

ENDURANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT Lesson Twenty; Romans 15-16**Bearing with the Weak**

We who are strong [in our understanding of the universal implications of the gospel] have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak [in their understanding], and not to please ourselves.

² Let each of us [set aside our personal rights and entitlements to] please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written [in Psalm 69:9], "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."

For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. (Psalm 69:9)

Endurance and Encouragement

⁴ For whatever was written [in the Torah, Prophets, and Writings] in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,

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

Welcome One Another

⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God [Cf. Matthew 10:40].

To the Jews and the Gentiles

⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised [i.e. Jewish people] (1.) to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,

⁹ and (2.) in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

Prooftexts about Gentiles in the Kingdom

As it is written [in Psalm 18:49], "Therefore I [Messiah speaking through David] will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."

¹⁰ And again it is said [in the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:43) regarding the final redemption], "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."

¹¹ And again [in the songs of the Hallel that will be sung to welcome King Messiah at Psalm 117:1], "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him."

¹² And again Isaiah [11:10] says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."

Abound in Hope

¹³ 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.

Purpose of the Epistle

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God

¹⁶ 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.

Paul's Work among Gentiles

¹⁷ In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God.

¹⁸ 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,

¹⁹ 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;

²⁰ and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named [by other apostolic witnesses], lest I build on someone else's foundation,

²¹ but as it is written [regarding the suffering servant Messiah in Isaiah 52:15], "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."

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

Future Travel Plans

²³ But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions [around the Aegean Sea], and since I have longed for many years to come to you,

²⁴ I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be [financially] helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.

Collection for Assembly at Jerusalem

²⁵ At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints.

Cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1ff; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Acts 20

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

²⁷ 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.

The Journey Ahead

²⁸ When therefore I have completed this [Diaspora collection] and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you.

²⁹ I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

³⁰ 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,

³¹ that I may be delivered from the [Jewish] unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,

³² so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.

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

Romans 16

The Letter Carrier

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;

2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

Priscilla and Aquila

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; 5 also greet the church that is in their house.

Cf. Acts 18:2, 18:18-26, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19

First Believer from Asia Minor

Greet Epänetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

Miriam

6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

Fellow Apostles

7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

More People Paul Knows

8 Greet Ampliatius, my beloved in the Lord.
9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.
10 Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ.

Important People Paul Knows

Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

Rufus

13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine. (Cf. Mark 15:21)

Still More People Paul Knows in Rome

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.

15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

A Last Warning

17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Greetings from Corinth

21 Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius (i.e. Luke) and Jason (Cf. Acts 17:5) and Sosipater (Acts 20:4), my kinsmen.

22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

23 Gaius [Titius Justus?, Cf. Acts 18:], host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus [Cf. Acts 19:22, 2 Timothy 4:20], the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

[...] ERATVA PRO AEDILIT[AT]E S P
STRAVIT

Erastus in return for his aedileship laid [the pavement] at his own expense.

(First Century Inscription in Corinthians Paver)

Doxology

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith [cf. Ephesians 3:1-12];

27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.