolve all the elements in your body. So he saw only a portion of it, His mercy, compassion, goodness—all the perfections of God make up His glory. That is inherent glory.

Exodus 34.5 *he LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD. 6 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin;...*

It gives us a feel for God’s inherent glory. Man has no glory. Only God possesses it. He created us in His image and has been pleased to give us a tiny little bit of that glory, but even that, because of sin, is distorted and marred and diminished.

b. **Revealed Glory** God has been pleased to reveal Himself and make His glory known; in fact that is the purpose of the creation, the whole universe—to *display* the glory of God. And His creation by itself displays it; He has built in within the creations things that you can detect to be able to see the glory of God.

Psalms 19 *The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands...*

Astrophysics declare the glory to God. There are bits of data that tell us something about who He is, and everyone is exposed to it, so everyone is exposed to some aspects of the glory of God.

Deuteronomy 5.24 *“You said, ‘Behold, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives.*

Obviously He has revealed His glory in His written word. This is at Mt Sinai when the glory of God was *visible, audible, tangible*...the whole mountain rocked. The glory of God is so magnificent it could dissolve you. Here Moses is recounting that experience 40 years later, in Deuteronomy.

c. **Ascribed Glory** Romans 1.23 *and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.*

The Bible encourages us to *ascribe* glory to Him. We can't *add* to his glory; we can't, in a real way, *give* Him glory. When we say that, we are saying that we want to *ascribe* glory to God, by the way that we live, or when we praise Him or adore Him we are ascribing glory to Him. We will see some of that in verses 10-12.

We are responsible to ascribe glory to Him. Paul even condemns the lost world for not giving glory,

1.21 *For even though they knew God, they did not honor [the word is glorify] Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

That is what the unbeliever does: he does not give what is due to God, the respect, the glory, the honor that belongs to Him and is due Him from His creatures. This is Christlikeness, reflecting and ascribing glory to God in a visible way. The lost world can actually get a glimpse, and it is part of what God will use in the judgment if they never come into a saving relationship with Him.

The rest of the passage will give us more of how God has revealed Himself with His plan.

IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.3
A. Application to God	12.1-2
B. Application to Church	12.3-21
C. Application to Society	13
D. Application to Christian Liberty	14.1-15.13
1. Reception of Differing Convictions	14.1-12
2. Restraint for Edification	14.13-23
3. Responsibility of Christlikeness	15.1-6
4. Resulting in God's Glory	15.8-12
a. Sustaining of Brothers	15.7
b. Service of Christ	15.8-12
1) Service to Jews	15.8

Paul reviewed, in verse 7, the idea of sustaining the brethren. And now he is going to talk about His plan, or the service of Christ and what Christ came to do. Verses 8 and 9 are one sentence...

15.8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, 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."

...looking at the main parts of it to understand the essence of what is being communicated. 'to the circumcision...the fathers', the fathers of the Jewish people. And there are two overall purposes in this broad plan of God that, we will see, started with Abraham, Genesis 12. Notice that Christ is a servant to a particular group—the circumcision, which goes back to Genesis 17, the Covenant—and, in verse 9: the Gentiles *to glorify*, that is, the plan is ultimately to glorify God for His mercy, indicating that Jew, Gentile, are not deserving; it's on the basis of mercy. Now he is going to support it from Scripture, 'as it is written', and he gives us 4 Scriptures. These almost summarize the whole Bible, His plan from beginning to end. It's in the law, the writings (the Psalms) and the prophets. So, indirectly, Paul is saying that his plan that God has effected—that includes Jew and Gentile, to bring them together to ultimately glorify God—is a theme of all of the Bible. This is the big Plan of God. In a few verses Paul lays out this grand plan.

