

Romans 15 — Closing Statements

Romans 15:1-2

“We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor.”

“What is at stake is the power [dunamis] of faithfulness, the greater of lesser degrees of such empowerment. The measure of our faithfulness is not how empowered we are but the extent to which that empowerment is placed in the service of the less empowered (Jennings, *Outlaw Justice*, 209).”

Romans 15:3-4

“For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.” 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.”

“Thus, the written, when read within the context of endurance [that is, the context of affliction, suffering, or persecution], strengthens the reader toward hope. The function of the text is to awaken hope and thus to orient the reader toward the messianic consummation set in motion by the messianic event associated with Joshua messiah (Jennings, *Outlaw Justice*, 210).”

Romans 15:5-6

“May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, 6 so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“It is the togetherness of what is basically different that is this glorifying. It is the bearing with one another, the welcoming of the other, and the concern for the other in and through such great differences that is the shining forth of God, of that God who is the father of the one to whom we are oriented in life and death: the messiah Joshua (Jennings, *Outlaw Justice*, 211).”

Romans 15:7-9a

“ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, 9 and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.”

“That the messiah becomes a servant of the circumcision thus confirms the priority of Israel as God’s chosen people while at the same time makes clear that the favoring of Israel comes to the fullest expression in the extension of the messianic effect [justice and thus salvation] to the pagan nations (Jennings, *Outlaw Justice*, 212).”

Romans 15:9b-13

“As it is written,

“Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles,
and sing praises to your name [Psalm 18:49]”;

10 and again he says,

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people [Deuteronomy 32:43]”;

11 and again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples praise him [Psalm 117:1]”;

12 and again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse shall come,
the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;
in him the Gentiles shall hope [Isaiah 11:10].”

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

“The selection of texts [Psalms, Torah, Prophets] is consistent with what Paul has done at other points in the letter when calling upon the testimony of the ‘written’ (Jennings, *Outlaw Justice*, 213).”

“It should be clear from this perspective that there can hardly be any justification for a ‘Christian’ mission to the ‘Jews.’ Paul is a Judean with a mission to the gentiles: to proclaim the good news that Israel’s messiah is also the messiah for the gentiles and that this is precisely in conformity with God’s promise to and through God’s chosen people... God is faithful to God’s promises to Israel in such a way as to include all the nations [and, as we have heard, all of Israel as well] (Jennings, *Outlaw Justice*, 213).”

Romans 15:14-16

“I myself feel confident about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. 15 Nevertheless on some points I have written to you rather 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.”

“Here Paul uses cultic language to express a public and even political responsibility - his work among the nations - just as he had used similar language to speak of all offering up their bodies as a living sacrifice or a rational worship. What seems evident is that Paul makes use of familiar pagan cultic language to give expression to his mission as well as to the form of just life that he supposes characterizes the life of the messianic society (Jennings, *Outlaw Justice*, 216).”

Romans 15:17-19

“In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast of my work for God. 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, 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 as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ.”

“Here it is important to recall the synecdochal logic with which Paul has been operating. A part not only stands for but also entails the whole of which it is a part. The first fruits - to use a cultic reference - entail the entire harvest... Insofar as the messianic cells are sufficiently well established in manifesting the new just sociality in the midst of the towns and cities of this half of the empire, it is time for Paul to move on (Jennings, *Outlaw Justice*, 217).”

Romans 15:20-21

“Thus I make it my ambition to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on someone else’s foundation, 21 but as it is written,
“Those who have never been told of him shall see,
and those who have never heard of him shall understand [Isaiah 52:15].”

“Of course, as we have seen here and known from the other letters, he is not interested simply in giving people the right ideas but in enabling them to become mini-societies of messianic justice. He has no particular interest in cult or even the fine points of doctrine but in forms of social life that reflect the coming justice of God (Jennings, *Outlaw Justice*, 218).”

Romans 15:25-29

“At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem in a ministry to the saints; 26 for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. 27 They were pleased to do this, 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 things [fleshly things]. 28 So, when I have completed this, and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will set out by way of you to Spain; 29 and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.”

“We recall that the gospel is for the Judeans first and then the Greeks. This sharing from the Judeans to the pagans in the messianic proclamation now redounds to the Judeans in the form of concrete material assistance, what Paul does not hesitate to call **fleshy things**: things, that is, that serve or minister to the weakness of the human, the necessities of life (Jennings, *Outlaw Justice*, 222).”