

SEVEN YEAR WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year Five
Lessons 27-39

Third Quarter
Romans 8--I Corinthians 4

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FOREWORD

“RELICS OF ST. PAUL”

In the life of Dean Stanley there is a story of a visit which Merle d’Aubigne, the historian of the Reformation, once paid to a prominent Roman Catholic ecclesiastic. The dignitary, not knowing his visitor, spoke to him of the advantages the Roman Church enjoyed in possessing the bones of St. Paul.

D’Aubigne answered modestly, “We, too, have some RELICS of St. Paul.”

“Indeed,” said the priest. “What are they?”

“We have some LETTERS,” replied D’Aubigne.

The letters are indeed “relics of St. Paul!” They are part of the great heritage of the Church and the world. They are amazingly alive, for a great soul has poured his life, under God, into them. The words of St. Paul in his letters are like a searchlight on a ship that throws light on the immediate landing spot and also throws a shaft of light on distant hills. St. Paul’s words light up the immediate foreground, whether it be the conflict in Corinth or the legalism of Galatia. They also throw light on the scene far beyond in time, on the issues of today, and to the hills of eternity.

How Many?

Out of the 27 books that compose the New Testament, 21 are in the form of letters by six different authors. To Paul are ascribed 13 – some would say he wrote Hebrews also; to Peter 2; to James 1 and to Jude 1. John 3; to James 1 and to Jude 1.

In addition we have the four gospels. Acts, the book of history, and Revelation, the book of prophecy of “things to come.”

Four Groups

Paul was probably converted when he was thirty years of age. He wrote his first epistle (I Thess.) sixteen years after his conversion. All his letters come in the period of his life from 46 to 61 years.

They have been divided into four groups.

1. Those that relate to Christ’s second coming, written during the second missionary journey: I Thessalonians, 52 A. D. at Corinth; II Thessalonians, 53 A. D., probably at Corinth.

2. The Anti-Judaic group (controversial and doctrinal) written during the third missionary journey: I Corinthians, at Ephesus; II Corinthians, probably at Philippi; Galatians and Romans, at Corinth.

3. The Christological and PERSONAL letters written during his first imprisonment in Rome: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians.

4. Epistles of Paul’s last years: The main theme is the duty of a Christian pastor in guiding his church: I Timothy and Titus, probably in Macedonia; II Timothy, written in Rome 67 or 68 A. D.

In all of Paul’s epistles we note his loyalty to Christ, the spirit of helpfulness and joy.

May these “Relics of St. Paul” bring a real blessing to you!

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Third Quarter

Lesson 27
Romans 8

Page 1
Memory Verse: Romans 8:1

Memory Verse:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).

LIBERATION FROM THE POWER OF SIN

“I defy any man to get out of the 7th chapter of Romans into the 8th except by that one word, ‘Christ.’” (H. W. Beecher)

This is one of the best-loved chapters in the Bible. Romans 8 may be titled “The Victorious Man.”

In Christ we have our sins forgiven. He gives to us “new life.” We are “new creatures” (II Cor. 5:17), “For if a man is in Christ he becomes a new person altogether – the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new” (Phillips). A baby spirit, in a manner similar to that in which our physical life, our Adam nature, was started by our parents, is **STARTED BY THE SEED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST** (James 1:18; I Pet. 1:23; John 3:3, 5).

Contrasts

The man in Romans 7 was a slave, “sold under sin.” In Romans 8 is **VICTOR OVER SIN**.

In Romans 7 we see a man “in sin,” while in Romans 8 we see a man “**IN CHRIST**.”

In Romans 7 he is a “wretched man” seeking deliverance. In Romans 8 he is a **VICTORIOUS MAN**,” happy and secure.

In Romans 7 it was Christ’s work “for us,” while Romans 8 is Christ’s work “in us.”

In Romans 7 he is a victim crying out, “Who shall deliver me?” In Romans 8 he is the **VICTOR** who says, “In all these things we are more than **CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM THAT LOVED US**” (Rom. 8:28).

In Romans 7 the personal pronoun “I” is mentioned 33 times (KJV), and in Romans 8 only 2 times. In the former it is the efforts of human personality, while in the latter it is the effect of the divine personality of Christ in us through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is mentioned 20 times in Romans 8, and only once in Romans 7. In Romans 7 we have a despairing cry, while in Romans 8 we see a man with a conquering Christ.

The two chapters are bound closely together by one’s closing verse and the other’s opening verse. Romans 7:25 is “through Jesus Christ our Lord”; in Romans 8:1 it is “**IN CHRIST JESUS!**” Thus the chapters are bound together in a common Christ!

I. Our Deliverance from Condemnation (Romans 8:1-17)

A. The condemnation of the law removed in Christ (Rom. 8:1-4).

“There is therefore now no condemnation...” (Rom. 8:1): The “therefore” points back to Romans 7:25 which shows that in Christ we are delivered from sin and the curse of the law. Under Christ we are justified from sin, liberated from its power. Through him we are dead to the law (Rom. 7:4-6), hence “dead to sin” (Rom. 6:2). We have no desire to **CONTINUE IN SIN**.

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“No condemnation”: God gives pardon to those in Christ Jesus. There is now no ground for condemnation for the Christian. The fire has burned on and around the Cross of Christ. There and there alone is safety. Those in Christ Jesus can lead the consecrated, the crucified, and the baptized life (Rom. 6:1-4; II Cor, 5:21). “Baptized into Christ,” we must walk in Him, and “not after the flesh.” If sin is yielded to, the Christian repents, and is forgiven.

“In Christ Jesus”: We are immersed into Christ (Gal. 3:27). The New Testament knows no other way to get “into Christ Jesus!” Note the POSITION of the “new life!”

“For the law of the Spirit of life... made me free” (Rom. 8:2): The Spirit of life must be the Holy Spirit. The whole phrase is equivalent to the Gospel, a name for the gospel. It is a law, as an expression of the divine will. It is God’s rule of conduct. In Christ I shall stand uncondemned at the last judgment! Not to be in Christ is to be under the “law of sin and death,” any law we may happen to be living under – Jewish or Roman. Sin once committed must end in death unless forgiven.

We are able by the help of the Holy Spirit to live the NEW LIFE IN CHRIST. This is THE POWER OF THE NEW LIFE, and PROTECTION, too.

“For what the law could not do... weak” (Rom, 8:3): “The impossibility of the law” is shown in Rom. 7:7-24. The law met resistance in human nature. The law was not able to overcome the tendency of the flesh, the carnal nature, to evil.

The law condemned sin in the flesh, BUT IT COULD NOT DESTROY SIN AND FREE US FROM SIN!

“God sending his own Son...” Jesus, by His sinless life, lived in the flesh, as the Son of man, resisted, conquered, condemned, sentenced and destroyed the power of sin in the flesh! Jesus CONQUERED SIN AS THE PERFECT SACRIFICE FOR SIN (II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:4-6). Blessed PROVISION of the “new life!”

“That the righteousness of the law...” (Rom. 8:4) “The requirement of the law” was met fully by Christ in our stead (Rom. 3:21-20). We comply with the righteous demands of the law when we “WALK not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The POSSIBILITY OF THE NEW LIFE is realized as we obey the dictates of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the believer to help him!

B. They that are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:5-8).

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.” (Rom. 8:5): “After the flesh” refers to the unconverted. Those still in a state of nature. These are put in contrast with the converted, believers, who “are after the Spirit.”

Some wants of the flesh are lawful. It is right to gratify them. We must have proper sleep, eat and drink to sustain the body. We must not listen to those fleshly desires that are evil and lead us to sin. “Crucify” them – put them to death. We Christians must mind the Spirit of God who dwells in us (I Cor. 6:10, 20).

“For to be carnally minded is death” (Rom, 8:6): To be under the dominion of evil -- fleshly impulses of the body -- is SURE PROOF THAT ONE IS SPIRITUALLY DEAD AND UNDER CONDEMNATION. “Death” is eternal death, separation from God. The one who LISTENS ONLY TO EVIL DESIRES AND FOLLOWS THEM WILLFULLY AND PERSISTENTLY SINS AGAINST GOD (verse 7). Such that “are in the flesh cannot please God” (verse 8). You can’t serve God and the devil at the same time (Matt. 6:24).

“They that are after the spirit” (Rom. 8:5b): The Christian obeys the ‘things of the Spirit,’ the words of the Spirit, the Holy Scriptures (II Tim. 3:14-17).

C. God’s Spirit dwells in believers (Rom. 8:0-11).

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“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit...” (Rom. 8:9): We dwell in a physical body, but the evil desires of that body DO NOT CONTROL THE CHRISTIAN. We are in the Spirit as a sphere of life while the Spirit is in us as the secret and power of life. Paul does not mean that we are out of our body or in some immaterial form. He means that IF WE HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE RESIDENT PORTION OF THE GOD-HEAD IN OUR LIVES, THEN WE ARE NO LONGER MERE UNREGENERATE FLESH, BUT INSTEAD ARE IN THE NEW STATE AND THE NEW SPHERE OF THE SPIRITUAL. As Way translates it, “You, however, are now controlled by your animal nature, but by the Spirit of God, if God’s Spirit really has His home in you.” The control of our lives by our lower or higher nature is entirely up to us.

All Christians have the Spirit, but not all Christians are controlled by the Spirit. It is utterly impossible to be a Christian and NOT HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT, as the last half of verse 9b states: “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” The PROOF of the indwelling Spirit is that we “mind... the things of the Spirit” (verse 5), and BEAR THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (Gal. 5:22).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22).

“Spirit of God dwell in you”: The Holy Spirit is God’s Spirit. He proceeds from God, or is sent by Him when we obey the gospel. “Repent,” commands the Spirit directed Peter on Pentecost, “and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION of sins, and ye SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST” (Acts 2:38). “The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that OBEY HIM” (Acts 5:32).

“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead” (Rom. 8:10): Christ dwells in us through the Spirit (Gal. 2:20). The body is dead in the sense of being doomed to die because of Adam’s Sin, God raised up Jesus; our bodies will literally be RESURRECTED “by His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (verse 11). Our mortal bodies shall be raised, not in corruption, but in incorruption (I Cor. 15:42-44).

Daily a Christian, Spirit-led, has clean habits, temperate indulgences, and worry-free minds – all these things help to “preserve life.” They react favorably on our physical bodies in the “here and now!” The spiritual life has spiritual fruits that are normal and natural to our present daily life.

D. Led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:12-14).

“Therefore brethren, we are debtors...” (Rom. 8:12): We are not “debtors” to the flesh. We are not to “live down to the demands of our lower, Adamic nature. We have no obligation to it. The Christian’s debt to sin is not to live after the flesh. If we do this, “we shall die” (verse 13). “Die” enlarges and emphasizes verse 6. To “mind the things of the Spirit” brings life as verse 11 shows -- eternal life.

“Mortify...” Means “to make to die” or to put an end to the deeds of the body. It is not an automatic process, but a gradual one. When it comes to the sins of the flesh like drunkenness, there is but one course. Stop drinking! Sins of the disposition must be “mortified” by us, or it will never be done in us.

“Led by the Spirit of God... sons of God” (Rom. 8:14): In the widest sense, all men are “the offspring” of God (Acts 17:28). In the special sense here only the obedient Christians are “sons of God.” They have been “born again” (John 3:3, 5). They are “led by the Spirit of God.” How?