For I say that Christ has become is in the perfect tense, that is, in the past with ongoing effects or results. Christ has become a servant and continues to be a servant, almost on an on-going basis, and you might say it is implying the incarnation. We know that in the deity of Christ, He always is eternal, but in the incarnation, Philippians 2 that speaks of God's humility, setting aside access to His attributes, 'emptying Himself', so Christ has become, with ongoing and, we would say, eternal effects, a servant διάκονος (dee-áh-ko-nos), in the sense that He is always giving Himself for the benefit of others.

to the circumcision: referring to the Jews, but also probably reminding us of Genesis 17 where a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant was circumcision, confirmed with 'the fathers'. Remember that there were no nations, no Jews when God called Abraham, 12.1:

### Plan of God

1. Revelation of Plan Genesis 12:1 *Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you;...*

God called one man and his relatives from their country, to the land, 2 *And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you.* God was going to create His own counterculture, His own nation that would be His own possession, separate and distinct from all the other nations. And God was going to make them great, he would bless them and *And make your name great*; The purpose of Abraham and his descendants through Isaac is to be a blessing to the rest of the world/nations. Even there we have a hint at the purpose that God has for His people; it is for other peoples, whom we call Gentiles.

He continues with the summary of world history: 12.3 *And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse.* We have it seen worked out throughout history and even today. *And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.*” Not only from Abraham; Paul takes this little passage and attributes it to Jesus Christ: in Jesus Christ (15.8a). This gospel goes out to the nations.

Already God has revealed His glory in His Word through His people. The Bible was written by Jews, by His nation.

Isaiah 14.24 *the LORD of hosts has sworn saying, “Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand,...*

By the time Isaiah writes, this plan has unfolded in large measure, ‘intended’ ... ‘planned’—synonymous parallelism—‘so it has happened’ ... ‘so it will stand’. Two poetic lines saying essentially the same things. A lot of that plan had even been fulfilled.

26 *This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations.* 27 *“For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”*

The plan of God is *certain* and even the aspects in the future that we have not seen are just as certain as those that have already taken place and we can read about them.

46:9 *Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,*

Again, synonymous parallelism.

10 *Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;*

Comforting, assuring: you are part of God’s plan; He has called us to Himself, and He is going to finish what He started. It brings Him pleasure, can you imagine that?

## 2. Christ fulfills plan

This passage in Romans is one of many others that explains that: Christ fulfills the plan in large measure, ‘on behalf of the truth of God’, that is, revealing and fulfilling the plan. On the Sermon on the mount, Matthew 5.17. Jesus said, ‘I came not to destroy it, but to fulfill the law’.

15.8 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, 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.”

In what ways does He fulfill the law? In at least 3 aspects or senses: He fulfills Bible prophecy, predicted from Genesis to Malachi. Then he fulfilled the law by obeying every aspect of the law, including being the ultimate sacrifice. So He fulfilled the whole sacrificial system. And a 4th way: takes the intent of the law, ‘not murder...but I say, fulfilling with *meaning*, the intent of that commandment that prohibits murder is not just the outward act of taking someone’s life, but it includes the hatred that comes before which leads to the final act of murder. In that sense He is filling up or bringing out the meaning of the law. So He comes on behalf of the truth of God...

15.8 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, 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.”

...glorifying what God has said, the truth of God. I think that one aspect of the glory of God is the faithfulness of God. God is faithful in His word, Christ comes and fulfills it as a servant—probably an allusion to the ‘servant of the Lord’ in the OT which is a messianic personage. Here is the servant of the Lord, Christ, being expounded by Paul.

It’s on behalf of the truth, and it is ‘to confirm the promises given to the fathers’ and we just finished reading the Genesis 12 passage that begins to give us the promises to the fathers. And it is plural; remember that the Covenant was given to Abraham in promise form in chapter 12, made into a Covenant in chapter 15, re-iterated as a covenant in chapter 17, and possibly a 4 time to Abraham later on, and then re-iterated to Isaac, and 2 times to Jacob. So the promises were given to the fathers. And remember that the Abrahamic Covenant from that time on, sets the parameters for the rest of world history. This is the way God is going to deal with mankind for the rest of history and it includes, Paul tells us, the work of Christ because he sees Christ fulfilling some aspects of the Covenant.

