

15:13 *Abounding in Hope*

All Joy and Peace.

Origen: Precisely how all this can be fulfilled so that they may be filled with all joy and peace is hard to say, especially since the apostle himself, when talking about the gifts of the Spirit, says that he knows in part and prophecies in part. ⁶⁴ But I think that believers can have the fullness of peace when they are reconciled to God the Father by faith.... For if someone who believes is armed with the power of the Holy Spirit, it is certain that he will always have the fullness of joy and peace. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.⁶⁵

In Believing.

Chrysostom: In other words, may you get rid of your heartlessness toward one another and not be cast down by temptations. You will achieve this by abounding in hope, which is the cause of all good things and comes from the Holy Spirit. It is not just from the Spirit, though, because you must do your part also. That is why Paul adds the words “in believing.” Homilies on Romans 28.⁶⁶

15:14 *Paul Encourages His Readers*

The Relativity of Human Goodness.

Origen: This fullness is relative. Paul and those like him are full of goodness, etc., in comparison with their fellow believers, but naturally they are still vastly inferior to the perfection of God. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.¹

Satisfied About You, My Brethren.

Chrysostom: This applies to the exhortation just given [in the preceding verses]. It is as if Paul was saying: “It was not that you were cruel or haters of your brethren that I gave you that exhortation to receive and not to neglect or destroy the work of God. For I am aware that you are full of goodness.” Homilies on Romans 28.³

15:15 A Reminder

Written Boldly.

Chrysostom: Note how humble and how wise Paul is. He cut deep in the first part of his discourse, and after obtaining what he wished, now he turns to kindness. Even without the rest of what he said, his confession of boldness would be enough to calm their anger.... He often does this in his epistles, ⁶ but here even more than usual. For the Romans were of a higher rank than the others, and Paul had to bring them down to size. Homilies on Romans 29.⁷

15:16 In Service of the Gospel

Justin Martyr: We are the true high priestly people of God ... for everywhere among the Gentiles well-pleasing and pure sacrifices are presented to God. Dialogue with Trypho 116.¹¹

In the Priestly Service of the Gospel.

Origen: The priests had to make sure when they offered sacrifices that there were no blemishes on the sacrificial victim nor faults of any kind, so that the sacrifice might be acceptable and pleasing to God. ¹² So also the one who makes a sacrifice of the gospel and preaches the Word of God must ensure that there is no blemish in his preaching, nor fault in his teaching, which might make him blameworthy at the judgment. ¹³ Rather, he ought first of all to sacrifice himself, to strangle his own faults and to put to death the sins in his members, so that not only by his teaching but also by the example of his life he may make his sacrifice, which is the salvation of his disciples, acceptable to God. The Holy Spirit is the source of sanctification, and therefore the offering of the Gentiles which is made by Paul, in the role of priest, is said to be made acceptable to God by the Holy Spirit and not by the observance of the law. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.¹⁴

Paul's Form of Priestly Sacrifice.

Chrysostom: Now Paul raises his discourse to a loftier tone, speaking no longer of mere ministry only but of "priestly service" also. For Paul, his preaching and evangelizing were a priestly service. It was his form of sacrifice. Nobody would reproach a priest for desiring to offer the most perfect sacrifice possible. Paul says this both to lift up their thoughts and show them that they are a sacrifice and to explain his own part

in the matter, because he was appointed to this office. My sacrificial knife, he says, is the gospel, the word of my preaching. Homilies on Romans 29.15

That the Offering of the Gentiles May Be an Acceptable Sacrifice.

Augustine: The Gentiles are offered to God as an acceptable sacrifice when they believe in Christ and are sanctified through the gospel. Augustine on Romans 83.16

15:17 Paul's Work for God

Proud in Christ Jesus.

Origen: To be proud of one's work for God without Christ Jesus would be like saying one has glory in God's eyes without righteousness, wisdom or truth. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.18

My Work for God.

Chrysostom: After humbling himself, Paul here raises the tone, so as not to become an object of contempt in the eyes of his readers. Homilies on Romans 29.20

15:18 What Christ Accomplished Through Paul

The Proof of His Calling.

Chrysostom: The miracles he performed and the obedience of the Gentiles were the proof that Paul had accomplished the purpose for which he was sent.... He does all he can to show that the whole thing was God's doing, not his own. 22 Homilies on Romans 29.23

15:19 Signs and Wonders by the Spirit's Power

The Power of Signs and Wonders.