1. They have given up their own wills to do God’s will, and seek to obey Him in all things.
2. To such the Spirit is given as a helper of their weakness (Rom. 8:26), and by His aid overcome the flesh.

Through the Bible the Spirit instructs and guides us externally. The Spirit internally gives strength and comfort to the Christian who desires to be “led” by the Spirit.

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E. The Spirit hearing witness with our spirit (Rom. 8:15-17).

“For... ye have received the Spirit of adoption...” (Rom. 8:15): Both Jew and Gentile receive this “adoption” into the family of God with all its privileges. We are no longer slaves to sin and in sin. We have received the Holy Spirit as Acts 2:38 promised, have the Spirit of adoption, of sonship. Among the Romans, adoption of children not their own by nature, was common. They would understand this to mean that those converted, or born again, are “adopted” as children of God. Upon those thus “adopted” God bestows His Spirit. This Spirit in their hearts produces a loving trust that enables them to address God as Father.

“Abba Father”: Abba is the Chaldee word for father. “Pater” is its Greek synonym. As “sons” of God we approach and address God as “Father!”

“The Spirit itself...” (Rom. 8:16): “It is a grave mistake to use the neuter ‘it’ or ‘itself’ when referring to the Holy Spirit” (Robertson). The Spirit of God bears witness “with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” The Spirit is one witness to the fact. “Our spirit is a corroborative witness. How do each bear witness?”

1. Witness is usually borne in words, but not always. God’s Spirit bears witness in words (Heb. 10:15). He SHOWS US HOW WE ARE SONS OF GOD THROUGH THE GOSPEL,

2. The Spirit bears testimony in our lives His fruits (Gal. 5:22). Do we BEAR THIS FRUIT? Read I John 4:13; 5:13; John 8:31; I John 5:10.

3. Does our own spirit testify that we “MIND THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT”, inward as well as outward?

“And if children, then heirs... joint-heirs” (Rom. 8:17): According to Roman law all children, including adopted children, received equal shares of an inheritance. Under the Jewish law the older brother had a double portion. Our Lord Jesus Christ ADMITS ALL TO A JOINT SHARE OF THE GREAT INHERITANCE OF HEAVENLY GLORY. Thank God we can all say, “I’m a child of the King!” We “suffer with him” when we are “baptized into His death” (Rom. 6:2-5; Phil. 3:10).

II. The Believer’s Hope of Glory (Romans 8:18-30)

A. The glory of suffering with Christ (Rom. 8:18-24).

“For I reckon that the sufferings... not worthy to be compared with the glory” (Rom. 8:18): The life of the Spirit-led Christian involves suffering (I Pet. 4:12-16). To share in the glory of Christ, the Christian must first share his sufferings. To be despised, persecuted, slain (verse 36). All these things Paul counted as nothing compared to the hope of eternal glory. Read II Cor. 11:23-28.

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth...” (Rom. 8:19): McGarvey thinks this means the earth and all the life upon it EXCEPT MAN. Creation by the fall of man fell from its original purpose, is imperfect and subject to premature decay (Gen. 3:17, 18; II Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1, 5). The figure of childbirth is appropriate, since “nature wishes to reproduce herself in a new, fresh and better form.” God gave a promise of final redemption to fallen man (Gen. 3:15). Creation is represented as sharing that hope (verses 20-22).

“We... waiting for our adoption... redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23): The suffering Christian longs for the time of release from this weak, corruptible, earthly body (I Cor. 15:42-29). Only through death can the state of complete liberty be reached (see Luke 20:34-37). We cling to life naturally. The Lord decreed death to rid us of our earthly body, and “be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (II Cor. 5:2, 6-8). “We were saved in hope, by hope, for hope” of the redemption of the body (verse 24).

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B. The Spirit's intercession (Rom. 8:25-27).

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities..." (Rom. 8:26): We are weak and ignorant of so many things we need. Paul pictures the Holy Spirit as taking hold at our side at the very time of our weakness and before it is too late. The Spirit helps our "groanings" -- helps us express our true wants in harmony with the Father's will (verse 27). Read John 14:16; I John 2:1.

C. The Christian's assurance (Rom. 8:28-30).

"And we know that all things work together for good..." (Rom. 8:28): Paul gives a third reason for patiently enduring suffering with Christ, for His sake, and in His cause (see verses 18, 26). Every experience of life may be so overruled of God as to work for the advantage of those who "love God... the called according to his purpose." "All things" are described in verses 35-39.

"For whom he did foreknow..." (Rom. 8:29): "According to His PURPOSE" (verse 28) is the KEY to explain verses 29 and 30.

To "foreknow" and to "predestinate" are not the same thing. The former knows something before it occurs; the latter is to decree something.

BEFORE MAN WAS CREATED GOD FORESAW HIS FALL AND DESIGNED THE GOSPEL FOR MAN'S SALVATION (verses 16, 25, 26; I Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:4-12; 3:8-9; Col. 1:25-20). THEN, MAN and the GOSPEL EXISTED ONLY IN THE PURPOSE OF GOD. Paul is speaking then of IMAGINARY, IDEAL PERSONS WHO EXISTED ONLY IN THE MIND OF GOD. In PURPOSE GOD DETERMINED THAT THOSE WHO DID HIS WILL THROUGH JESUS CHRIST SHOULD BE MADE RIGHTEOUS AND FINALLY GLORIFIED (verse 30).

Thank God for our calling "by our gospel" (II Thess. 2:14), our justification through that gospel, and the hope of our glorification through Jesus Christ!

III. The Believer's Triumph (Romans 8:31-39)

A. Who shall oppose us (Rom. 8:31, 32)?

"What shall we then say to these things?" (Rom. 8:31): "From Rom. 8:12 on Paul has made a triumphant presentation for the reasons for the certainty of final sanctification of the sons of God" (Robertson). Believers in Christ are justified by faith, their justification results in holy living and finally issues in eternal glory.

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" God is for all who love God. If He is on our side, we must prevail. The gift of "His own Son" (verse 32) is the promise and pledge of the "all things" for God of verse 28. Christ is all and carries all with him." This is our Protection.

B. Who shall accuse us (Rom. 8:33)?

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. 8:33): God is the Judge who sets us RIGHT according to his plan for justification (Rom. 3:21-31). The Accuser must face the Judge with his charges!

C. Who shall condemn us (Rom. 8:34).

"Who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. 8:34): It is a bold accuser who can FACE GOD WITH FALSE CHARGES, or true ones for that matter, for we Christians have an "ADVOCATE at God's Court (I John 2:1) "who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Our Advocate paid the debt for our sins with his blood. The score is settled. We are FREE (verse 1). This is our vindication.

D. Who shall separate us (Rom. 8:35, 36)?

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35): Can anyone lead Christ to cease loving

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us? The seven things noted can not separate us from Christ and His love for us. This is security!

“As it is written...” (Rom. 8:36): In Psalm 44:22. Will such persecution lead us to abandon Christ? The same idea of continuous martyrdom appears in I Cor. 15:31.

“Nay... more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Rom. 8:37): Not the seven things mentioned can lead us from Christ. Christ leads us out of condemnation and into conquest. Christ did not promise to keep us from adversity, but to keep us in adversity. “We gain a surpassing victory through the one who loved us.” It is not merely putting down the enemy, in the seven things noted, but to rise to higher heights on the prostrate form of each of them. No Christian has any excuse for perpetual defeat!

E. The completeness of the conquest (Rom. 8:38-39),

“For I am persuaded...” (Rom. 8:38): “I stand convinced.” The nine items mentioned are those that people dread – death, life, supernatural powers, above, below. “Any other creature” covers any omissions. God’s love is VICTOR OVER ALL FOES. No enemy from the outside can break our connection with Jesus Christ, or separate us from the love of God. A Christian is The Inseparable Man.

Questions

1. How may Romans 8 be titled?
2. Can you name some contrasts in Romans 7 and 8?
3. How many times is “I” used in Romans 7 and 8? How many times does “Spirit” (Holy Spirit) occur in these chapters? How does this explain Paul’s change in Rom. 7:24 and Rom. 8 (see Gal. 5:22)?
4. Can you name six distinct titles applied to the Holy Spirit in this chapter (Rom. 8:2, 4, 9, 11, 15)?
5. How are we made “free from the law” (Rom. 8:2; 3:24)?
6. What ten things are said as to the Holy Spirit’s relationship to believers (Rom. 8:2, 4, 5, 9-11, 13-16, 23,26, 27)?
7. How is the law “weak through the flesh” (Rom. 8:3)? How was sin “condemned in the flesh” (II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:4-6)?
8. What is “the mind of the flesh” and the “mind of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:5, 6; Heb. 10:15-17)?
9. What is characteristic of every obedient believer (Rom. 8:9; Acts 2:38; 5:32)?
10. While every believer has the Holy Spirit, what defeated enemy still wages a continuous battle within (Rom. 8:5-13; Gal. 5:16, 17)?
11. Can we know when we are living after the flesh, and when we are walking in the Spirit (Rom. 8:12; Gal. 5:16-25)?
12. What is the meaning of “mortify” (Rom. 8:13)? Who leads true sons of God (Rom. 8:14)?
13. Can you explain the meaning of “The Spirit of adoption” (Rom. 8:15)?
14. If we are God’s children, what does that make us in our relation to God and Christ (Rom. 8:17)?
15. For what glorious future event are the “groaning” creation and believers waiting (Rom. 8:18-23; Titus 2:13; Phil. 3:20, 21; I Cor. 15:47-49)?
16. How are we saved in hope (Rom. 8:24, 25)?
17. How does the Spirit intercede for us (Rom. 8:26, 27)?
18. Why do we “know” that “all things work together for good” (Rom. 8:28, 18, 19, 30; Heb. 6:10, 11; 12:1, 2; I Cor. 10:1-12)?
19. Can you explain “foreknew,” “predestinate” and what is the KEY to explain Rom. 8:28-30?
20. What is the love of God from which nothing shall be able to separate us (Rom. 8:37, 39)? Does this mean WE ARE NOT ABLE TO DENY CHRIST AFTER WE ONCE ACCEPT HIM (Rev. 2:10c; 3:5)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Third Quarter

Lesson 28
Romans 9

Page 1
Memory Verse: Romans 9:33

Memory Verse:

“As it is written, Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Romans 9:33).

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

JEWISH UNBELIEF was the greatest stumbling block to general acceptance of the Gospel of Christ.

Many Jews especially those in Judea, had become Christians. Yet, the Jewish nation as a whole was unbelieving and antagonistic, Jewish rulers had Christ crucified. They persecuted the church (Acts 4:3, 18-22; 5:18, 29-33, 50:42; 8:1). Jewish unbelievers made trouble for Paul in almost every place he worked.

