

Romans 14-15

Romans 14:1-15:13

- 14:1: Welcome (προσλαμβάνεσθε) those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions (διαλογισμῶν).
- See 15:7 that forms an *inclusio*: Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God
- Προσλαμβάνεσθε (προσλαμβάνω) - **to extend a welcome, receive in(to) one's home or circle of acquaintances** → to accept someone wholeheartedly, without prejudice, on the basis that Christ also welcomed us.

Romans 14:1-15:13

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- διαλογισμῶν (διαλογισμός) - **content of reasoning or conclusion reached through use of reason, thought, opinion, reasoning, design** (cf. 12:1-2).

Romans 14:1-15:13

- Who are the "weak in faith"?
 - "weak" – 14:1, 2; 15:1
- Who are the "strong" in 15:1?
- In 1 Cor 8:7-12 -> reference to social status
- Here in Romans, reference to ethnic groups, not some degrees of faith or a quality of faith based on 14:2-6, and language of clean and unclean in 14:14, 20
- Weak – Jews
- Strong - Gentiles

Romans 14:1-15:13

- Disputes between Jews-Gentiles in 2nd Century
- Justin Martyr to Trypho in mid 2nd century:
 - Justin said "in my opinion" Jewish believers can still keep the Torah if they so wished, as long as they do not impose them on Gentiles.
 - Trypho then asked if there were Gentiles who did not tolerate the Jews
 - Justin: "there are some Christians who boldly refuse to have conversations or meals with such persons. I don't agree with such Christians."

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– Justin: "we should receive them and associate with them in every way as kinsmen and brothers."

Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 46.1-47.4

Romans 14:1-15:13

- What are the disputes/quarrels over opinions?
 - 14:2-4 – Food/meat
 - 14:5-6 – Observance of days/festivals
 - 14:21 – wine?

Romans 14:1-15:13

- Food/meat
 - Not eating meat is purely for purity
 - 1 Macc 1:62-63: “But many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food. They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die.”
 - Food handled by Gentiles were unclean

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- Food/meat
 - Tobit 1:10-12: “ After I was carried away captive to Assyria and came as a captive to Nineveh, everyone of my kindred and my people ate the food of the Gentiles, but I kept myself from eating the food of the Gentiles. Because I was mindful of God with all my heart, ...”

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- Food/meat
 - Judith 12:1-4: “Then he commanded them to bring her in where his silver dinnerware was kept, and ordered them to set a table for her with some of his own delicacies, and with some of his own wine to drink. But Judith said, “I cannot partake of them, or it will be an offense; but I will have enough with the things I brought with me.” Holofernes said to her, “If your supply runs out, where can we get you more of the same? For none of your people are here with us.” Judith replied, “As surely as you live, my lord, your servant will not use up the supplies I have with me before the Lord carries out by my hand what he has determined.”

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- Food/meat
 - Josephus, Life 14: Jewish priests taken prisoner to Romans chose to eat only giffs and nuts.
 - 2 Macc 5:27, in Judea, Judas Macaabees did not eat meat: “But Judas Maccabeus, with about nine others, got away to the wilderness, and kept himself and his companions alive in the mountains as wild animals do; they continued to live on what grew wild, so that they might not share in the defilement.”

Romans 14:1-15:13

- Food/meat
 - Eusebius records that James the brother of Jesus abstained from “wine, beer, and meat” as a symbol of his piety (*Eccl. Hist.* 2.35.5)
 - Meat often associated with temple sacrifices (1 Cor 8-10)
 - Hence avoid food/meat is to ensure one does not eat anything unclean!

Romans 14:1-15:13

- Food/meat
 - How should Gentiles treat the Jews?
 - 12:2-4: “Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.”

Romans 14:1-15:13

- Observance of days/festivals
 - Sabbath, festivals like Passover and Pentecost
 - Paul is neutral
 - 12:5-6: “Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.”

Romans 14:1-15:13

- Food and days – they are meaningless without Christ S
- 14:7-9: “We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.”

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- 14:10-12: “Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.” So then, each of us will be accountable to God.
- Who is the “you”? Gentiles?
- Is God on the side of the weak?

