1. All Scripture is given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is therefore "profitable" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). An example of its profitability is its record concerning the Apostle Paul. He was commissioned to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15 cf. Gal. 2:8, Ro. 15:16). He labored faithfully to do this (vv. 18-23).

2. Having completed his work, Paul intended to go to Spain and enroute to see the Romans (vv. 23, 28). Before going to Rome, he affirmed his decision to visit Jerusalem (v. 25). At Rome, Paul anticipated the blessing of the Gospel of Christ (v. 29).

3. With all these plans expressed, Paul concluded there was need for prayer. That desire for the prayers of the Roman saints is the substance of this text. Take note of the facets of the prayer request.

NOTE Since the Bible is God's revelation, every portion has some "profitability" for believers. These verses clearly accent facets our prayers for missionaries should include.

1. FACET #1 Agency of Prayer v. 30
The text is forceful to state the earnestness of the Apostle for prayer. The verb "beg" (προσεύχεται parakalo) is the root for the noun "Comforter" (Jn 14:16). It is often used in the N.T. (cf. 12:1). Etymorphologically the verb signifies to "call along side." This was acceptable because Paul's plea is to believers. Only such can pray effectually. All others need to believe and be saved (Ps 50:16ff).

a. Lord Jesus Christ
The first intermediary Agency in prayer is "our" Lord Jesus Christ. The preposition "for" (διά dia) is used with the genitive and is to be rendered "through." He is at once Lord (Sovereign), Jesus (Saviour), and Christ (Messiah or Anointed One). That is His full Name. It is the manner by which we are repeatedly instructed by Himself to pray (Jn 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 26).

b. Holy Spirit
The second intermediary Agent in prayer is the blessed Holy Spirit. The same preposition "for" (διά dia) as used of the Lord is found in this phrase. In place of "our" the text reads "love" of the Holy Spirit. While the grammatical construction could be an objective genitive, it is best to view this as a substantive genitive. Hence it is the Spirit's love in the believer through Whom prayer is to be sought (cf. 5:5; Gal. 5:22). So it is that Divine love moves to prayer.

2. FACET #2 Urgency of Prayer
The word for "prayer" (προσεύχεται proseuchēs) is plural. It is also sourced in a verb which is always used of prayer to God (cf. Acts 1:24; 6:6; 9:11). This prayer is to be:

a. Agonizing
The compound infinitival verb (συγκόλαβε ἐν συγκόλαβε sunagwnisasthai) is only found here in the N.T. It is a sports term relating to wrestling (cf. Col. 4:12). Paul is asking the saints to join him in intense prayer as spiritual wrestling against powerful forces (cf. Eph. 6:12).

b. Co-operating

This thought is indicated by the preposition prefixed to the infinitive (συγκόλαβε sun) and by the position of the personal pronoun "me" (μοι moi). Here is cognitive joint effort.

c. Directing
Here is an incredible statement linked with the noun "prayer." It is noted by the prepositional phrase "to God" (πρὸς to pros) ton theon). Paul's intent was that the prayer expected would go right to the "face" of God (cf. same preposition in Jn 1:1).

NOTE: Gathering the contents of this one verse, the Trinity is mentioned. Bible praying is orderly: to the Father (God), through the Son (Jesus), in the Spirit (Eph. 2:18).

d. Considering
"For me" (ὑπὲρ emou huper emou) averts that Paul wanted the prayers personalized. He wanted compassionate considerate prayer for himself. Blessed is the man, especially in God's work, who has such. May the lament of Ezek. 22:30 not be said about you, your home, our church, our missionaries.

3. FACET #3 Expectancy of the Prayer vv. 31, 32
Grammatically this is stated in three specific purpose clauses with subjunctive verbs.

a. To be Delivered
Paul had been transformed by the Gospel from an able opponent to an able advocate of Christ. He therefore experienced virulent hostility from his own countrymen (cf. Acts 21-26; 2 Cor. 11:23-33; 1 Thess. 2:14-16). Paul expressed readiness to suffer all this and to die if necessary (Acts 20:22-24; 21:13). Nonetheless, he prayed for deliverance from the non believing (πείθο peitho, unpersuaded) Jews in Judea. He hoped their prayers would rescue him from their bitter spirit.

b. To be Accepted
This is not a personal acceptance, but "my service" (διακονεῖ διακονεῖ diakonein) which belongs to Paul. It is a technical term and refers to Paul's ministry for the saints at Jerusalem (cf. Eph. 4:12). Apparently, functioning in ministry, he probably had a gift for the Jerusalem believers. Ordinarily such a gift would be welcomed, but Paul's commitment to Gentile missionary work caused him to fear that even a generous gift would fail of acceptance. Hence, this request for earnest prayer.

NOTE Think about it. On the one hand Paul was concerned about non compliant Jews. On the other, he was concerned about believing Jews' attitude. The rock and the hard place are not new (cf. Eccles. 1:9).

c. To be Rested v. 32
Precious final prayer request: that Paul might come "in joy" (ἐν χαρᾷ en chara) face to face with the Romans (δια πρὸς pros) and all of this "through" (διὰ dia) the will of God. Should this eventuate, Paul would be "refreshed" (συμπληρώσω συμπληρώσω sunapason) a double compound only here in the N.T. The LXX uses this verb of a husband and wife sleeping together (Isa. 11:6). What a cherished prayer request of Paul.

Afterward
The final verse (v. 33) is an expression of hope, confidence, and optimism. It is found only in Paul's N.T. writings. Surely, the "God of Peace" would resolve the concerns expressed. So be it for him and us. Amen.