IF Jesus was really the Messiah of their own Scriptures, how did God’s own nation thus reject Jesus? Paul answers this question in Romans 9-11,

I. God’s Dealings With the Jews Shown to Be Right (Romans 9:1-18) A. Paul’s love for his Jewish brethren (Rom, 9:1-5).

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not...” (Rom. 9:1): This triple oath is a strong statement that he is speaking the truth in Christ and as accountable to Him. His enlightened conscience, guided by the Holy Spirit, testified that he was wholly truthful. Paul was grief-stricken that his own people, the Jews, had rejected the gospel (verse 2). In Romans 1-8 Paul had presented the great teaching that RIGHTEOUSNESS and SALVATION are obtained THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST. Generally, the Jews rejected this doctrine. The intensity of his feeling is emphasized by describing it as “great sorrow” and as “unceasing pain of heart.

“For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ (Rom. 9:3): Paul did not say, “I wish,” but “I COULD WISH...” IF IT WERE PROPER OR POSSIBLE FOR ME TO WISH SUCH A THING.

No man can save another in the sense of SAVING HIM FROM HIS SINS. ONLY Christ could do that (II Cor. 5:21). Judah could offer to BECOME a SLAVE IN Benjamin’s stead (Gen. 44:18-34; read II Sam. 18:33; Exodus 32:32), but Paul COULD NOT ATONE FOR THE SINS OF HIS PEOPLE BY BEING WILLING TO GO INTO ETERNAL PERDITION TO KEEP JEWS FROM GOING THERE!

“Who are Israelites...” (Rom. 9:4): “Israel” is “Prince of God” (Gen. 32:28). All descendents of Jacob wear this name. It was the covenant name of the chosen people.

“To whom pertaineth the adoption.” In sonship, or firstborn (Ex. 4:22, 23). God chose Israel to be his peculiar people, his “son,” his firstborn” (Hosea. 11:1).

“Glory...” The “Glory” of having God as their friend, as the “glory” of the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (Ex. 13:21, 22; 24:16; 29:43; 40:34-R8; I Kings 8:10,11).

“Covenants” God made many covenants with the Jews, but here the messianic covenant is stressed (see Gen. 6:18; 9:9; 15:18; 17:2, 9; Ex. 2:24; II Sam. 7:12-17).

“Law...” The Law of Moses given to the children of Israel at Sinai (Ex. 19:o-S).

“Service of God...” Refers to the praise and worship in the tabernacle and temple under the charge of the priests and Levites (Heb. 9:1, 6).

“Promises...” Those relating to the coming Messiah, our Lord Jesus, and the Gospel.

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“Whose are the fathers...” (Rom. 9:5): Great men like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Physically Jesus was born through the Jews. Jesus was truly God-Man (John 1:1, 14). The supreme privilege and distinction of the Jews is that from them came Christ, of their own blood. In his eternal “being” **“OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. AMEN.”**

This paragraph serves as an admirable introduction to Romans 9-11. While Paul here sets forth the responsibility and the guilt of Israel, such an opening of passionate love disarms any suspicion of prejudice or of hostility on his part. At the same time, Paul’s recital of the high privileges of Israel only emphasizes the greatness of Israel’s rejection of Christ and the Gospel. Since God chose Israel, **HOW CAN SUCH A PEOPLE FAIL TO ENJOY THE SALVATION WHICH HAS BEEN PROVIDED THROUGH GOD?** Paul now discusses this problem.

B. The children of promises are God’s children (Rom. 9:6-13).

“Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. (Rom. 9:6): Paul’s pain of heart is due to the rejection of Israel. The Jews who rejected Christ and the gospel were lost. By this Paul did not mean to say that God’s Word respecting Israel has failed.

“Not all Israel, which are of Israel”: The Jews took the promises to mean that the promises guaranteed salvation to all Jews and to the Jews alone. **THE PROMISE OF GOD DID NOT INCLUDE ALL OF ABRAHAM’S POSTERITY (Gen. 21:12f). IT EXCLUDED ISHMAEL (verse 7).** The privileges of the Jews were not due to their physical descent from Abraham (Luke 3:8).

“Children of God... children of the promise” (Rom. 9:8): Isaac’s children alone received the promises. Before Isaac was born, the promise was made, “At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son” (Gen. 18:10, 14). Thus Isaac was a child born of promise. Physical descent is stressed in verse 7, but spiritual seed by promise in verse 8.

Ishmael was born according to natural laws, he was not of the chosen race. Isaac (verses 9, 10), the child of promise, born contrary to natural laws, produced those who became the chosen people. Only those who believe in Christ now are the children of promise, a spiritual seed rather than of the flesh.

“The purpose of God according to election...” (Rom. 9:11): The two sons of Isaac, unlike Isaac and Ishmael, had the same mother as well as the same father. They were twins – Esau and Jacob. Yet before their birth and thus before they had done anything good or bad, God **REJECTED ONE AND ACCEPTED THE OTHER AS THE HEIR OF THE PROMISES.**

Here it is the purpose or **CHOICE** of God in choosing as He did. Paul is not discussing the predestination of individuals to salvation, or condemnation. He is asserting God’s **ABSOLUTE RIGHT IN THE CHOICE AND MANAGEMENT OF NATIONS FOR WORLD EVENTS AS TO BRING ALL, AT LAST, WHO WILL, IN SUBJECTION TO HIMSELF.**

“The elder shall serve the younger...” (Rom. 9:12): It was Said to Rebecca, **“TWO NATIONS ARE IN THY WOMB, and two manner of people... one shall be stronger... and the elder shall serve the younger” (Gen. 25:23).** There is **NO REFERENCE TO THE INDIVIDUAL**, Jacob and Esau, but to the nations – the Israelites and the Edomites. The prophecy of Gen. 25:23 is fulfilled when David put “garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David” (II Sam. 8:14). In Gen. 32:4 Jacob represents himself as the servant of Esau, calling him Lord. The **ELECTION HERE** is that of a race.

“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (Rom. 9:13): An Oriental way of emphasizing a contrast. It means that **ONE NATION IS PREFERRED TO THE OTHER.** Jesus does not teach that a man should actually “hate” his father and mother. (Luke 14:25), but that God should be preferred to every one else –

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even father and mother. This expression was used long after Jacob and Esau were dead and the two nations referred to were fully established. God preferred the nation Israel to the nation of Esau – the Edomites.

C. Man cannot merit God's favor (Rom. 9:14-18).

“Is there unrighteousness with God?” (Rom. 9:14): Paul goes to the heart of the problem. “Beside” God there can be no injustice to Esau or to any one because of election. God is not unrighteous because he chose Jacob, and rejected Esau, as some Jew might object.

“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy...” (Rom. 9:15): This is found in Exodus 33:19, and is in answer to a request of Moses for a high privilege. God is not forced to show mercy, but offers it willingly and freely and ON CONDITION (Isa. 55:7; Exodus 20:5-6). Paul is not discussing salvation or foreordination as to eternity. He is speaking of privileges bestowed according to God's will. What God does is RIGHT, ALWAYS AND IN ALL WAYS.

“Not of him that willeth... but of God that sheweth mercy” (Rom. 9:16): There is NO MERIT ATTACHED TO THE WILLING AND RUNNING on the part of man. There are conditions, The SOURCE OF THE BLESSING OF SALVATION IS OF GOD, not of man. God offers the blessing of salvation to MAN ON CONDITION OF MAN'S WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT SALVATION. “And WHOSOEVER WILL...” (Rev. 22:17; I Cor. 0:24).

“Pharaoh... I raised thee up” (Rom. 9:17): God made Pharaoh appear in history. The Egyptian king was a fit subject for God's divine punishment. God was ONLY THE OCCASION, and NOT THE CAUSE OF THE HARDENING OF Pharaoh's HEART, “The same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay” (see Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:34). When you HEAR THE GOSPEL, the occasion will find you with a response – a HARDENED HEART, or a YIELDED HEART. God gladly extends mercy to all that COME TO HIM (verse 18).

Paul shows the Jews that if they followed Pharaoh's course, they might experience Pharaoh's fate. If they hardened themselves, God is not limited by race, or by any limitation, but hardens whom he wills. God wills to harden (those who harden themselves).

II. The Jews Rejected and The Gentiles Accepted {Romans 9:19-33}

A. The potter and the clay (Rom. 9:10-22).

“Why doth he yet find fault?” (Rom. 9:19): If God's will is paramount, why should the Jewish objector find fault, for no one nation can withstand God's will.

“O man, who art thou that replies against God?” (Rom. 9:20): Shall man charge God with injustice? Man has no right to strive with his Maker. God HAS THE RIGHT TO DECLARE HIS OWN CONDITIONS UPON WHICH HE WILL HAVE MERCY.

“Hath not the potter power over the clay...” (Rom. 9:21): God has the right to make of His creatures what He will. It is not said that we are as clay in the potter's hands, BUT THAT GOD HAS THE RIGHT OVER US THAT THE POTTER HAS OVER THE CLAY. One lump the potter can use for a splendid vase; another for a vessel for base uses.

This illustration of DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY of the Potter and the clay does not EXCLUDE CONDITIONALITY as shown by Romans 2:3-5. God's goodness is for the purpose of leading men to repentance, and at the same time it is implied that man may through hardness and impenitence, treasure up wrath.

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II Peter 3:9-15 declares “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,” and “account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation” (verse 15).

The passage from II Timothy 2:20, 21 plainly states a condition, “IF A MAN therefore PURGE HIMSELF from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the Master’s use.”

In Jeremiah 18:1-10 the prophet takes us to the potter’s house to watch him as he works on the wheel. The clay is marred in the hands of the potter. He changes his mind concerning the kind of vessel to make of the clay. The house of Israel is in the hands of Jehovah to do with it just as the potter did with the clay. The potter intends to make a certain kind of vessel of the clay, but on account of its being marred he “made it again another vessel” as seemed good to him to make it. Note that God makes application of this illustration. His dealing with them **DEPENDS ON A CONDITION** of their **REPENTANCE** and **OBEDIENCE TO GOD**. Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, and God spared the city that he said he would destroy (Jonah 3:4-10)!

“HOW to reconcile the Sovereignty of God and the **FREEDOM OF THE HUMAN WILL** we do not know. Both doctrines are taught in the Bible. We believe them both.... Some things we now see in a glass darkly. But some day we shall know, even as we are known” (I Cor. 13:12).

“What if God... endured with much longsuffering” (Rom. 9:22):

God intends to save men. He **WANTS ALL MEN TO COME TO REPENTANCE** (II Pet. 3:0). Those who willfully and persistently **REJECT GOD** and His way, choose their own destruction. The Jewish nation sinner in rejecting Christ. Yet God “endured with much longsuffering” their sin. Such sin persistent in leads to endless perdition, not annihilation (I Thess. 2:15f).

B. The riches of His glory (Rom. 0:23).

“And that he might make known the riches of his glory

(Rom. 9:23): “The vessels of mercy” are both Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ. What was wrong if God “endured” vessels fitted for destruction (verse 22)? What if God made known the “riches of his glory on vessels of mercy?” “Riches” suggest abundant glory. God made preparation to save the Gentiles as well as the Jews,

C. The call of God is universal (Rom. 9:24-26).

“Even us... not... Jews only, but also of the Gentiles” (Rom. 9:24): Paul had already alluded to this fact in Rom. 9:6f (see Gal. 3:7-9). Now he proceeds to prove it from the Old Testament.