### Plan of God

1. Revelation of plan
2. Christ fulfills plan
3. Is Jewish Genesis 12.1-3 We read this passage.

D. Application to Christian Liberty	14.1-15.13
1. Reception of Differing Convictions	14.1-12
2. Restraint for Edification	14.13-23
3. Responsibility of Christlikeness	15.1-6
4. Resulting in God's Glory	15.8-12
a. Sustaining of Brothers	15.7
b. Service of Christ	15.8-12
1) Service to Jews	15.8
2) Service to Gentiles	15.9

So the service of Christ goes all the way to verse 12. In verse 8, service to the Jews. And it is through the Jews that the Gentiles have access, part of the plan of God. So the Jews have a priority in this plan. But there is an inclusion. In the 1st Century Jewish believers needed to hear this, because part of their up bringing was that the Gentiles were dogs, evil, unclean; they needed to be reminded of their own Scriptures. Paul takes those 4 OT passages from the law, prophets and writings to show that the Gentiles have a place, and they have had it in the plan of God which was not totally realized until Jesus Christ, and has not been completely finished yet. Part of the purpose of calling Israel to Himself was that they were to be a light to the nations, the evangelists of the OT.

15.8 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, 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."

Not only a servant to the Gentiles, but *for the Gentiles*, that is, a servant *to* the circumcision but it is supposed to work itself out *for* the Gentiles and this is to the glory of God. It displays what God has planned and what God wills. In this context he is promoting the idea that we can accept one another; therefore, we should be united, love one another, without divisions that detract from the glory of God, that is, bringing together of Jew and Gentile for the glory of God.

Romans 1.16 *Porque no me avergüenzo del evangelio, porque es poder de Dios para salvación a todo aquel que cree; al judío primeramente, y también al griego.*

The Jew first and then the Gentile—but both received the promises of the Messiah. Even Jesus: the Syrophenician gentile woman would have been considered a dog, and she acknowledged it. She came to Jesus who said, Mark 7.27 "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

Jesus' ministry was primarily to the nation of Israel and the Jewish people. Now, Jesus also acknowledged her faith. He was probably aware of all these passages that Paul quotes including the gentiles, but they come through the nation of Israel—until after the death and resurrection of Christ and then the gospel goes to all peoples.

Romans 2.9 *tribulación y angustia sobre todo ser humano que hace lo malo, el judío primeramente y también el griego, 10 but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

3.1-4 *¿Qué ventaja tiene, pues, el judío? ¿o de qué aprovecha la circuncisión? 2 Mucho, en todas maneras. Primero, ciertamente, que les ha sido confiada la palabra de Dios. 3 *¿Pues qué, si algunos de ellos han sido incrédulos? ¿Su incredulidad habrá hecho nula la fidelidad de Dios? 4 De ninguna manera; antes bien sea Dios veraz, y todo hombre mentiroso; como está escrito: Para que seas justificado en tus palabras, Y venzas cuando fueres juzgado.**

Notice the significance of what God is doing in the nation of Israel, and the priority and the advantage of the Jew. He is showing that both Jew and Gentile stand condemned and both are in need, on an *equal* basis, of the grace of God. There is a priority in the plan and working of God but it does not omit the Gentiles.

### Plan of God

1. Revelation of Plan
2. Christ fulfills plan
3. Is Jewish Genesis 12.1-3
4. Plan included Gentiles

15.8 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, 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."

Then notice the next part of verse 9, the plan is to glorify God; so the Jew was intended to be a glory to God—that people would see something of God which is why they were to be a separate people, a holy people and the nations would see a glimpse of God—but now the Gentiles 'to glorify God for His mercy'. So the Jew glorifies God because of the covenants of God and the Gentiles because of the mercy of God. He is not saying that the mercy was not poured out to the Jews, but the Gentiles had no other claim to God except by His mercy.

So the Plan is for God's Glory.

Then Paul uses Scripture from the Old Testament. In fact, these give us the theme of all the OT. Jesus referred to the OT using three little words: the law (the first 5 books, of Moses, the Pentateuch), the prophets (including the historical prophets as well—Joshua, the writer of Judges, 1&2Samuel—and Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc), and the writings (including some poetic books, I think Daniel also). So that 3-part dividing of the OT, the law, the prophets and the writings, are the source of these quotations.

Paul may be hinting here that this is a theme, a major theme of all of Scripture.

