



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



# The Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

## Chapter 15

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# Introduction

- In this chapter St. Paul encourages the strong to help the weak (1-3)
- He reminds them of the value of one mind and one mouth that they may glorify God (4-6)
- Finally, he emphasizes the importance of accepting one another (7-12)
- St. Paul then offers a prayer for them (13)
- To conclude the epistle, he share his plans with them (14-16)



# Introduction

- He makes clear to them that he does not preach where Christ had already been received (17-21)
- St. Paul tells of his plan to come to Rome on his way to Spain (22-24)
- He speaks also about his plan to help the poor (25-29)
- Realizing the danger such a trip entails, he asks to be remembered in their prayers (30-33)

# Bearing Others' Burdens (15:1-6)



- In the last chapter St. Paul makes a contrast between the strong and the weak
- The strong ones (of clearer judgment) are to bear with the infirmities of the weak
- The strong should think less of what they may lawfully do and to consider more how their conduct will affect others.
- The strong should please his neighbor not for his gratification, but for his good to his edification

# Bearing Others' Burdens (15:1-6)



- We should follow the example of Christ
- He forgot Himself in His work of saving men
- As it is written (Ps 69:9): Christ, instead of pleasing Himself, accepted the reproaches of them who reproached the Father
- All things written in the Scriptures are for our instruction
- The comfort of the Scriptures gives hope to those who suffer and encourages them to be patient

# Bearing Others' Burdens (15:1-6)



- The apostle does not pray that they may be of the same opinion, but that there be harmony
- This harmony needs patience and comfort
- God is the provider of these virtues
- Following Christ makes us of one mind
- That being in full accord you may with one voice (mouth) utter the praises of God



# Glorify God Together (15:7-13)



- Let the strong receive the weak, all receive each other into full fellowship, even as Christ has received us
- All must be done so as to glorify God; praising God is more in works and deeds than in words
- The work of Christ is given to show the spirit we ought to have
- Christ is the Father's minister for the salvation of the circumcision (Israel)

# Glorify God Together (15:7-13)



- He accepted this to make God's promise to Israel come true
- Although, Israel was unworthy, but Christ fulfilled the promises and came to save them
- So, the gentiles should receive them too
- He is applying the same to the Gentiles, whom also the Lord by his incomprehensible goodness had regard for, so that they are not to be condemned by the Jews as strangers



# Glorify God Together (15:7-13)



- (Ps 18:49) implies that God shall be confessed, and His praises sung among the Gentiles
- (Deut 32:43) is a direct command to the Gentiles to worship with the Lord's people
- (Ps 117: 1) commands the Gentiles to praise the Lord
- (Isa 11:10) Jesse, the father of David, was an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ

# Glorify God Together (15:7-13)



- The passage shows very clearly that Christ was to be the Savior of the Gentiles
- St. Paul has quoted from Isaiah, In Him shall the Gentiles trust
- So he prays that God who has given them the hope may fill them with joy and peace, so through believing His promises they may abound in hope
- This can be done through the power of the Holy Spirit

# From Jerusalem to Illyricum (15:14-21)



- St. Paul excuses himself, that he has written to them somewhat at length rather to warn them than to teach them, and that of necessity, by reason of his calling, which binds him in a special way to the Gentiles
- It is evident that they have the knowledge of spiritual truth, professed by those who are strong in faith
- Able to admonish one another: Therefore having less need of the apostle's admonition

# From Jerusalem to Illyricum (15:14-21)



- Though they were able to admonish each other, he has written to them boldly and plainly, and rightfully so, because his apostleship to the Gentiles, given him by the grace of God
- By the offering up of the Gentiles, he means the Gentiles themselves, whom he offered to God as a sacrifice
- Being sanctified, set apart, by the Holy Spirit through baptism and chrismation

# From Jerusalem to Illyricum (15:14-21)



- He does not do this for his own sake, but to glorify God
- In those things which pertain to God: in his ministry as an apostle of Christ
- I will not dare to speak of the signs of grace and the work of others, but only of the mighty works of God has wrought through me to make the Gentiles obedient

# From Jerusalem to Illyricum (15:14-21)



- He describes what extraordinary help had been given to him to work miracles and the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Jerusalem was near the southeast corner of the Mediterranean; Illyricum lay north of Greece, on the Adriatic
- His labors had embraced a circuit clear around the east and northeast shores of the sea



# From Jerusalem to Illyricum (15:14-21)



- He declares the fixed policy of his ministry not to preach where Christ had been heard, but in new fields
- As no apostle or great evangelist had yet visited Rome, his letter to the Romans was no violation of his principle
- The passage in (Isa 52:15) declares that God's name shall be carried where it was unknown, so his policy is in accordance with God's will

# Plan to Visit Rome (15:22-33)



- The greatest hindrance to his coming to Rome was the duty of preaching in places where Christ was unknown
- Everywhere around the eastern Mediterranean the name of Christ had been preached, so that churches were formed in all the chief cities
- So, St Paul wished to seek new fields
- Also he had a great desire these many years to come to see them in Rome

# Plan to Visit Rome (15:22-33)



- The New Testament does not record that he went to Spain, though it is the testimony of the early church that he did
- He only intended to stop for a season, in passing through to be helped and to enjoy their spirituality
- God willed that it should be otherwise
- He is going to Jerusalem to minister to the poor saints (Ac 24:17)

# Plan to Visit Rome (15:22-33)



- The spirit of love and fellowship among the churches is clear in v. 26
- They are bound to it, in justice as well as mercy
- Spiritual things: By the preaching of the gospel
- Material things: Things needful for the body
- As soon as he completes the ministry, it is his purpose to go to Spain, and to take Rome in on the way

# Plan to Visit Rome (15:22-33)



- Sealed to them this fruit: Made this contribution safe to them. What is sealed is made secure
- He promises them through the blessing of God, not to come to them empty-handed
- He is requiring of them the duty of prayers, he shows what thing we ought mainly to rest upon in all difficulties and adversities

# Plan to Visit Rome (15:22-33)



- St. Paul knew the hostility of the Jews to him, and that his visit to Jerusalem would be dangerous
- The Jewish brethren looked with great prejudice on St. Paul's work among the Gentiles, and that various rumors were circulating among them
- Three things he desires through their prayers:
  - ❖ (1) That he may be delivered from his Jewish enemies
  - ❖ (2) Be warmly received by his Jewish brethren



# Plan to Visit Rome (15:22-33)



- ❖ (3) come unto them with joy by the will of God
- He did go to Rome, submissive to the will of God (Ac 23:11), but not in joy (Ac 28:16,20), though no doubt God was with him and refreshed him
- Asking their prayers, it was but natural that he should ask God to bless them



# Conclusion

- Whose example are we to follow in bearing the weakness of others?
- What value is the Old Testament to Christians?
- Why is it important that we be of one mind?
- To what degree are we to receive one another?
- In his preaching, what did St. Paul try to avoid?
- Where did St. Paul hope to go after passing through Rome?
- Where was he headed for at the time he wrote this epistle? Why?