“As he saith also in Osee (Hosea)...” (Rom. 9:25): The salvation of Gentiles and the rejection of Israel had been predicted by the prophets. To establish further the justice of God, Paul appeals to Scripture. In the case of the Gentiles he quotes Osee or Hosea, meaning “Deliverer,” the first of the Minor Prophets as they appear in the Authorized Version. Hosea spoke in reference to the apostate and idolatrous Ten Tribes, involving the same principle of divine pardon and mercy:

“I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.” (Hosea 2:23; 1:10)

God “endured” the sins of the Jewish nation, without cutting it off, that He might make known his mercy in calling the Gentiles. Paul quotes Hosea 1:10 in Rom. 9:26 to show that the gospel call to the Gentiles is only in harmony with the long-declared purpose of God!

D. God can force none to be saved (Rom. 9:27-33).

“Esaias also crieth...” (Rom. 9:27): Esaias is Isaiah and the quotation is from Isaiah 10:22, 23. Paul

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shows that Isaiah predicted that for a time the whole nation would be rejected and only a small remnant be saved. Because of their UNBELIEF, God would cut off his people, although in mercy He would save some, a remnant. Isaiah describes the punishment of Israel in his own day, and the remnant that was to escape from the destroying hosts of Assyria. Paul applies the words to those in Israel who at the time he was writing were being saved by the gospel (verse 28).

“And as Esaias said before...” (Rom. 9:29): This is found in Isaiah 1:9. This shows that only a “remnant” of Israel shall be saved. Sodom and Gomorrah perished on account of their sins. From Sodom only four souls escaped (Gen. 19:15-25). Gomorrah was utterly destroyed, Thus from the mouth of the Old Testament prophets Paul establishes the fact that God is not only just but merciful, even in his present rejection of Israel.

“What shall we say then?” (Rom. 9:30): What conclusion shall we reach? Paul has shown that it is “Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect” (verse 6), for the Bible through the prophets has foreshadowed all that has taken place. What is the conclusion?

“The Gentiles... attained to righteousness... of faith”: The Gentiles, who did not have knowledge of God’s righteousness, SECURED RIGHTEOUSNESS BY ACCEPTING CHRIST, THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST!

“BUT Israel... hath not attained to the law of righteousness” (Rom. 9:31): Israel through UNBELIEF failed to attain the “law of righteousness” in Christ.

“Wherefore?” (Rom. 9:32): Why this failure on Israel’s part? Not because God willed that Israel should be rejected, not because of any foreordination, BUT BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF IN JESUS CHRIST, Israel’s Messiah. Israel “sought” righteousness before God, a righteousness of works by keeping the Law of Moses! They “stumbled at the stumbling stone” (verses 32, 33). They refused FAITH IN A CRUCIFIED CHRIST. Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16 showed that when Jesus came as a lowly one to be crucified, the Jews rejected Him. They looked for a mighty earthly king. They stumbled and fell!

Questions

1. What blocked general acceptance of Christ by the Jews? What did this cause toward the early church, and the apostle Paul (Acts 4:3, 18:22; 5:18, 29-33, 50-42; 8:1)?
2. Why did Paul give such a solemn avowal of truthfulness (Rom. 9:1)?
3. What was the cause of Paul's "unceasing pain" of heart (Rom. 9:1-3)?
4. Did the Jews love Paul in return (Acts 18:45, 50; 14:19; 21:27; 23:12; 25:7)?
5. How could Paul make the wish in verse 3 in order to express his sympathy with the Jews? Who only can save us from our sins (II Cor. 5:21)?
6. What eight advantages over the Gentiles had the Jews enjoyed (Rom. 9:4, 5)?
7. In dealing with sin and its cure (Romans 1-8) had Paul recognized any difference between the Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 3:9, 30; Gal. 3:28, 29)?
8. Did the promise of God include all Jews, all of Abraham's posterity (Gen. 21:12f)? In whom alone should "thy seed be called" (Rom. 9:6, 7; Gen. 18:10, 14)?
9. What is the difference between the natural descendants of Abraham and the spiritual seed of Abraham (Rom. 9:7-13; Gal. 3:7, 29)? Did the blessing rest merely upon natural descent?
10. Upon what, then, does God's purpose rest (Rom. 9:11; 3:27; 4:4)? Did Jacob and Israel merit the election?
11. How was it true that the elder served the younger (Rom. 9:12; Gen. 25:23; II Sam. 8:14)?
12. How was Jacob loved and Esau hated (Rom. 9:13; Mal. 1:24; Ezek. 35:3-9)? Is it right to "hate" your mother (Luke 14:26)?
13. Who only determines what God shall do (Rom. 9:15, 16)? Does God's mercy EXCLUDE conditionality (see Isa. 55:7; Exodus 20:5-6; Rev. 22:17; I Cor. 9:24)?
14. What is the import of the address to Pharaoh (Rom. 9:17)? How did God harden Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:34)?
15. Why is it so inconsistent for men to criticize what God does (Rom. 9:20, 21)? Does the illustration of Divine Sovereignty EXCLUDE CONDITIONALITY (Rom. 2:3-5; II Pet. 3:9-15; II Tim. 2:20, 21; Jer. 18:1-10)?
16. Why is it so difficult for men to understand God's ways (Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 8:7; 11:33-36; I Cor. 2:14)?
17. Whom hath God called (Rom. 9:24; Eph. 2:11-13)?
18. To whom did Hosea refer as a people "which were not my people (Rom. 9:25, 26; Hosea 2:23)? What did Isaiah predict concerning the salvation of the Jews (Rom. 9:27-29; Isa. 10:22, 23; 1:9)?
19. What did the Gentiles receive which the nation of Israel missed (Isa. 9:30, 31)? Why did the Jew fail (Rom. 9:32; Isa. 53:6)?
20. Why did Christ crucified become "a stumbling stone and rock of offence" to the Jew (Rom. 9:3R; Isa. 8:14; 28:16)? Who shall NEVER BE ASHAMED?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Third Quarter

Lesson 29

Page 1

Romans 10

Memory Verse: Romans 10:17

Memory Verse:

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

“WHOSOEVER WILL” MAY COME!

In a children’s meeting an assignment was given them to print on their handwork, “Go ye therefore, and TEACH ALL NATIONS.” One little girl printed: “GO YE... TEACH ALL NOTIONS.”

Some would preach Matt. 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15, 16 this way, not clearly presenting “The Everlasting Gospel” (Rev. 14:6).

“For They Stumbled” (Rom. 9:32)

In Romans 9 God chose Israel, not through any merit of that nation, but bring blessings through them to the world. To Abraham God promised: “In thee shalt all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3b).

God did not make Israel reject Christ. Israel “stumbled at that stumbling stone” – the Messiah, Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 9:32). God “left us a seed (remnant)...” (Rom. 9:29) in His mercy!

This “seed” or remnant in Isaiah’s day, or Paul’s day, or in our day, must seek God’s righteousness BY FAITH. “Whosoever believed on HIM SMALL NOT BE ASHAMED” (Rom. 9:33). Gentile or Jew may have other “notions” about it, but only God’s way is right (John 14:6). Today we see

I. Legal Righteousness Contrasted with Faith (Romans 10:1-11)

A. Prayer for the unsaved (Rom. 10:1).

“Brethren...” (Rom. 10:1): Seven times in Romans Paul addressed his brethren generally (Rom. 1:13; 8:12; 11:25; 12:1; 15:14, 30; 16:17). It was a kindly gesture.

“My heart’s desire and prayer to God...” Literally his heart’s good pleasure. Read again Rom. 9:1-3.

“For Israel...might be saved” In Rom. 9:31, 32 the nation of Israel had rejected the Christ and the Gospel hope. Paul desired and prayed for Israel’s salvation. Paul would not have prayed for Israel had the nation been absolutely reprobate. Paul leaves God’s problem to him and pours out his prayer for the Jews in accordance with the strong words of Romans 9:1-5.

B. Misdirected zeal (Rom. 10:2, 3).

“They have a zeal of God...” (Rom. 10:2): “Of” should be “for.” Paul was a fitting witness of zeal. He was “zealous” as a persecutor or as a preacher. “Concerning zeal, persecuting the church” (Phil. 3:6). “And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women” (Acts 22:4; 21:20-31; II Cor. 11:24).

Augustine says: “It is better to go limping in the right way, than to run with all our might out of the way.”

“But not according to knowledge”: The Jew had knowledge of God and so were superior to the Gentiles in privileges (Rom. 2:9-11). They sought God in an external way by rules and rites and missed him

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(Rom, 9:30-33). They failed to see that there was no other way to justification and salvation than by faith in Jesus Christ! Had they read Moses and the prophets correctly they would have recognized Christ as their long-expected Messiah, and used their zeal to preach the gospel to “every creature” (Mark 16:15, 16). “For had ye believed Moses,” said Jesus, “ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me” (John 5:46).

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness...” (Rom. 10:3): The Jew did not understand the God-kind of righteousness by faith (Rom. 1:17). Moses’ righteousness demanded that “The man that DOETH THEM (the law) shall live in them” (Gal. 3:12), To live under the Law of Moses and attain righteousness means that one must KEEP THAT LAW PERFECTLY. This no man was able to do.

Christ was God’s righteousness. Any man who by faith would “PUT ON CHRIST” (Gal. 3:27) was MADE TO BE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD. The Jews rejected Christ’s way. They sought righteousness by works, secured by keeping the law, and by obeying the traditions of men (Mark 7:7, 8). Foolishly they would not put themselves under the authority of Christ and build of the ROCK (Matt. 7:24-27)!

“FAITH ONLY” is anti-Scriptural. To be saved, Jew and Gentile must “WALK IN THE STEPS OF THAT FAITH OF OUR FATHER ABRAHAM” (Rom. 4:12). We are “FREE INDEED” IN CHRIST (John 8:31-36). All urged to submit themselves unto the “righteousness of God.”

C. The righteousness of the law contrasted with the righteousness of faith (Rom. 10:4-11),

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness...” (Rom. 10:4): Christ is the END OF THE LAW REALIZED. The law was consummated in Christ. Christ by providing the gospel put an END OF THE LAW – he “fulfilled and killed it (Matt. 5:17) “Nailing it to his cross” (Col. 3:14, 15). This NEW COVENANT or TESTAMENT of the gospel (Heb. 8:13) REVOKED THE OLD TESTAMENT or covenant.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:3, 4). The law demanded punishment for sin, and CHRIST BORE THAT PUNISHMENT FOR YOU AND ME. All who are in Christ enjoy the benefits of HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. “Jesus Paid It All!” If you have not obeyed this gospel, will you do so today (II Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:15)?

“Moses... The man which doeth those things shall live by them” (Rom. 10:5): The principle of LEGAL RIGHTEOUSNESS described by Moses calls for ABSOLUTE PERFECTION. This means we would be SAVED ON THE GROUND OF WHAT WE DO, without any reference to faith in Christ and works that would make our faith perfect. Without Christ we are lost. Legal righteousness OFFERS NO CHRIST TO MANKIND. “The law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them” (Gal. 3:12).

“Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God” (Lev. 18:5).

“Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.” (Deut. 27:26). “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10) The law, then, brought death to the proud self-righteous. It led the humble to Christ and the gospel!

“But the righteousness which is of faith...” (Rom. 10:6): You can NEVER reconcile the new gospel and the old law! Paul personifies Righteousness-which-is-of-faith and lets it speak for itself. This is God’s righteousness in contrast with that of the law.