- D. Application to Christian Liberty 14.1-15.13
  - 1. Reception of Differing Convictions 14.1-12
  - 2. Restraint for Edification 14.13-23
  - 3. Responsibility of Christlikeness 15.1-6
  - 4. Resulting in God's Glory 15.8-12
    - a. Sustaining of Brothers 15.7
    - b. Service of Christ 15.8-12
      - 1) Service to Jews 15.8
      - 2) Service to Gentiles 15.9
      - 3) Scriptural support 15.9b-12
        - a) Glorification among Gentiles 9b

15.9 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."

'as it is written' is a favorite word (only one in Greek) of Jesus for the Old Testament. That was of the authoritative writings. He quotes from the Septuagint version of Psalm 18.49 "THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES'. If you read the context, this is a David Psalm, but it is also recognized as messianic. David, as a representative, you might say, or a prototype of the Messiah is speaking of victory among the Gentiles and praising God for that victory. So Paul is applying this, in this context, to awaken people that God is glorified amongst the Gentiles. They are not excluded from the dealing of God and what He has done historically and what is recorded in the Scriptures. God is glorified or is given praise. The Gentiles are exposed to the glory of God; it is evident to them or can be evident to them and here is one example in a psalm that touches on a historical incident in the life of David that looks beyond David.

## God's Truth

1. Writings (9) - Psalm 18.49

So we have God's Truth here, showing that it is out of the writings (Psalms). It is also quoted in 2Samuel 22.50.

15.8 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, 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."

Remember, Hebrew poetry, in which the Palms are predominately written, you have parallelism, you have one line and then another that is similar to the first in some way. It can be antithetical, an opposite, or something very similar—which we call synonymous parallelism. And that is what we have here: 'I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES' and then almost the same idea in another line, 'AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME'. So glorification, praising, singing, worshiping—two lines. The synonymous parallelism just reinforces the first line with the second saying essentially the same thing. The idea is glorifying amongst the Gentiles and ultimately *Messiah* is glorified amongst the Gentiles. And there are other messianic elements in the psalm.

- D. Application to Christian Liberty 14.1-15.13
  - 1. Reception of Differing Convictions 14.1-12
  - 2. Restraint for Edification 14.13-23
  - 3. Responsibility of Christlikeness 15.1-6
  - 4. Resulting in God's Glory 15.8-12
    - a. Sustaining of Brothers 15.7
    - b. Service of Christ 15.8-12
      - 1) Service to Jews 15.8
      - 2) Service to Gentiles 15.9
      - 3) Scriptural support 15.9b-12
        - a) Glorification among Gentiles 9b
        - b) Glorification with Jews 15.10

So the first Scripture is from the Psalms, or we might broaden it to the Writings. Then, not only is there glorification and singing *among* the Gentiles, but there is glorification *with* the Jews. Notice there is progression here in the quotations from the psalms. Very simply:

15.10 Again he says, "REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE."

‘Again’, referring back to ‘as it is written’, he now quotes from Deuteronomy 32.43, ‘REJOICE, O GENTILES’; in other words, Gentiles, join in with his people.

### God’s Truth

1. Writings (9) - Psalm 18.49  
2 Sam 22.50
2. Law (10) - Deuteronomy 32.43

15.10 Again he says, “REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.”

Glorification amongst the People of God. This is a prophetic passage, even from the church age. It looks to a time of Messiah and in fact a period preceding and including the 2nd Coming, in which time frame, probably in the Great Tribulation there is going to be Gentiles along side of Jewish people. And we know from several passages, particularly from Revelation 7 that there is going to be a great conversion of Gentiles along with a great turning, in fact a restauración of the entire nation—no that every single Jew will believe, but there will be a revival amongst the Jewish people but it also will extend to the Gentiles. There will be great rejoicing amongst the Gentiles.

And this is all the way back in Deuteronomy 32. If you read the whole context of that passage it speaks of the coming of Messiah so there will be rejoicing of the Gentiles along with the nation of Israel.

This is a passage from the law, so we have two parts of the OT before us. And now this glorification is going to be *united*—not only *amongst* the Jews and *with* the Jews, but there will be *united* glorification which brings us to verse 11.

