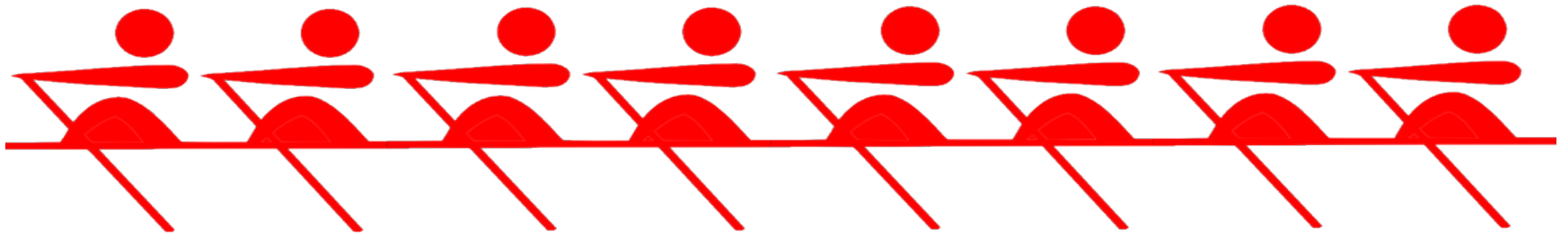


# Romans 15:29-32

**“I Urge You... to Join Me”**



**Vs. 27** – Paul had more than one purpose in bringing this offering money from Greece to Rome. His intent was to find a way where they could pull together (a rowing metaphor) in unison, instead of the chaos of racial tension.



To what lengths would you go to discourage division and promote unity in the church? Why bother?



Disunity is harmful to the purposes of God in and through the church! The intent of Jesus was to build a team of people that loved each other unconditionally – a team called “the church”! They were to be that shining “city on a hill”, a beacon of light that caught and held the attention of the world!



***“All men will know you are my disciples if you...***

...go to church faithfully

... know the Bible well

... have a great family life

... give money and time to good causes

... pray a lot (and even fast)

... simply tell them you are a disciple of Christ

... don't follow the more extreme cultural trends

... don't drink, smoke, gamble, watch TV, or care about the latest electronic devices

... are an honest person with good morals

... don't use swear words or vulgarities

...



**Vs 29- “...I will come to you in the full measure of the blessing of Christ”**



Can it be considered a “*full measure of the blessing of Christ*” when Paul comes to Rome under arrest? The televangelists today proclaim that God’s blessing is connected with success and material gain - with the physical comfort and the mental/ emotional feeling of security that accompanies the accumulation of wealth and the bettering of one’s position in the world.

What do you think God’s word really teaches?  
**[Matt. 8:20; Mk 10:28-30]**

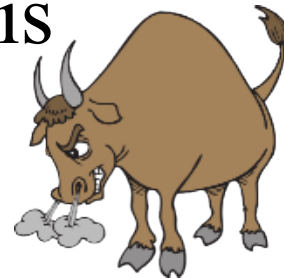
**Vs. 30** – “I urge you... by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit... to join me in my struggle...”

-What “struggle” are we supposed to join?

Paul is referring to the struggle to bring people who are in the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of Light! But it’s usually hard! It requires courage and boldness! It requires the ability to verbally and skillfully articulate the gospel of Jesus and His claims upon people’s lives. It requires some

social skills. The **bull-in-a-china-closet method** is counter-productive.

The **wall-flower** approach accomplishes nothing because the gospel is cerebral. A set of facts must be told. Silence is *not* golden!



# Vs 30 cont...

What motivation does Paul appeal to in getting us to join the struggle?

1 - Christ! 'Nough said!

2 - The love of the Holy Spirit

Q: Is this a reference to our love *for* the Holy Spirit?

A: Actually, no. It is a reference to the key work of the Holy Spirit in our lives to bring about a genuine *love of people* and a compelling concern for their souls!



**[1 Jn. 4:16b-21]** - Love is imparted by the Spirit of God who transforms our perspective and our inclinations toward people when we are truly following Jesus. An all-encompassing agape love for the people around us is a divinely wrought miracle that cannot be consistently achieved on our own. It is a daily death to our normal inclination with its negative view of others. and an acquiescence to the outward flow of the Spirit's work.

Vs. 31 - Join Paul's team by praying for Paul. We are not called to be a Paul. Few could ever fill his shoes. But we are called to be ourselves - to become who the Spirit is making us to be and fulfilling what He has called us to do.

But we are all in this together, strongly connected by Christ and by the Spirit of God. It is our obligation to the God who so mercifully saved us to support our brothers and sisters, our co-laborers in Christ, in their quest to follow and serve the purposes of God! Our most fundamental level of support for other Christians is prayer. Paul couldn't take everyone with him on his journeys to promote Jesus to the nations, but he is asking them to continually keep him before the throne of God in prayer.

Can we rely upon each other for a commitment to pray for one another? Does it even cross your mind to pray that the person sitting next to you in church be faithful and ultimately successful in bringing others to Jesus? In living a life of Christ-centered love?





## vs. 31 cont...

Prayer for our friends and colleagues in Christ, besides engaging the intervention of God, keeps our head in the game and always conscious of our place in God's purposes. Paul wanted pray-ers on his team, people that faithfully held up his work.



**Vs. 31**-Paul had two specific concerns.



1 – The threat to his life from Jewish authorities and from Jewish zealots was very real.

He was knowingly going into the lion's den and wanted them to pray for deliverance from all that was likely to happen if he showed up in Jerusalem.

2 – I think he was concerned about how he would be received by his Jewish brothers. He knew there were Judaizers in Jerusalem who would have been constantly trying to erode his reputation with the church leaders there. He could not be sure how he would be received. He needed prayer that he could continue to build bridges between the Jewish and gentile church. The substantial offering money he was bringing from largely gentile churches to the poverty stricken, constantly harassed, and poor Jerusalem church would help.

Paul needs something good to happen in Jerusalem. He seems a bit down from all the pressure, especially of his upcoming trip to Jerusalem. He believes God will intervene in favor of His own plan and purposes and do something that will silence Paul's many enemies and protect him from them. They were enemies gained during the course of Paul's many years of controversial ministry – a ministry that Christ Himself had called him to. Paul was certain that his enemies were also God's enemies! But, ultimately, he knew the end was drawing near. The only thing that could save him would be to stop so aggressively promoting the gospel, but of course he could not do that. ***Could you?***