“Who shall ascend...?” Paul takes various phrases from the LXX and uses them for “his inspired

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conviction and experiences of the gospel” (Denny), See Deut. 30:11-14. Paul applies the words of Moses to Christ. There is no need for one to go to heaven to bring Christ down to earth. That Christ was born of the Virgin Mary (the Incarnation) is already a glorious fact.

“Or, Who shall descend into the deep?” (Rom. 10:7): Christ has already risen from the dead. It is finished. We do not need a Saviour who will do it. It has been done! The Jews “were wont to demand that they should see the Risen Christ with their own eyes, or that he be produced from the realms of the dead. To have met the demands of the Jews would have been SIGHT rather than FAITH.”

“The word is nigh thee... mouth... in thy heart” (Rom. 10:8): In Scripture things hard to be done are said to be FAR OFF. Those things easy to be done are said to be near. Justification BY FAITH is NEAR US – it is not hard to obtain it IF WE WILL TO DO SO!

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth... believe in thine heart” (Rom. 10:9): Jesus attached great importance to the good confession (Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8). The thing to be confessed: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matt. 16:10; see Acts 8:37).

The gospel is the good news that Jesus died for our sins, that he was buried, that he rose from the dead the third day (I Cor. 15:3, 4; II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:24; 3:18). FAITH REQUIRES that we make this confession; it must be accepted. This word of God is WITHIN OUR HEARTS (Jer. 31:33; Luke 17:20, 21). Faith WILLING is repentance (II Pet. 3:9). Faith SPEAKING is confession (Matt. 10:32, 33). BAPTISM is faith ACTING (Gal. 3:27; Mark 16:16). These are the conditions of our being JUST BEFORE GOD. They are all the CONDITIONS given in the New Testament to put us into Christ (Rom. 10:10). Do these, and YOU WILL BE SAVED Refuse to do them, and you be damned, lost forever!

“Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. 10:11): The one who believes and confesses Christ will be JUSTIFIED, or SAVED. Being uncondemned, he has no cause for shame. “The scripture” is from Isa. 28:16 and already quoted in Rom. 9:33.

II. The Gospel Leaves the Disobedient without Excuse (Romans 10:12-21)

A. Calling on the name of the Lord (Rom. 10:12-18).

1. The universal need (Rom 10:12).

“For there is no difference... Jew and the Greek” (Rom. 10:12): God’s word states frankly that “there is NO DIFFERENCE.” The Jew objected to SALVATION BY FAITH, instead of BY THE LAW. Paul has shown that RIGHTEOUSNESS COULD NOT BE OBTAINED BY THE LAW, and that the prophets had predicted salvation by faith. This salvation is for the JEW – AND THE Greek, or Gentile (verse 11). “Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (verse 11). “The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.” “All have sinned” (Rom. 3:23); ALL must be SAVED by FAITH THROUGH CHRIST!

2 The simple condition (Rom. 10:13).

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord... saved” (Rom. 10:13): To “call upon the name of the Lord” implies:

- a. The true God (Jehovah, in the Hebrew quotation) shall be approached in worship,
- b. There shall be something more than saying, “Lord, Lord.” (Matt. 7:21, 22).

To “call” upon the name of the Lord is to call UPON THE LORD HIMSELF, the name standing for the person. The sinner must come to the Lord and call on him in his appointed way as His word directs.

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When Paul was face to face with Christ, he asked, “What shall I do, Lord” (Acts 22:10). “And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and THERE IT SHALL BE TOLD THEE OF ALL THINGS WHICH ARE APPOINTED FOR THEE TO DO” (Acts 22:10). Ananias told Saul what God had “appointed” and Saul became a Christian (Acts 22:12-16).

Paul quoted from Joel 3:5 (2:32 LXX).

3. The human means (Rom. 10:14-18).

“How then shall they call on him...?” (Rom. 10:14): The Gentiles were to have the opportunity of hearing the gospel and the opportunity of salvation. The duty of preaching is now shown. They could not “call upon the Lord” (verse 13) WITHOUT FAITH. The worldwide gospel demands worldwide proclamation! Paul was constrained to preach to the Gentiles to carry out the purposes of God. His plea is just as true today as then.

“And how they preach, except they be sent?” (Rom. 10:15): If “calling” requires believing and if believing requires hearing, then hearing requires telling! Every Christian is a “preacher” and under the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 8:4). “Tell it wherever YOU GO!”

“And how shall they preach except they be sent?” (Rom. 10:15): What is the meaning of being “SENT?” It was by Divine Authority in the Commission (Mark 16:15, 16). It is by human assistance. “As it is written” (Isa. 52:7). The message was to the Gentiles blessed tidings which they joyfully received (Acts 18:48).

“But they have not all obeyed the Gospel.” (Rom. 10:16): Those who receive the gospel enjoy the gospel or peace and glad tidings. It is “A great mercy to enjoy the gospel of peace, but a still greater one to enjoy the peace of the gospel.”

“Lord, who hath believed our report?”: Paul quotes Isa. 53:1 to show how Isaiah felt. The tragedy was not in the gospel, but because of those who do not obey the gospel! Great opportunity means great responsibility (Luke 12:47, 48). Glory spurned means tragedy earned.

“So then faith cometh by hearing...” (Rom. 10:17): You do not get faith by asking, but by HEARING the word of God. You do not get it by reasoning but by revelation, for it is a product of the word of God! Preaching is essential. “IF GOD BY A MIRACLE WROUGHT FAITH IN THE HEART, HE COULD DISPENSE WITH THE PREACHER. But the divine arrangement is that it should result from hearing the word of God preached” (read Acts 18:8).

“Have they not heard?” (Rom. 10:18): “They” allude to both Jew and Gentile. The objector might say, “Well, if faith comes by hearing, so few have heard that we are not responsible for our unbelief. Nay, says the apostle, the opportunity to hear has been very widely extended.

“Their sound... words... ends of the world”: This is the language of Psalm 19:4. The vast multitude on Pentecost (Acts 2:38-41) were scattered to their home. They carried the gospel to all parts of the civilized world. Paul was now writing to the Roman church from Corinth, probably in 58 A. D., where no apostle had ever been.

B. God’s long suffering and patience (Rom. 10:19-21).

“Did not Israel know?” (Rom. 10:19): “Did Israel fail to know?” The Jewish unbeliever objects, IF THE GOSPEL HAS BEEN EXTENDED SO WIDELY, WHY IS THE GREATER PORTION OF ISRAEL IN IGNORANCE THAT THE GENTILES WERE TO BE SAVED? Paul replies that Israel should have known.

“First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy...”: Moses in Deut. 32:21 (LXX quotation) foretells the call of another people to the favor of God – the Gentiles.

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“I was found of them that sought me not” (Rom. 10:20): Isaiah “breaks out boldly” (Gifford) in the prediction of the salvation of the Gentiles (Isa. 65:1), and he predicts the falling away of Israel (Isa. 65:2). See Rom. 9:30-33 for illustration of the point.

“But to Israel... All day long have I stretched forth my hands...” (Rom. 10:21): God shows extended patience. Try to stretch out your hands and see how soon they become too heavy to hold. It is the picture of a parent with hands extended, appealing to a wayward child. The Jewish nation was that child. It was CAST OFF BECAUSE IT WOULD BE CAST OFF. It refused to listen to appeals (See Matt. 23:37). “I would... YE WOULD NOT!”

“A disobedient and gainsaying people”: “Unto a people disobeying and talking back.” The two things usually go together. Israel was contrary and contradictory (Luke 13:34f).

Questions

1. Does Matthew 28:18-20 say, “Teach all nations” or “Teach all notions?”
2. How does John describe the gospel (Rev. 14:6)?
3. How did Paul usually address the Jews (Rom. 10:1; 1:13; 8:12; 11:25; 12:1; 15:14, 30; 16:17).
4. What was Paul’s desire for Israel (Rom. 10:1)?
5. Did the Jews have “a zeal of (for) God” (Rom. 10:2)?
6. Did Paul himself exhibit “zeal” (Phil. 3:6; Acts 22:4; 21:20-31; II Cor. 11: 24)?
7. Was the Jews’ zeal according to “knowledge” (Rom. 10:2; 2:9-11; 9:30-33; John 5:46)?
8. Of what great fact were the Jews ignorant (Rom, 10:4; Mark 7:7, 8; Matt. 7:24-27; 1:17; Gal. 3:12)?
9. How is Christ the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes (Rom. 10:4; 8:3-4; Matt. 5:17)?
10. What is the principle of legal righteousness as described by Moses (Rom 10:5; Gal. 3:10-12; Lev. 18:5; Deuteronomy 27:26; James 2:10)?
11. Is it possible to reconcile the gospel of “righteousness which is of faith” with the Law of Moses (Rom. 10:6)?
12. What is the meaning of “Who shall ascend” and “Who shall descend” (Rom. 10:6, 7)?
13. Is the confession of our faith in Christ essential (Rom. 10:9, 10; Matt. 10:32, 38)?
14. Will the believer in Christ ever “be ashamed” (Rom, 10:11; Isa. 28:16; Rom. 9:33)?
15. Can you explain “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek” (Rom. 10:12; 3:23; 10:11)?
16. What steps are involved in “calling upon the name of the Lord” (Rom. 10:13; Matt. 7:21, 22; Acts 22:10; Joel 3:5; 2:32 LXX)?
17. What is necessary before men can believe (Rom. 10:14-17; I Cor. 9:16)?
18. What illustration did Paul use to show that all that hear would not believe (Rom. 10:16-21)?
19. What had been God’s attitude toward the rebellious nation of Israel (Rom. 10:21)?
20. Will YOU call upon the Lord today? You MAY if you will (II Cor. 6:2; Rev. 22:17)?

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Year V

Third Quarter

Lesson 30

Page 1

Romans 11

Memory Verse: Romans 11:26, 27

Memory Verses:

“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” (Romans 11:26, 27),

ISRAEL’S RESTORATION

Frederick the Great asked his chaplain to give him, in a single sentence, the greatest and most convincing evidence for Christianity. Quickly the chaplain answered, “THE JEW!”

Can Jews be converted to faith in Christ? Is Jewish evangelization a futile and impertinent enterprise on the part of the Christian Church? Is the spiritual condition of Israel hopeless? Paul in Romans 11 gives his inspired reply to these searching questions of the present day.

Train of Thought

Romans 9-11 must be considered as a unit of thought. Israel’s present rejection is in keeping with Old Testament prediction and with the justice of God (Rom. 9). God chose Israel. God did not make the Jew reject Christ.

Israel’s rejection is due to Israel’s stubborn unbelief (Rom. 10).

Israel’s rejection is neither complete (Rom. 11:1-10), nor final (Rom. 11:11-32), but is to issue in such a national restoration as will result in universal blessing. Paul closes the discussion with adoration and praise (Rom. 11: 33-36).

I. A Remnant Saved, the Rest Rejected (Romans 11:1-10)

A. Needless discouragements (Rom. 11:1-4),

“I say, then, ‘Hath God cast away his people?’” (Rom. 11:1) In Romans 10 Paul has shown that the Gentiles were to come into God’s favor, and the Jews, the chosen people, to be rejected. The apostle now asks: “Hath God cast away his people?” This refers to the Jews. God has not “totally repudiated H’s People!” The nation has a chance to come back. God is still holding out his hands to invite them back (Rom. 10:21). The Jew is not completely cut off as Rom. 11:23 shows.