4. Resulting in God’s Glory 15.8-12
  - a. Sustaining of Brothers 15.7
  - b. Service of Christ 15.8-12
    - 1) Service to Jews 15.8
    - 2) Service to Gentiles 15.9
    - 3) Scriptural support 15.9b-12
      - a) Glorification among Gentiles 9b
      - b) Glorification with Jews 15.10
      - c) Glorification United 15.11

5.11 And again, “PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.”

Again, a quotation, ‘PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES’..

5.11 And again, “PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.”

...and ‘LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM’

Let the Gentiles, all people praise him. Again, synonymous parallelism. Gentiles = all people, and you might even extend ‘all people’ to include the Jews, but the focus is on the Gentiles. It is the idea of worshipping as a unit, together, a united praising of all people. This comes out of the writings as well, Psalm 117.1.

### God’s Truth

1. Writings (9) - Psalm 18.49  
2 Samuel 22.50
2. Law (10) - Deuteronomy 32.43
3. Writings (11) - Psalm 117.1

In fact Psalm 117 is one of the smallest songs in all the Bible.

Psalm 117.1 *Praise the LORD, all nations; Laud Him, all peoples! 2 For His lovingkindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD is everlasting. Praise the LORD!*

Total praise, including all the nations. So God envisioned all of the nations eventually, and in the Millenium Kingdom this will be fulfilled. God includes Gentiles: the point that Paul is emphasizing in this passage.

4. Resulting in God’s Glory 15.8-12
  - a. Sustaining of Brothers 15.7
  - b. Service of Christ 15.8-12
    - 1) Service to Jews 15.8
    - 2) Service to Gentiles 15.9
    - 3) Scriptural support 15.9b-12
      - a) Glorification among Gentiles 9b
      - b) Glorification with Jews 15.10
      - c) Glorification United 15.11
      - d) Gentiles’ Messianic Hope 15.12

Then another quotation, the only one of which Paul identifies the location, ...

15.12 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.”

Again Isaiah says'—this is prophetic—'THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE', and if you look in the genealogy of David, Jesse is in it, but it looks ahead to the ultimate David or King, a messianic reference.

### God's Truth

1. Writings (9) - Psalm 18.49  
2 Sam 22.50
2. Law (10) - Deuteronomy 32.43
3. Writings (11) - Psalm 117.1
4. Prophets (12) - Isaiah 11.10

This completes the list for God's Truth. We have two passages from the Writings, one from the Law, and now from the Prophets. This is not just a minor idea that Gentiles are included. And, when we read the Abrahamic Covenant, we mentioned that *it includes* the Gentiles, even though the Covenant wasn't *given* to the Gentiles, but the intent of the Abrahamic Covenant is that the Jewish people would *bless* all the nations, and that God would evaluate all the nations on the basis of how they would return that blessing or whether they would return it in cursing.

So this is a major theme, according to Paul, in the selection of these passages in Romans.

15.12 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."

And 'HE', this messianic descendent, 'WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES'. That's a Millennial passage. The Messiah is going to rule over the Gentiles. This is in Isaiah!

15.12 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."

'IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE'. The hope of the Gentiles will be in the Jewish Messiah that comes from the root of Jesse, or a descendant of Jesse. And other passages stress David who, in many passages is a foreshadowing of the Messiah. You might say that there is a partial fulfillment in that we put *our* hope as Gentiles in the Jewish Messiah during the church age. And there will be an ultimate hope of Gentiles that will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

That is a little of the support that Paul gives for the idea of the unity of Jew and Gentile and why we in fact should overlook these differences

in convictions and look at them in a bigger perspective in terms of what God is doing in a big plan of uniting Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ that would include all of these different backgrounds and hangups that we might have and we should be striving, as it says in Ephesians to preserve the unity that has been established by Jesus Christ.

Paul is preserving that unity, preventing the conflicts caused by differences of opinions or convictions. This is not just a characteristic of the church. We see in the Old Testament that this is a characteristic of people. Our nature is to divide, to have issues with one another, have conflicts. You see this in a big way in the nation of Israel; the kingdom was divided and these passages talk about a future time when God will in fact bring back together. God is the only one that can establish unity. We are the ones that are always dividing, separating, but it always God's desire that we be united.