Romans 14:1-15:13

- 14:13-23 → Paul offers some practical advice
 - Not passing judgement (14:13)
 - Not be a stumbling block/hindrance (14:13)
 - Pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding (14:19)

Romans 14:1-15:13

- 15:1
 - We who are strong ought to put up/be obligated/ be indebted (Οφείλομεν) with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.
 - Paul now identifies himself with the “strong”
 - Paul places obligation (Οφείλομεν) on the “strong”: **to be under obligation to meet certain social or moral expectations, owe.** → **carry one another’s burden is how we pay the debt of love (13:8)**

Romans 14:1-15:13

- 15:2-3: Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. ³ For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”
 - “each of us” – now includes both the “strong” and “weak”
 - Christocentrically focussed

Romans 14:1-15:13

- 15:5-6: May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- → unity may be restored, resulting in worship and glorifying God

Romans 14:1-15:13

- 15:7: Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
 - Paul repeats when he sets off to say in 14:1

Romans 14:1-15:13

- 15:8-12
 - Reminding the Gentiles that they become the people of God precisely because of Israel.
 - Confirming the promises of God to the patriarchs – cf. Romans 4
 - Bringing Gentiles to the point where they could praise God – citation of 4 passages of Scriptures (Ps 18:49/2 Sam 22:50; Deut 32:43; Ps 117:1 and Isa 11:10)

Romans 14:1-15:13

- 15:8-12
 - Therefore all the more both Jews and Gentiles must reflect the reconciliation that God offers to all humanity through Christ

Romans 14:1-15:13

- 15:13: 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.

Romans 14:1-15:13: Reflections

- Do we major in the minor in our church today in terms of our practices and doctrines? Give specific examples.
- Does your church welcome everyone, including those who are “different” from us or those whose we might disagree with (eg, LGBT)?
- In what ways we could be obligated to the failings of the weak so that we could build up the body of Christ?
- How can we exercise our convictions and yet build others up?

Romans 15:14-33

- Paul’s purpose in writing Romans clearly expressed in 15:14-33
 - 15:14-21: Paul’s missionary map and purpose
 - 15:22-29: Paul’s next mission frontier
 - 15:30-33: Paul’s request for prayers

Romans 15:14-33

Similar themes between 1:8-15 and 15:14-33

Text	Themes	Text
1:8	Thanksgiving/blessings	15:33
1:8	Paul’s commendation of the Romans	15:14
1:9	Prayer	15:30-32
1:9, 15	Paul’s evangelical task	15:16, 19-20
1:11-12	Paul’s desire for mutual benefit	15:23-24, 28-29
1:13a	Hindrances in visiting Rome	15:22
1:13b	Paul’s ministry to Gentiles	15:15-21
1:14	Indebtedness	15:25-27

Romans 15:14-21:

Paul’s missionary map and purpose

- After addressing Jews-Gentiles conflict, and the need for unity, Paul now moves to commend the Romans in 15:14-15a:

“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. Nevertheless on some points I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder”

Romans 15:14-21:

Paul’s missionary map and purpose

- Paul reminds the Romans of his calling:

“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.”
- Echoes of Isaiah 61 → Paul seeing himself playing the role of the Servant?

Romans 15:14-21:

Paul’s missionary map and purpose

- Offering of the Gentiles:
 - Jerusalem collection?
 - Gentiles as people of God?
 - More likely – see 15:18-21 → “to win obedience from the Gentiles” covering vast geographical area from “from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum” where his ambition is “to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on someone else’s foundation.”
 - Citation of Isaiah 52:15 – Context refers to the Servant being announced to the nations and kings, startling them and leaving them speechless as they contemplate what God has done to and for the Servant

**Romans 15:22-29:
Paul's next mission frontier**

- Spain as the next destination
- Why Spain?
 - Isaiah 66:19-20: “From them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud—which draw the bow—to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations. They shall bring all your kindred from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and on mules, and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring a grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD.”

**Romans 15:22-29:
Paul's next mission frontier**

- Paul mentions his Jerusalem collection project
- “A Polite Bribe”?
- See:
 - “Generosity from Pauline Perspective: Insights from Paul's Letters to the Corinthians,” Special Edition on Contagious Generosity, *Evangelical Review of Theology* 37 (2013): 20-30.
 - “Paul the Economist? Economic Principles in Pauline Literature with the Jerusalem Collection as a Test Case,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 41 (2017): forthcoming.

**Romans 15:22-29:
Paul's next mission frontier**

- 15:24: “For I do hope to see you on my journey and to be sent on by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little while.”
- 15:28-29: “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; and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.”

**Romans 15:22-29:
Paul's next mission frontier**

- Paul's request for support

**Romans 15:30-33:
Paul's request for prayers**

- Did Paul detect dangers ahead of him that troubles await him in Jerusalem?

**Romans 15:30-33:
Paul's request for prayers**

- Did Paul detect dangers ahead of him that troubles await him in Jerusalem?

**Romans 15:30-33:
Paul's request for prayers**

- Acts 28:13-15: warm reception when Paul lands in Italy

"After one day there a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. There we found believers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. The believers from there, when they heard of us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage."

Conclusion: Romans 16:25-27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.