William Tyndale, who was condemned to death, strangled and then burned at the stake by the Roman church for translating the Bible into English; and isn’t that irony, written to the Romans. Tyndale wrote the following in his prologue for the Letter to the Romans:

“Forasmuch as this epistle is the principal and most excellent part of the New Testament… no one can read it too often or study it too well: for the more it is studied the easier it is. Wherefore it appears evidently, that Paul’s mind was to comprehend briefly in this epistle… all the whole learning of Christ’s gospel, and to prepare an introduction to all the Old Testament. For without doubt whosoever has this epistle perfectly in his heart, the same has the light… of the Old Testament with him.

In his commentary on Romans, Dr. F.F. Bruce wrote: It is noteworthy that Tyndale commends this Epistle as an introduction, not to the New Testament, but to the Old; that is to say, he finds it an indispensable guide to the Christian understanding of the books of the old covenant. The Old Testament was the Bible which the apostles and other Christians of the first generations used in their propagation of the gospel; it was the arsenal from which they drew their proofs that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.

In 57 AD, the year in which Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, Pomponia Graecina, the wife of Aulus Plautius /who added the province of Britain to the Roman Empire in 43 AD, was tried and acquitted by a domestic court on a charge of embracing a “foreign superstition” -- Christianity.

The oldest surviving MS of the Pauline Epistles, dating from the end of the second century, contains the shorter corpus Paulinum of ten Epistles together with the Epistle to the Hebrews. Most scholarly debates about the final 2 chapters center around roman documents, often fabricated in their own archives… and the older eastern Greek, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Old Latin, and Ethiopic biblical records available.

Personally, the discussion about Romans 16 written to the Palatium Britannicum – the royal house of Caractacus and his Briton family under house arrest in Rome… has gone under-reported, though Tacitus in his Annals 12:37… spoke at length about this Welsh Silurian’s notable address to the Roman Senate producing the one solitary case of clemency in history. Claudia, the adopted daughter of Emperor Claudius was married to Rufus Pudens… brother of the apostle Paul. Huh?

Why has that history been ignored?
1 Then we who are strong / dunatos: this word is also translated: possible. With God all things are possible -- same word. 2 Cor. 4 says: mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds -- same word;

we who are strong ought to bear the weakness of the weak and not to please ourselves / adunatos: the impossibly weak. Here, Paul is not talking about hardhead critics who live in fear and bondage. He is talking about those dreadfully weak… who seem to have no strength for anything; those who are just immobilized on-lookers; one of the nicest guys I know, tragically lives on the street.

2 Let each one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.

3 For even Christ did not please himself / I bet Jesus even had some bad days He learned to endure;

but, as it is written / not too long ago, somebody I had just met… who complained, actually sniveled that during our conversation I quoted from the Old Testament a lot?! Well, the Lord is still my Shepherd, and though I don’t know about you; I don’t need another. For the last 5 chapters… Paul has quoted from the Old Testament at least 40 times! It makes you wonder what he’d say to Paul, doesn’t it?

but, as it is written,

The reproaches of those who reproached You / O God… fell on me -- Psalm 69. And you might ask: why is Paul reminding us of this scripture verse? Well, don’t interrupt him! He is inspired by the Spirit of God and is going to tell us…

4 For whatever was previously written / as in the Old Testament times, was written for our learning, that we through patient endurance and comfort / this old word literally means: to call alongside to strengthen; to fortify,

that we through… comfort of the scriptures, might have hope / elpis: in this chapter, Paul is telling us, God’s word gives us a reason to get up in the morning… and keep going.

5 Now the God of patient endurance and comfort grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus / who previously recorded in His Word in times past… His patience and comfort:

6 that with one mind / this one Greek word is the same used 11 times in Acts… when 120 people continued in prayer those 10 days… awaiting the Spirit of God who was promised from the Father with one accord, and we are in agreement; and that mind which isn’t my mind or your mind: but it is Christ’s; and Paul says, have this mind that was also in Christ Jesus -- Philippians 2:5; and the only way to do that is by learning and reading what Jesus said;

and with one voice glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ / which is what Jesus told his learners… that others may see their good works and glorify / boast about our Father in heaven -- Matthew 5.
Wherefore receive one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God / Paul says, open your doors and welcome one another; in the same way, Jesus welcomed us and showed us the Door that opens to the kingdom of heaven... and life eternal.

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister / in Greek: diakonos... the one who cleans the tables and paints the walls... and scrubs the floors... and does many other equally exciting messy jobs. It is interesting, the next use of this word is in: our sister who is a diakonos of the church -- Romans 16.