[Romans 15.13 The Glory of God (3) 195]

### Unity Stressed

Ezekiel is writing as the nation is being overrun by the Babylonians, part of it before the Babylonian destruction of the Temple and the city and the destruction of the nation. And also part was written while Ezekiel was in exile. Everything was lost.

Preceding the destruction you saw the apostasy of the northern kingdom and the division of the kingdom so that there were two kingdoms, the Northern was essentially rebelling and all of the kings were evil kings. The Southern kingdom survived after the destruction of the Northern, but it also kind of followed the pattern of idolatry and eventually was destroyed by the Babylonians.

But Ezekiel is looking forward to a restoration.

> Israel & Judah - Ezekiel 37.15 *The word of the LORD came again to me saying, 16 "And you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write on it, 'For Judah and for the sons of Israel, his companions'; then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions.' 17 "Then join them for yourself one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand.*

Our tendency, as was Israel's, is to depart from the Lord, to divide amongst one another, and in fact the whole nation was divided. But God's desire is *unity* and He eventually, using the imagery of two sticks, putting them together and uniting them. Now that will be future and will take place during the Great Tribulation, even future from the church age.

Zechariah 14.9 similarly, the coming of the Messiah:

*And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.*

The focus is on the Lord; and that is what we need to do to maintain unity. And when we can focus on Him, then all of our differences can fade in the background and we can maintain unity. ‘One Lord’ which is also future. Zechariah 14 is about the coming of Messiah, from our perspective the *2nd coming* of Messiah, when He sets foot on the Mount of Olives. There will be a united focus on Him. And, in the church age even, Jesus desires and anticipates and wants unity within the body of Christ. Before there was a church, notice what Jesus says in John 10.16:

> Church of Jew and Gentile John 10.16 *“I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.*

In that context, remember, Jesus is explaining to a Jewish believing audience and to the disciples, without being explicit, talking about ‘other sheep’, ie, gentiles, non-Jewish ‘sheep’. But notice that the design and intention is that they be one flock.

Notice the prayer in John 17, the night before the crucifixion, after Jesus is in Gethsemane, this is his high-priestly prayer:

17.11 *“I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.....*

Even as the Father and Son are one, that is the desire of the Lord—that we as a believing body maintain:

20 *“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.*

In fact, the unity of the body of Christ, the world can recognize and it has an impact on them in *believing*. So when we are divided it is actually a bad testimony to the unbelieving world. This is a prayer; this is Jesus’ desire that we be one.

The central passage on unity in the NT that encourages unity is the beginning of Paul’s application portion of Ephesians, the first three chapters being primarily doctrine. He gives our blessings that we have in Christ, our standing in Christ, our position in Him, and then in chapter 4 he desires that that standing work itself out. It’s analogous to Romans 12 where chapters 1-11 are doctrinal, and the application beginning in 12. Chapter 4 in Ephesians is similar. That’s why he starts it with ‘I therefore entreat you or desire or encourage you to walk’—live the Christian life—‘worthy of the calling’—which is laid out in the first three chapters.

Ephesians 4.1-6 *Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*

What does he start with: *humility and gentleness, patience, showing tolerance to one another, love*: Here is the key verse: 3, *being diligent...* He has established the unity, but we are called upon to *preserve it, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

To kind of support that, there is a unity within the things of God that he expands upon in 4-6: *one body*: different denominations / churches, but one spiritual body. *one spirit*: only one Holy Spirit... *one hope...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.* The desire of the Lord is that we be one *body*.

Others about unity:

1Corinthians 1.10, 12.12

Galatians 3.28

1Peter 3.8

And there are lots of passages of Jew and Gentile in the 1st Century, even hints of it in the Gospel of John and elsewhere, and there are clear passages like Ephesians 4 and others that stress the need for unity in the body of Christ.

That’s the whole thrust of the section of 14.1. Paul is attempting to maintain a unity of the church at Rome. That results in God’s glory.