“For I also am an Israelite...” Paul was Jewish born, of the tribe of Benjamin. He “was free born” as a Roman (Acts 22:28), Read Phil. 3:5 for more of Paul’s pedigree. Since God accepted him as an apostle of Christ, it proves that God has not rejected all the Jews (verse 2; Acts 15:15-18). He only rejected them that would not believe. Belief in Christ alone under the gospel age gains God’s favor.

“Elias... I am left alone” (Rom. 11:2, 3): The passage referred to is found in I Kings 19:10. Elijah who was running for his life from Jezebel assumes falsely that all Israel has fallen into idolatry, and hence God has rejected ALL ISRAEL. Elijah made a mistake. He thought HE WAS ALONE IN SERVING GOD.

“But... God... I have reserved to myself seven thousand men...” (Rom 11:4): Poor disheartened Elijah on Mt. Horeb was reminded that God had a REMNANT in Israel who “have not bowed the knee to the

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image of Baal.” Baal was the chief male god of the Phoenicians. Baal was a common Canaanite word for “Master, Lord,” and the son of El, the father of the gods, according to the tablets uncovered at Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit of the Amarna Letters) from 1921-1937.

Jezebel, Ahab’s queen, tried to displace the worship of Jehovah with the worship of Baal. So thorough was her evil work that Elijah thought he was the only true worshipper of God left in Israel! But GOD HAD A REMNANT. HE STILL HAS A REMNANT!

B. The election of grace (Rom. 11:5, 6).

“A remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 11:5): Those who had not “bowed the knee to the image of Baal” were a REMNANT OF ANCIENT ISRAEL. A remnant is a portion.

“The election of grace.” “The idea contained in these words is this. In virtue of the election of Israel as the salvation-people, God has not left them in our days without a faithful remnant any more than He did in the kingdom of the Ten Tribes as the period when a far grosser heathenism prevailed.” (Godet) The “election” of individuals is not referred to but the election of a remnant to represent the race.

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works...” (Rom. 11:6): The election is not of works. It is not merited. IT IS CONDITIONAL. Paul and II Pet. 1:1 agree that “give the more diligence to make your calling and ELECTION SURE: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall!” Jewish and Gentile Christians are saved, not because they deserved it on account of keeping the law blameless, BUT BECAUSE THEY ACCEPTED THE OFFERED MERCY of God!

C. Result of seeking to establish our own righteousness (Rom. 11:7-10).

“What then?” (Rom. 11:7): What inference shall we draw, Israel sought to be retained as God’s people. They failed. “The election,” those who OBEYED CHRIST, WERE ACCEPTED.

“The rest were blinded”: Or hardened. Israel had eyes and saw not. Read Isa. 6:9 and Matt. 13:14, 15. Jesus says they were “blinded” because they closed their eyes. It was their own act. God never hardened a man’s heart to KEEP HIM FROM DOING RIGHT, or in order to lead him into wrong! That would make God a monster! God may permit Satan or wicked men to harden them, but GOD DOES NOT LEAD US INTO EVIL.

“Written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber” (Rom 11:8) How is this consistent with grace? With this text we dare not do as the old preacher did. “Brethren, this is a difficult text, we will look it in the face and pass on.”

The “blinded” or “hardened” of verse 7 comes from a medical word that describes the formation of a callus in the fractures of a broken bone. Way’s translation, “The rest have been callously indifferent.” They became hardened like stone. Then God judicially declared them hardened BECAUSE AND AFTER THEY MADE THEMSELVES SUCH BY THEIR CHOICE.

The crustacea of Mammoth Cave have CHOSEN TO ABIDE IN DARKNESS. They have become fitted for it. By REFUSING TO SEE, they have waived the right to see. Nature has grimly humored them.

To NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION will bring God’s judgment upon us – then or now (Heb. 2:3). Isaiah’s work was the occasion of Israel’s REFUSING TO SEE AND OBEY GOD’S WAY. The CAUSE FOR IT was in the people themselves. “THEIR EYES THEY HAVE CLOSED” (Matt. 13:14, 15; Isa. 29:10; 6:9, 10; Deut. 29:4).

“And David saith, ‘Let their table be made a snare...’” (Rom. 11:9): The quotation is from Psa. 69:22, 23, The prediction is applied to the enemies of Christ. David was praying from a legal standpoint – calling

God's justice upon these people, The very place where the enemies of God feel secure, or the very objects in which they delight, prove to be the source of their down-fall and the occasion of their ruin.

These prayers represent divine judgment and justice. They do not represent David's personal feelings. David spared his enemy Saul when he could have killed (I Sam. 24:4; 26:11). Jesus applied the words of this pas-sage to the unbelieving Jews (Matt. 23:38) and prayed for his murderers on the cross (Luke 23:34).

II. The Natural and Wild Olive Branches (Romans 11:11-24)

A. Gentile riches from Jewish losses (Rom. 11:11, 12).

"Have they stumbled that they should fall?" (Rom. 11:11): Out of the present unbelief of Israel God brought two things:

1. The rejection of the gospel by the Jews resulted in the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles.
2. Spiritual blessings thus brought to the Gentiles will in the end stir the Jews to emulation, result in their conversion, and will issue in universal blessing.

Has Israel fallen forever? Paul rejects this question as emphatically as he did that in verse 1. If the Jew REJECTED Christ, then of course God intended they fall. In the matter of rejection the Jews were perfectly FREE TO CHOOSE. Christ said, "AND I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32, 33). He referred to the cross. Rejected by the Jewish nation, and sent to the cross, Jesus became the Saviour of all mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews.

The rejection of the gospel by the Jews stepped up the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles (Acts 8:4; Acts 13:44-47). When the Jews crucified Christ, "the handwriting of ordinances was nailed to the cross," the "partition wall" between Jew and Gentile was broken down (Col. 2:14). God overruled the Jewish rejection of Christ for the salvation of the Gentiles.

"Provoke them to jealousy": The elder brother was filled with jealousy when he saw the younger son accepted by the father (Luke 15:25-32). The coming of salvation to the Gentiles should arouse unbelieving Israel to accept Christ and so be brought back to the place that rightfully belongs to them.

"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world... Gentiles" (Rom. 11:12). A paraphrase makes the meaning clear: "If the Gentiles have been enriched in a sense through the very miscarriage and disaster of Israel, what wealth is in store for them in the great return, when all Israel shall be saved – when God hath made the pile complete!"

Israel in her disobedience was SCATTERED AMONG THE NATIONS. Wherever Moses and the prophets are read, the WAY LIES OPEN FOR CHRIST. To study the Old Testament aright will LEAD ONE TO CHRIST (read John 5:45, 46; Luke 24:45-47).

B. The danger of high-mindedness (Rom 11:13-21).

"For I speak to you Gentiles..." (Rom. 11:13): Paul wants it known that he now addresses the Gentiles to whom God had sent him. He wanted to save as many Gentiles as possible. It might provoke the Jews to obey Christ (verse 14).

"Receiving... but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11:15): Some think this is a literal resurrection from the dead. It is doubtless a figurative expression denoting the "resurrection of a nation" into the life of righteousness that is in Jesus Christ. When Christian Israel (Jews) and Christian Gentiles BECOME ONE TO WIN THE WORLD, WHAT AN INGATHERING OF SOULS WILL RESULT!

"For if the first fruit be holy..." (Rom. 11:16): The Jewish law demanded the consecration of the "sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest" (Lev. 23:9-14; Ex. 34:16). This consecrated the whole harvest. The

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Jews, Paul and others, were accepted through the gospel. Hence, the WHOLE NATION COULD BE ACCEPTED. God still watches over the Jews. He will finally receive them if they obey the gospel.

“Root...”: Abraham was the patriarchal ROOT OF THE NATION. He was accepted on faith, so must the branches be accepted by faith.

“A wild olive... grafted in” (Rom. 11:17): The Gentiles were called “wild olives” because God had not cultivated them as he had the Jews. Unbelief caused the Jews to be rejected (verse 20), BELIEF caused the Gentiles TO BE GRAFTED INTO the “fatness of the olive tree” (verses 17, 20, 21). Gentiles must not boast of the favor granted us, We have become Abraham’s children by faith (Gal. 3:28, 29).

C. The goodness and severity of God: FAITH IS THE TEST (Rom. 11:22-24).

“Behold... goodness and severity of God” (Rom. 11:22): “Severity” is shown in breaking off the Jewish branches on account of their unbelief. “Goodness” in admitting Gentile believers.

“And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief...” (Rom. 11:23): As Gentile believers will be cut off unless they “continue in the goodness of God,” so the Jews, IF THEY ABANDON THEIR UNBELIEF, shall AGAIN BE GRAFTED IN. They are not cut off by a decree of God casting them away, but by their own unbelief.

“Contrary to nature...” (Rom. 11:24): God has the power to do what is contrary to natural processes. He put the wild olive (GENTILE) into the good olive tree (the spiritual ISRAEL) and made the wild olive (contrary to nature) become the good olive. The grafting means bringing them into divine favor and the cutting off indicates rejection from the Divine favor.

Those who were his people once and those who were not his people changed places once, AND Paul says THEY CAN CHANGE AGAIN.

III. Final Restoration of the Jews (Romans 11:25-36)

A. God’s covenant preserved – the promise made sure to all the seed (Rom. 11:25-27).

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery.” (Rom. 11:25): “Mystery” does not refer to the incomprehensible. It means that which can be KNOWN ONLY BY PROPHECY OR REVELATION (I Cor. 2:6-12; Eph. 3:1-9). The mystery that Paul is about to unfold is concerning the conversion of Israel. He unfolds it lest the Gentile Christians may have wrong views, or be “wise in your own conceits.” In explaining the “mystery” Paul notes that “hardening” or “blindness in part is happened to Israel.” This blindness or hardening had been due to Israel’s sins – especially UNBELIEF. The second fact is that such blindness would continue “until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in,” or the GREATER PART OF THE GENTILE WORLD HAD BEEN CONVERTED.

“And so all Israel shall be saved...” (Rom. 11:26): Paul evidently speaks here of Israel as a nation. He is not referring to every individual Israelite, just as in speaking of the “fullness of the Gentiles” he does not mean to indicate every individual in the Gentile world. Paul is speaking here of nations and he is pointing to a time when Gentile kingdom and the people of Israel shall be united in the blessings of a redeemed world.

“There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer...” Paul does not quote literally in what follows, but gives the sense of Isaiah 59:20, 21 and Isa. 27:9. In turning “away ungodliness from Jacob” Christ shall convert to righteous-ness the descendants of Jacob, the Jew. “This is my covenant with them” to “take away their sins” (verse 27). These passages imply the restoration of Israel to the divine favor.

B. God’s wonderful gifts (Romans 11:28-32).

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“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes... “(Rom. 11:28): The rejection of the Jews because of their unbelief had proved a blessing to the Gentile world (verse 11).

“As touching the election...” Israel was a chosen nation. Though enemies of God, God remembered that they were children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He did not cast them off forever, but remembered them in love. To this day God has preserved Israel, and purposes to SAVE ISRAEL. God does not change His purposes or fail to keep His covenant (verse 29). What God promised concerning Israel will be fulfilled.