Jesus Christ was deacon... of the circumcision / Paul is writing the good news that will be heading for the Romans... and he knows, a little explanation about why Christ came is needed. Paul says, Jesus Christ came to those historically known for their circumcision rites... those with the time-honored tradition of that delicate surgery to whack on their vital parts.

for the truth of God, to stabilize and confirm... the promises to the fathers / Paul says the same thing Mark wrote in the last chapter of his gospel record:

and that the Gentiles might glorify God, for His mercy, as it is written, Therefore, I will confess You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name -- Psalm 18

And again He says, Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people -- Deuteronomy 32

And again, Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; all the people praise Him. -- Psalm 117

And again, Isaiah says, There will be a root of Jesse, and He who will arise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him will the Gentiles trust -- Isaiah 9 and 11

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy / the very God who inspires... and gives us reasons... to get up tomorrow and keep going. Paul says, no gas tank is half empty. In Greek: pleroo... meaning: to fill up fully; the prophet Nehemiah tells us: the joy of the Lord is our strength;

and peace in believing / quite frankly, God knows that going His way... will be like swimming upstream; occasionally, it will be turbulent for many... as they learn to trust Him and act in faith,

that you abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And concerning you my brethren, I myself also am persuaded / Paul recognizes the faith of the early church going to the uttermost parts precedes his travels... and has already taken root among the Romans,

that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge / again... no gas tank half empty. To fill up fully; filled with all they need to know,

able also to admonish one another / capable to warn each other.
15 However, brethren, I have written very boldly to you in some measure as putting you in mind because of the grace that was given me from God / on some points than might have been expected from a stranger; not necessarily to instruct, but reminding,

16 that I should be minister / the word is: leitourgos... it simply means: public servant. Paul used this word in chapter 13:6 when he writes of taxes to the God appointed public servant... even in the world, God intends order and not anarchy. In Hebrews 10 we read: Moses sprinkled with blood... all the vessels of the public service. In Hebrews 10 we read: every priest stands daily in public service... offering the same offerings that can never take away sins -- thankfully, their job is NO longer needed!

Here Paul simply says...

that I should be a public servant... of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles / and the Spirit of God knowing the tendency to wrench the word of God, twisting it into man-made traditions... also had Paul write in Philippians 2, I send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, he that publically served to my wants: so, Paul isn't talking about some mysterious hocus pocus position or duty,

ministering / this word: hierourgounta… is used once in scripture here, and is derived from 2 Greek roots: hier = sacred; and ourgos = work. Paul clearly understood the old, lifeless, loveless ways; and, anything seeking to imitate or resemble the Aaronic order was now obsolete. The Spirit of God was sending the good news to the rest of the world…. not to become a clerical hierarchy and pecking order of lovers of legalistic practices created by inane men.

Paul says...

that I should be a public servant… of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles;

my sacred work… the gospel of God / what God said -- that Good News; not what some decrepit institution decrees. God always spoke Good News in the Old Testament; and in the New Testament too… which is the same Good News He speaks through His Son today… to anyone who will listen,

that the offering up of the Gentiles be with good acceptance,

being sanctified / being made holy, and set apart for God’s purposes;

by the Holy Spirit / and Jesus the night He was betrayed… 12 times He told his disciples: Keep My Word. In other words, Guard My Words with your life. And He prayed: Father, sanctify them in Thy Word: Thy word is truth. When the Spirit of God comes… He ALWAYS confirms His presence with what Jesus said when He was here… 2,000 years ago -- still good news today.

17 Therefore, I have reason to boast through Jesus Christ / having been so highly honored by God… empowered by His Spirit… Paul tells us he has one reason to brag… as a public servant, as one doing his sacred work… carrying the Good News to the Gentiles; through Jesus and His faithfulness; and His calling. in those things which pertain to God.
For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not worked through me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed / if Christ Jesus had not worked it in Paul through the power of the Holy Spirit; then anything else Paul did... was of no importance to those he was writing; Paul wanted those who read this letter: to hear... and do it,

through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about to Illyricum, I have preached the gospel of Christ fully / a 3rd time: to fill up fully; no gas rationing going on. Here Paul tells us, throughout his public preaching God’s Spirit knew how to leave His mark... whenever and wherever He wanted to.

Yes, so I have strived / philotimeomai; this is 2 Greek roots: philo = to befriend + timeo = to honor, to value its worth... in the middle voice: remember: the middle voice always indicates... done for one’s own benefit. Moses tells us: Honor your father and mother that it may be well with you -- same word. Jesus says, All should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who honors not the Son, honors not the Father who sent him -- John 5 and 8.

What is Paul saying here?

Yes, I befriend in honor and value... to preach the gospel / whatever the cost, Paul was honored to tell what Christ Jesus had done... not only for all mankind, but more importantly... vindicating our Father in heaven who always speaks grace and peace; who has never stopped speaking grace and peace... even to those in the 21st century,

...not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation / Paul was on the move; it was his ambition... to preach to the rest of the world; he wasn't interested in retirement; nor was he interested in stepping on other’s toes, or elbowing a larger space in the local suburban neighborhood:

As it is written, Those who had no news, will see: and they who have not heard will understand -- Isaiah 52

For this reason... I have been very hindered... coming to you / and if I were to guess, Paul just wrote one incredible understatement.