4. Resulting in God’s Glory	15.8-12
a. Sustaining of Brothers	15.7
b. Service of Christ	15.8-12
c. Summary Prayer	15.13

Then he concludes with a summary prayer, 15.13. And I think he gives many of the elements of The Abundant Life. He is praying that we would have an abundant life.

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.

This is his desire: may God do something...fill you with all joy and peace in believing...abound in hope. You could say that in one verse

Paul encapsulate all that he desires of us in the Christian walk, abundance—it's not prosperity gospel but he does desire that we have an abundance of certain things, mostly spiritual, not material. It's much like what we saw when Paul ended chapter 14, something like a prayer, a wish, a desire, and he was closing the whole doctrinal section.

It summarizes what Paul desires and I think it is what God desires of us as well. The God of hope, I think He is the *source* of hope. This comes right after verse 12 where the Gentiles have their hope in the Messiah, so He is the source of hope.

We have talked about hope before. The word probably occurs more in the book of Romans, in the verb and noun forms than in any other of the books of Paul. You could say it is a theme in Romans.

There is a distinction between these two: faith and hope. 'Faith' is simply trusting in our Lord, even as a moment by moment experience whereas 'hope' has more of a future perspective, but it is also based on our faith. If our faith is in the right place, then we will have a hope for what God is going to do in the future. The Biblical concept of 'hope' is not a 'wish'. In most of our languages, we may say, 'I hope I get to see my friend.' And we are thinking, 'I wish this would happen'. That is not the Biblical concept, it's not a 'wish'. We will look at passages about it. It is based on what the Lord has said and what He has promised. It is a forward or future look; *it is a full confidence in what God will do in the future* because we believe in what He has said, the promises that He has made.

## Hope

> Faith = trust in our Lord today

> Hope - based on our faith

Not a wish

Full confidence in what God will do in the future

It is an *experience* that comes as a result of growing, as a result of fellowship with the Lord and notice the string of things he puts together here:

Romans 5.1-5 *Justificados, pues, por la fe, tenemos paz para con Dios por medio de nuestro Señor Jesucristo; 2 por quien también tenemos entrada por la fe a esta gracia en la cual estamos firmes, y nos gloriamos en la esperanza de la gloria de Dios....*

We can boast, brag about it, glorify God about it. This gives us a sense of confidence.

*3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;*

Notice that it is the result of experiences—some are hard ones: tribulation, proven character, that is, development and the involvement of God. And as we see God getting us through

tribulation, as we see Him developing character within us, that gives us confidence in what God is going to do in the future. And that's why he says, *and proven character, hope*; then he adds to that: *5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

So that hope is based on God working in our experience, in our life to develop us and mature us. That gives us a hope that He will continue and finish that good work that He began. It is God doing the work, pouring out His love through the Spirit.

In a closer context, in chapter 15, we saw that idea of hope in verse 12.

2Corinthians 1.7 *and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.*

His hope is based on things he can observe in the Corinthians. It is steadfast, based on the knowledge he has of them. No a wish but full confidence.

Philippians 1.20 *according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.*

He couples *earnest expectation* with *hope*. It gives us the sense of hope having substance, full confidence. Then, one of the strongest passages, Hebrews 6.

Hebrews 6.11 *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,*

*18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,*

Notice all the words: *unchangeable things...impossible for God to lie: It is impossible for God to lie*, and our hope is in what God has said and promises...like an anchor, stability, assurance, confidence, sure and steadfast...

## Abundant Life

1. Source - God of hope

That's the Biblical concept that he is praying for, that the God of all hope will *fill us* and later on in the verse, that you will abound *in* hope.

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.

We can list some things that bring about the abundant life. The source is the God of hope; he has set before us these promises that we can focus in on and when we are focused on what God has accomplished it doesn't matter what happens in our present circumstances—we can go through tribulation or hardship. In fact all of those things even *develop and strengthen* our hope.

#### **Abundant Life**

1. Source - God of hope
2. Abundance - filled

He continues: may God *fill you* with all joy and peace.

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.