“For as ye...” (Rom. 11:30): The Gentiles. Formerly they were Without God. Now they have obtained mercy. This is indirectly due to Jewish unbelief. Now the Jew was in unbelief (verse 31), and Israel’s disobedience opened the door for the Gentiles! The obedience of the Gentiles shall be a means of converting the Jews (verse 32).

“For God hath concluded them all in unbelief...” (Rom. 11:32): God shuts both Jew and Gentile as each was disobedient (Gal. 3:22). “All” who receive God’s mercy, Jew and Gentile, will be saved.

C. The depth of God’s riches (Rom. 11:33-36).

“O the depth of the riches...” (Rom. 11:33): A doxology closes the chapter. Paul’s doxologies are stately, majestic, sublime, and yet apparently quite spontaneous. They seem to arise naturally from the emotions of a heart stirred by the contemplation of the matchless grace and goodness of God. The apostle has clearly set forth the way of salvation that God has prepared in Jesus Christ for ALL MANKIND. He has shown that MEN ARE JUSTIFIED FREELY and that the REJECTION IS DUE TO THE FAULT OF ISRAEL. He explains that this REJECTION HAS BEEN OVERRULED FOR THE SALVATION OF GENTILES AND ULTIMATELY WILL GIVE PLACE TO A NATIONAL RESTORATION WHICH WILL RESULT IN UNIVERSAL BLESSING. No wonder that the survey of such a vast panorama of divine providence is succeeded by a hymn of praise to “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.”

The “riches” of God would thus refer to “the wealth of love that enables God to meet, and far more than meet, the appalling necessities of the world.”

The “wisdom and knowledge” refers to God’s comprehensive view of all things and His penetrating perception of details which enable Him to adapt His love to all the forces and conditions of the world, even to failure, unbelief and sin, and to work out His plans and purposes of grace.

“Judgments”: Whether of punishment or of salvation are “unsearchable”; his “ways” of dealing with men are “past finding out”, or tracing out! This is the REASON FOR WORSHIP. This is the occasion for faith.

Surely God’s ways are “past tracing out,” for no one has been “his counselor.” (Rom. 11:35; Isa. 40:13) No one knew how He would proceed to attain His purposes. He is so rich that He needs nothing at the hands of man. All God gives must be the expression of grace, as none can merit anything from God. “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things” (verse 36). In this vast universe, and specifically in the sphere of salvation, all things have their SOURCE IN GOD, through Him they flow as upholds, rules and directs, He is their final cause, their exalted goal. They serve His eternal purpose, His gracious ends. Therefore we sing, “TO HIM BE GLORY FOR EVER. AMEN!”

Questions

1. According to Frederick the Great's chaplain, what is the greatest and most convincing evidence for Christianity?
2. What must be kept in mind as one studies Romans 9-11? Why? Summarize.
3. What question was raised when God blessed the Gentiles (Rom. 11:1)?
4. Who are God's people, and how are they not cast off (Rom. 11:1, 23; 10:21)?
5. What facts of Paul's pedigree are given here (Rom 11:1)?
6. Since God accepted Paul, a Jew, and called him as an apostle, what does this prove?
7. Was Elijah right in assuming that he was alone in serving God (Rom. 11:2-4; I Kings 19:10)?
8. What was Paul's argument from the experience of Elijah?
9. What is the remnant according to the election of grace (Rom. 11:5)?
10. How is it that the election, though not of works, nor meritorious, is nevertheless CONDITIONAL (Rom. 11:6; II Pet. 1:10)?
11. What is the meaning of the citation from Isaiah in Romans 11:8 (Isa. 29:10; 6:9, 10; Deut. 29:4; Matt. 13:14, 15)?
12. How was David justified in using the language as quoted in Romans 11:9, 10 (Psa. 69:22, 23; I Sam. 24:4; 26:11)?
13. How did the fall of the Jews become the wealth (well being) of the Gentiles, or their rejection, the reconciliation of the world (Rom. 11:11, 12; Acts 13:44-47)?
14. If we study the Old Testament aright, where will it lead us (John 5:45, 46; Luke 24:45-47)?
15. How will the reception of the Jews be "life from the dead" (Rom. 11:15)?
16. What is the meaning of the simile of the "firstfruit," the lump, and that of the root and the branches (Rom. 11:16; Lev. 23:9-14; Ex. 34:15)?
17. What is represented by the grafting of "wild olive" branches into the "root and fatness of the olive tree" (Rom. 11:17-21)? Of what conditions were the Gentiles warned (Rom. 11:18-21)?
18. Can you explain the "goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22-24)? When the Gentile body is complete, what change will take place in the nation of Israel (Rom. 11:26)?
19. Who must come before Israel is blessed (Rom. 11:26, 27)? What will the Deliverer do for the nation of Israel?
20. What was Paul's answer to the great, eternal purpose of God (Rom. 11:38-36)?

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Year V

Third Quarter

Lesson 31
Romans 12

Page 1
Memory Verse: Romans 12:1, 2

Memory Verses:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1, 2).

THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN

Paul always bases DUTY upon DOCTRINE, He traces life to belief. It does matter what one believes. Character is determined by creed.

Either the church is crazy, or the world is. They are opposites in their ideals and standards. This is why Festus shouted with a loud voice to Paul that he was “mad” (Acts 26:24). But Paul was sane; Festus was the “mad” one The Prodigal son “went crazy” when he left his Father’s house. “When he came to himself” (Luke 15:17), he arose without delay and returned to his father.

Standards

The standard of the church is service. The standard of the world is pomp and power (Matt. 20:20-27). When God called His workers He ignored the world in its pride and wisdom (I Cor. 1:26-29).

Why Serve?

The theme of this epistle is “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17). Those who seek to walk in the “STEPS OF THAT FAITH OF OUR FATHER ABRAHAM” (Rom. 4:12) become righteous through Jesus Christ (Rom. 9:30-33).

The carnal, fleshly mind’s first impulse is to abuse grace (Rom. 6:1; compare James 2:14-26). So, Paul defines the life or walk of the Christian.

I. Consecration to God (Romans 12:1, 2)

A. The appeal to consecration (Rom. 12:1a).

“I beseech you therefore, brethren...” (Rom. 12:1): The word “there-fore” links all that now is to be said with EVERYTHING THAT HAS GONE BEFORE. Paul has shown in the preceding chapters that we are wholly de-pendent on God’s mercy and not on legal righteousness to be just before God. Because of the grace of God, the believer is called to certain attitudes and actions. The very first of these is personal abandonment to God.

“By the mercies of God”: In view of all of God’s mercies toward Jew and Gentile comes the appeal to consecration. This is the real logic of Christianity. We do not serve God to WIN HIS FAVOR. Because WE HAVE RECEIVED HIS FAVOR we serve God in gratitude and love.

B. The act of consecration (Rom. 12:1b).

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“That ye present...” (Rom. 12:1b): It is voluntary. God does not force us to accept or serve Him. He invites us to “COME” (Rev. 22:17). “Present” is a technical term for offering a sacrifice. It was used of presenting Jesus in the temple (Luke 2:22), of the Christian presenting himself (Rom. 6:13), of God presenting the saved (Eph. 5:27), of Christ presenting the church (Col. 1: 28).

“Your bodies...” It is personal. It is ALL OF US – hands, head, feet and heart. Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind” (Matt. 22:37f). Mark adds: “Love... God... with ALL THY STRENGTH” (Mark 12:30). “What? Know ye not that your BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in YOUR BODY, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:19, 20).

“A living sacrifice.” This is in contrast with the Levitical sacrifice of SLAIN ANIMALS. Read Rom. 6:8, 11, 13. A sacrifice slain and consumed on the altar could not be offered again. It had to be perfect, without blemish (Deut. 15:21; 17:1).

The Christian is to “reckon... yourself to be dead indeed unto sin, but ALIVE unto God” (Rom. 6:11-18). The Christian’s DYING TO THE DESIRE TO SIN (Rom, 6:2; 7:4; Gal. 2:19, 20; Col. 3:5-10; 2:20) makes him through the obedience of baptism ALIVE UNTO GOD, the “servant of righteousness” (Rom. 6:18). It is to be a continuous, daily-to-be-repeated sacrifice (Eph. 5:2; Phil. 4:18). Our bodies and spirits are to be animated by the NEW LIFE THAT COMES FROM FAITH IN CHRIST.

C. The argument for consecration (Rom. 12:1c).

“Which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1c): It is logical in the light of what God has done to make us righteous through faith in Christ that we should DAILY GIVE EVERY FACULTY OF OUR BEING IN SERVICE TO HIM!

D. The attitude in consecration (Rom. 12:2a).

“And be not conformed to this world...” (Rom. 12:2a): The phrase “this world” or “age,” pictures the sphere of form of life from which God is excluded, the spirit of selfishness, the prince of which is Satan. We must not be “made like” “this world” or age, which became associated with those evils, vanities and devilish workings which then and now oppose Christ (Matt. 13:22; II Tim 4:10).

“But be ye transformed... renewing of your mind”: The Christian is CHANGED in BELIEF, DESIRE and PURPOSE. He was once fleshly (Col. 2:18; Rom. 7:23); the Spirit of God CONTROLS HIS BODY (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:21-24; Titus 3:5). He will gradually become more like the Master (Phil. 3:8-16). The “renewing of his mind” is by having a NEW SPIRIT, and WALKING AFTER THE SPIRIT OF GOD (Gal. 5:22-26)

E. The achievement of consecration (Rom. 12:2b).

“That ye may prove what is that good...” (Rom. 12:2b): To “prove” is to find out by practical personal experience the “will of God.” This is good – beneficial. Never fear the consequences of accepting God. “Acceptable”: or well pleasing to God. We obey God because it is right to do so, “Perfect”: There is nothing lacking and nothing wrong in such a life.

II. Cooperation in Christian Service (Romans 12:3-8)

A. A plea for humility (Rom. 12:3)

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“For I say... to every man... think soberly” (Rom. 12:3): The faith-life in Christ must show humility. Christians must not be puffed up because God bestows special miraculous gifts (Eph. 4:7; I Cor. 12:11) – different miraculous powers which were displayed by different Christians. Such faith vanished with the apostolic age (I Cor. 13:8-10).

Each Christian is to “think soberly” of himself, his powers and duties and daily glorify God in humble, loving service.

B. A plea for unity in the church (Rom. 12:4, 5).

“For as we have many members in one body...” (Rom. 12:4): The human body is composed of “many members,” each with its special function. The eyes, arms, legs have a definite function. The eye will never be able to do the hearing for the ear. No one can claim superiority over the others. All functions of the body are essential.

“One body in Christ...” (Rom. 12:5): Christ is the Head over His body, the church (Col. 1:18). Each member is necessary to the full growth and work of the church. God has given gifts to each of us, not to secure praise or for gratifying vanity, **BUT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WHOLE BODY**. We are “**ONE BODY IN CHRIST**.” There can be no freelancing We can’t go it on our own like lone wolves. We must **LABOR IN UNISON**.