Origen: Signs differ from wonders in that signs are miracles which point to some future happening, whereas wonders are just miracles. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.25

As Far Round as Illyricum.

Chrysostom: Count up all the places Paul had been—not just in the Roman Empire but beyond its frontiers as well. Phoenicia, Syria, Cilicia and Cappadocia for a start, but also the back country—Arabia, Persia and Armenia. This is why he said “as far round as Illyricum,” so that you would not only think of the direct route from Jerusalem to Illyricum but consider also all the surrounding countries as well. Homilies on Romans 29.26

15:20 Preaching the Gospel

Lest I Build Upon Another Man’s Foundation.

Chrysostom: Paul was preeminent in this also, in that he did not go to places where the gospel had already been preached. So far was he from forcing himself upon other men’s disciples that he even went to places where nobody had preached before.... He wrote all this to show that he was a stranger to vanity and to instruct them that it was not from any love of glory or of honor from them that he came to write but in order to fulfill his ministry, perfect his priestly service and love their salvation. Homilies on Romans 29.33

15:21 Those Who Have Never Been Told

Note Where Paul Goes.

Chrysostom: You see how Paul goes to where the labor is more and the toil greater. Homilies on Romans 29.38

15:22 Hindered from Coming to Rome

Why Hindered.

Origen: Paul was not hindered by Satan, as some think, but by the fact that he was too busy planting churches in places where nobody had ever preached the gospel before. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.41

Return to His Beginning Theme.

Chrysostom: At the end of his epistle he returns to what he said at the beginning. ⁴⁴ Homilies on Romans 29.⁴⁵

15:23 *Longing to Visit the Romans*

No Room for Work in These Regions.

Origen “These regions” refer to Achaia, where Paul then was, and to the neighboring Macedonia, where he had been the first to preach the gospel. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.¹

I Have Longed for Many Years to Come.

Chrysostom: He wrote to say he was coming to them but not because he wanted any glory from them. He was coming because he had ... always wanted to visit them. ² Homilies on Romans 29.³

15:24 *Go on by Way of You*

I Hope to See You in Passing.

Origen: This must not be understood to mean that Paul had so little love for the Romans that he was only going to drop in on them briefly while passing through on his way elsewhere. Look what he says [in the next few verses] and you will see that this cannot be right. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.⁶

As I Go to Spain.

Cyril of Jerusalem: Paul instructed imperial Rome and extended the zeal of his preaching even to Spain, sustaining countless conflicts and performing signs and wonders. Catechesis 17.26.⁷

Sped on My Journey.

Chrysostom: Paul expresses himself in this way in order to keep the Romans from feeling proud. They were not used to being a mere stopover on a journey. Homilies on Romans 29.⁸

15:25 *Aiding the Saints in Jerusalem*

With Aid for the Saints.

Chrysostom: Paul explains his delay and in the process takes the opportunity to teach the Romans about the importance of almsgiving. Homilies on Romans 30.¹¹

15:26 *Contributions for the Poor*

Contributions for the Poor of Jerusalem.

Origen: Note how Paul subtly exhorts the Romans by praising the believers of Macedonia and Achaia. For if they could make some contribution, why could the Romans not do likewise? Most people think that Paul wanted the Romans to give to the same purpose as those of Macedonia and Achaia had done, but this interpretation seems to me to be too narrow. There were poor saints all over the place, and Paul wanted the Romans to develop a spirit of generosity toward them all. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.¹⁵

15:27 *Sharing Spiritual and Material Blessings*

15:28 *Journeying to Spain*

To Spain.

Jerome: Mark well the swiftness of the Word. It is not satisfied with the East but desires to speed to the West as well! Homilies on the Psalms 57.²³

15:29 *Coming in the Fullness of Christ's Blessing*

I Shall Come in the Fullness of the Blessing of Christ.

Origen: What does Paul mean by this? I think he is talking here about the image of God, by which he means that there will be no admixture of any alien thought in the fulfilling of his task and no praise sought from men. He simply will offer all he has done to God in the simplicity of his heart. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.²⁴

Chrysostom: Paul is speaking here either about alms or about good deeds. For blessing is a name he very commonly gives to alms. Homilies on Romans 30.26