#### **Abundant Life**

1. Source - God of hope
2. Abundance - filled
3. Blessedness - joy and peace

He wants us to abound in hope, experiencing the abundant life; part of the abundant life is having joy which is not dependent on circumstances. It's different from 'happiness' which the world seeks, a good feeling or a good sense at any time. The Lord wants to give a joy that is not dependent on circumstance. He is talking about the living out of the Christian life. No one can take away our inward joy and peace.

In this context I think he is talking about this *experience* of peace, not what he says in 5.1 where he is referring to peace with God, a positional peace as a result of justification and forgiveness of sin; that verse even mentions that it is an *introduction* to grace. This peace is the one we can experience as a result of living life every day. Everything around us can be in turmoil, falling apart, but in the midst of that the abundant life is to have and maintain that peace that only the Holy Spirit can give.

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.

*In believing* here is not believing for salvation or justification but this is the *means* by which we experience the peace because we are *trusting* in passages like Romans 8.28 that God is *working* all things for our good. Again, everything can be going wrong but in the midst of that we can believe that God is going to *work* and we can experience the abundant life. This is the summary prayer of what God desires for us today.

#### **Abundant Life**

1. Source - God of hope
2. Abundance - filled
3. Blessedness - joy and peace
4. Means - trusting

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.

The purpose of all of this is that *you will abound in hope*, that is, we will have *full confidence, full assurance*, and that it will abound such that that hope is far greater than the pain and difficulty that we may be experiencing in the present time.

#### **Abundant Life**

1. Source - God of hope
2. Abundance - filled
3. Blessedness - joy and peace
4. Means - trusting
5. Purpose - abound in hope

The purpose of this prayer and of God working through us is that we might abound in that hope that is available to us as we trust in Him.

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.

The verse concludes with the empowerment that we need—not just by determination or our own efforts or by trying to keep our attitude right but by the power of the HS. And that goes back the *believing* that the HS empowers us because that is the source of the abundant life.

#### **Abundant Life**

1. Source - God of hope
2. Abundance - filled

3. Blessedness - joy and peace
4. Means - trusting
5. Purpose - abound in hope
6. Empowerment - HS

This is a magnificent little conclusion to the book of Romans that leaves us with all the elements of an abundant life and I would encourage you to memorize the passage and turn it into a prayer for yourself, especially as you face a difficult situation or circumstance that you don't understand or is confusing to you.

So the abundant life comes from the God of hope and he desires that we be filled, so that it is an abundant life filled with joy and peace as we, moment by moment, trust in Him. Therefore we need to maintain fellowship, confessing any sin that has broken that fellowship, re-establishing ourselves in fellowship with Him, and, as we trust in Him, He will encourage us in abounding in hope; the trials and difficulties are only temporary; they will end and God has promised that He will fulfill everything that He has said in His word. And in the whole process it is the HS that empowers us.

That is a fitting conclusion to the book of Romans, a summary prayer that you and I would experience the abundant life.

This is a summary of the book:

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision of God's Righteousness	1.18-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
V. Conclusion for God's Righteousness	15.14-16.27
A. Purposes of Paul	15.14-21
B. Plans of Paul	15.22-33
C. Personal Greetings of Paul	16.1-24
D. Praise Doxology of Paul	16.25-27

Now, in the the last half of chapter 15 Paul is going to lay out some of the *purposes* that he had in mind in writing, verse 14, first commending them, acknowledging that the prayer offered in verse 13 is being experienced by them, the Romans: *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.*

In other words, they are a growing group of believers.

*But I have written very boldly.* Now he will explain some of the purposes he has in writing and we will look at the details.

Actually there a lot of parallels between the introduction and these verses. He has already mentioned his desire to visit them, and he will reiterate some of those plans, even ones that go beyond the Romans also. He lays out those plans in verses 22 to the end of the chapter.

Then chapter 16 primarily deals, in 24 verses, with personal greetings when apparently Paul knew many of the members of the churches in Rome—and in that context we see there are several smaller churches, not just one larger church—greeting several people by name.

Then he concludes the *entire* book. It is almost as though he has several conclusions to the book, this being the final, more of a doxology of praise, verses 25-27.

Is Paul's Prayer being answered in you Life?