But now having no more place in these regions / Robertson writes in his word pictures: Surprising frankness that the average preacher would hardly use on such a matter. Paul is now free to come to Rome because there is no demand for him where he is. Apparently, Paul knew he had worn out his welcome,

and greatly desiring for many years to come to you / Paul looked forward to meeting his brother and mother, and those of the Palatium Britannicum... as well as to encourage any who would gather in that city. But notice, Paul wasn’t going to stay there; he was on his way further points west. Why? Well... Cardinal Baronius, Curator of the Vatican Library, in his Ecclesiastical Annuals, / 1588-1607 refers to the year 36 AD as when Joseph of Arimathea, Mary, the Bethany household -- caretakers of their new mother, and several others went into exile;
Baronius writes, “In that year the party mentioned was exposed to the sea in a vessel without sails or oars. The vessel drifted finally to Marseilles and they were saved. From Marseilles, Joseph and his company passed into Britain and after preaching the Gospel there, died (history is interesting, isn't it?);

24 Whenever I take my journey to Spain / Old Spain included the entire Iberian Peninsula. It was then subjugated by the Romans. You know, in Tarragona, Spain, the church that Jesus is building is still very much alive. Paul knew the first exodus from Egypt included the children of Zarah who took to the seas; and left their mark in Zaragoza = meaning: the joy of Zarah. He knew of all who were traveling west; according to the Spanish government… Paul made 2 different missionary trips to Spain,

I will come to you / definitely Paul intended to see the folks in Rome:

for I trust to see you on my journey / actually, passing through,

and to be helped on my way there by you,

if first / before traveling on to Spain,

I partially satisfy… my great desire… to be with you.

25 But now I go to Jerusalem diakoneo / it's the same word as in verse 8… that described the unenviable, shit-shoveling job Jesus Christ came to do. Now, Paul is going to pick up and run with… retelling the same good news of Jesus Christ… and what He first proclaimed.

to the saints / and NO, that does not mean Paul is going to Jerusalem… to talk to dead people… buried in gaudy grotto tombs surrounding that Old City.

26 For it pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution… for the poor saints at Jerusalem / the liberal generosity of Macedonia and Achaia givers is in sharp contrast to what seems to be a penniless, lifeless, tired old congregation of takers… which gathered around James, the half-brother of Jesus… who never really followed Jesus until after he rose from the dead.

27 Truly, it pleased them; and they are indebted to them / Paul began this letter declaring he was a debtor to so many… to Greeks and barbarians; to the sophists as well as the not so bright.

for if the Gentiles shared of their spiritual things / this action word is: koinoneo… indicating the non-Jewish communities were communicating; and participating and sharing and enjoying; they were learning, and receiving; and taking to heart,

then their duty is also to publically serve them carnal things / things valued in natural life.

28 Therefore, when I finish this, and validate their fruit, I will come by you to Spain / Paul says, when I have accomplished my task and authenticated… the work and edifying of the Spirit: you know, love and joy… and peace… mercy and grace; longsuffering… and patience… and kindness toward others.
For a 2nd time, Paul says he was going to Spain. He wasn’t writing his wish list itinerary of favorite EU funded sites to visit; he was inspired by the Spirit to state his intentions as he passed through Rome. Early church history says, Paul traveled all the way to Londinium… founded in 50 AD; and while Paul was there, he preached on Ludgate hill at the Broadway… which happens to be the very location where St. Paul’s Cathedral stands today. Huh? What’s that all about? (history is interesting, isn’t it?)

29 And I see that when I come to you / in Greek: eido; which means… to see something; to clearly perceive; Paul is expressing his confidence in briefly visiting those living in Rome, including his brother and mother, and particularly those living under house arrest at the Palatium Britannicum,

I will come full of blessing of the gospel of Christ / in Romans 1, Paul spoke of having a spiritual gift to share; here, he elaborates. For the 4th time, he uses a word describing: completeness, abundance of the blessing: in Greek: eulogia… which means: eu = good + logia = words. It is where we get our word: eulogy. To others Paul writes: God is not like us, He speaks good words to us when we are alive, not after we are dead! And those good words always sound like: grace and peace to our ears… which is why we know it is the Spirit of God speaking! God our Father is no longer angry with us. Why? Paul knew… because the good news of the Messiah. It is the good news about Jesus. If people don’t like Jesus Christ… then one of 2 things is true:

1. either they obviously haven’t learned from Him… because His ways are easy, His burden is light;
2. or they have heard… but they are religious hypocrites who dislike Him. Isn’t it interesting, not one woman in all the Scripture did not like Jesus, only men were envious and resented Him. You know, there is only one Christ: all others are pretenders, false christs; or antichrists = all of them are bad news.

30 Now I beseech you brethren, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together / to the Romans, this is Paul’s 3rd of four requests; sunagonizomai… that they struggle, that they apply some effort together with him as Paul anticipates going to Jerusalem, still the volatile center of ancient religious, legalistic hard heads; here Paul says:

Now I beseech you for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the love of the Spirit that you agonize together… with me in your prayers to God for me;

31 That I be delivered from the obstinate in Judaea; and that my ministry which I have for Jerusalem be with good acceptance of the saints / who might be tired, but are still living;

32 That I come to you with joy by the will of God, and with you be refreshed.

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