What is “The Most Important Job in the World?” The **JOB THE LORD HAS CUT OUT FOR YOU** in His body, the church, Let us understand what a **BIG JOB a LITTLE JOB MAY BE!**

C. A place for every worker (Rom. 12:6-8).

“Having then gifts differing...” (Rom. 12:6): It would be unwise to give **ALL CHRISTIANS THE SAME GIFT**, as it would be to give **ALL MEMBERS OF THE BODY THE SAME FUNCTION**. Each one in the church had his duties, just as the hand, or foot, or eye of the human body. These duties were indicated by the “gift” dealt out by “the measure of faith.” They differed according to “the grace that is given to us.”

“Prophecy”: The Spirit enabled the prophet to proclaim the divine truth, make God’s will known as to the past, present, or future events. The prophet “ceased” (I Cor, 18:8, 9). The Scripture took his place.

“Or ministry...” (Rom. 12:7): This word is derived from the Greek word for deacon. Miracles of healing may have been part of this ministry (I Pet. 4:11), caring for the poor, and serving tables (Acts 6:1-6; I Tim. 3:8-13).

“Or he that teacheth...” Much the same as that of today (II Thess. 2:15; II Tim. 1:13; 2:2; 8:10, 14). How needed is the ability to speak words of wisdom and comfort.

“Or he that exhorteth...” (Rom. 12:8): The ability to stir or excite people to do their duty.

“He that giveth simplicity” With singleness of purpose, sincerity (Matt. 6:1-4, 22; II Cor. 8:2; 9:6, 7).

“He that ruleth with diligence”: “In haste” as if in earnest. As elders, deacons, teachers and ministers in the church, or parents at home (I Tim. 3:R-5, 12) let us serve zealously and not for vainglory.

“He that shows mercy, with cheerfulness”: God wants a spirit of cheerfulness, of sunny brightness in all who visit the sick, the poor and the sorrowing. Matt. 25:35, 36 show the meaning.

Some years ago a church advertised in a religious paper: “**WANTED – a minister who is pious but cheerful!**” Why link piety with gloom? Did you hear of the little girl who said of a certain minister: “He must be an excellent man, he looks so sad?”

The word for “cheerfulness” means “hilarity” (II Cor. 9:7; Acts 20:35). “If you come with sympathy to sorrow, bring God’s sunlight in your face.”

III. Consideration for Others (Romans 12:9-21)

A. Our relation to Christians within the church (Rom. 12:9-16).

1. Love is discriminating (Rom. 12:9).

“Let love be without dissimulation” (Rom. 12:9): “Without hypocrisy” (II Cor. 6:6).

Our love for each other must be sincere.

“Abhor... evil... cleave to... good”: Keep running away from evil, but keep on clinging to good no matter where it leads you.

2. Love is fraternal (Rom. 12:10).

“Be kindly affectioned... brotherly love”: It is a “brother love.” During World War I an English soldier was trying to nurse back to life a German, with whom he found himself in a shell hole. When the German soldier was finally able to speak, he said: “Strange, isn’t it? If we had met out there, you should have tried to kill me for the sake of the Motherland, and I would have tried to kill you for the sake of the Fatherland, and here you are trying to save me for the sake of the BROTHERLAND.”

3. Love is humble (Rom. 12:10b).

“In honour preferring one another” (Rom. 12:10b): This means a courteous preference and recognition of others, Love is willing to vacate rather than occupy; to descend rather than ascend.

4. Love is practical (Rom. 12:11).

“Not slothful in business...” (Rom. 12:11): Notice what is together. One is “business” and another is “spirit.” We are not to be slow and “pokey” as the “slothful” servant in Matt., 25:26. The Christian must not only mind heaven, but attend to his daily calling.

5. Love is exultant. (Rom. 12:12).

“Rejoicing in hope...” (Rom. 12:12): Love is the most optimistic thing in the entire world. True love has a true hope. It looks on the bright side and not too much on the bleak side!

6. Love is enduring (Rom. 12:12b).

“Patient in tribulation” (Rom. 12:12b): Patient in any kind of affliction, sorrow, suffering, or persecution. “Christians are like tea – their real strength comes out when they get into hot wafer!”

7. Love is prayerful (Rom. 12:12c).

“Continuing instant in prayer” (Rom. 12:12c): “Praying always and fainting not” (Luke 18:1). Prayer moves more than our moods – it moves mountains! “Prayer Changes Things!” Try and see!

8. Love is helpful (Rom. 12:13).

“Distributing to the necessity of saints...” (Rom. 12:13): We must share our goods, and seek those who need help. The object of love’s help is the “necessity of the saints.” We are to “do good unto all men but especially to them that are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:2, 9, 10; Heb. 13:2). We are to be “given to hospitality.” This would make every Christian home a Christian inn where love extends the blessings of board

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and bed. In the early days of Christianity persecution often drove Christians from their homes. Christian homes are to be opened to such.

9. Love is blessing (Rom 12:14).

“Bless them that persecute...” (Rom. 12:14): Love steps up rather than stoops down. Love blesses instead of curses. See Matt. 5:44. “Father, for-give them” Christ prayed on the cross for His enemies (Luke 23:34). “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge” prayed Stephen as his enemies stoned him (Acts 7:60).

10. Love is sympathetic (Rom 12:15).

“Rejoice... weep” (Rom. 12:15): Love has an interest in others. Love sympathizes with the joys and sorrows of others.

11. Love is unifying (Rom. 12:16).

“Be of the same mind one toward another.” (Rom. 12:16) Love unifies. Love never divides or separates. “Do not be exclusive, but walk hand in hand with the lowly.” This spirit would eliminate cast from the church. Being wise in our own conceits means to overestimate our wisdom.

B. Our relation to non-Christians (Rom. 12:17-21).

1. Love is without retaliation and provident (Rom. 12:17),

“Recompense to no men evil for evil...” (Rom. 12:17): This is directly opposite to the law of retaliation of the Pharisees as in Matt. 5:39; I Thess. 5:15; I Cor. 13:5f.

“Provide things honest in the sight of all men”: “Be careful to conform to the proprieties, the decencies of human society.” Our jobs are to be honorable.

2. Love is peaceful (Rom. 12:18).

“If it be possible... live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18): Some-times you can do so. Sometimes one cannot do so. We are to be “peace-makers” (Matt, 5:9). See Acts 21:26-36.

3. Love is without vengeance (Rom. 12:19-20).

“Vengeance is mine; I will repay...” (Rom. 12:19): When wronged we are not to take revenge. Let God’s wrath and vengeance take care of the wrongdoer (Deut. 32:35). It is God’s prerogative to avenge what needs to be avenged.

“Therefore if thine enemy hunger...” (Rom. 12:20): It is not enough for the Christian to step aside and wait the day of God’s reckoning upon his enemy. He is to step out and help the enemy. The Christian must do as Scripture bids. “If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.” This is a quotation from LXX text of Prov. 25:21f.

“In so doing... heap coals of fire on his head”: The Christian by such kindness will subdue the enemy and make him feel most keenly the wrong he has done. “You will make him feel that burning sense of shame and remorse which comes to one whose unkindness is repaid by love.” When a Christian Indian tried this on one of his enemies, the missionary asked him why he did it. “I liked to see his head smoke.”

4. Love is victorious (Rom. 12:21).

“Be not overcome of evil...” (Rom. 12:21): The Christian must not let the evil done to him drive him to revenge. We must “overcome evil with good.” This sums up the whole matter respecting our relation to

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non-Christians. We must overcome evil by the good we do our adversary, transforming him from an enemy into a friend!

Questions

1. Was this chapter written to tell Christians what to believe, or HOW TO LIVE?
2. As a Christian, can you show that we must accept the standard of God and “walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (Rom. 4:12; 1:17 Acts 26:24; Luke 15:1)?
3. What two things about the Roman Christians were widely known (Rom. 1:8; 16:19)?
4. Why did Paul enforce these exhortations by the “mercies of God” (Rom. 12:1)?
5. Does God compel men under grace to obey him (Rom. 12:1; see Deut. 4:2; John 1:17)?
6. If our faith is right, will the walk with Christ be right (John 3:16, 18, 26; Rom. 4:12; 12:1, 2)?
7. Why should Christians be exceedingly careful about their life and works (Rom. 14:10, 12; I Cor. 3:9-16; 15:58)?
8. How are we to present our bodies “a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1; Deut. 15:21; 17:1; Rom. 6:8, 11, 13)?
9. Why call this “your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1)?
10. Is the Christian to be “conformed to this world” or “transformed” (Rom. 12:2)? How is one “transformed” (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:21-24; Titus 3:5; Gal. 5:22-26)?
11. How are these exhortations enforced through the grace given to the apostle (Rom. 12:3; Eph. 3:1-9)?
12. What danger faces every consecrated believer who is being used by the Lord (Rom 12.3; John 13:13, 14; I Cor. 12:21)?
13. On what basis does Paul make a plea for unity in the church (Rom. 12:4, 5)?
14. Who has given us ability or talents to serve (Rom. 12:6-8; I Cor. 12:4-11, 18, 27, 28)?
15. Can you list and explain the seven gifts (Rom. 12:6-8)?
16. What eleven characteristics of love are to prevail in our treatment of other Christians (Rom. 12:9-16)?
17. How many of the exhortations should Christians observe toward non-Christians (Rom. 12:17-21)?
18. Is it always possible to “live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18; Acts 21:26-36)?
19. Why is the Christian’s treatment of unsaved men so solemnly important (Matt. 5:16; I Pet. 2:12)?
20. What is the believer’s relationship to the world (Rom. 12:2; John 17:16; Col. 3:2; I Pet. 2:11)?

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Third Quarter

Lesson 32

Page 1

Romans 13

Memory Verse: Romans 13:7

Memory Verse:

“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” (Romans 13:7).

THE CHRISTIAN AS A CITIZEN

A good Christian is a good citizen. It is not worldly or unspiritual to be a good citizen. It is a mark of Godliness to “Pledge allegiance to the flag” of one’s country!

Romans 13 teaches that ALL CIVIL GOVERNMENTS derive their origin and authority from God, and when doing right, have God’s sanction. God ordained civil governments, even though run by evil men, to restrain the criminal elements of human society.

Christians must be law-abiding citizens of the government under which they live. Here we see our duties to civil authorities, our neighbors, and our service.

I. The Constitution of Authority (Romans 13:1-4)

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher power” (Rom. 13:1). Every individual Christian must be obedient to ruling authorities. “Higher powers” may be monarchic, oligarchal (ruling by few, as Japanese militarists before World War II), or republican by delegated authority as in America. Paul is not arguing for the divine right of kings or for any special form of government, but FOR GOVERNMENT AND ORDER. Nor does Paul oppose here revolution for a change of government, but he does OPPOSE ALL LAWLESSNESS AND DISORDER.

Here “higher powers” simply mean civil authorities. Nothing is implied in regard to the CHARACTER OF THE RULERS.

There is no essential conflict between the claims of God and those of the state. Jesus taught us to “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21)

“There is no power but of God”: Civil government has its source in God. God appointed human governments for the welfare of man.

“The powers that be are ordained of God”: “God” appears five times in these four verses. There is NO LEGITIMATE OR RIGHTFUL AUTHORITY BUT FROM GOD. While God has decreed governments, he has not declared WHAT FORM THEY SHALL HAVE. THEY MUST BE FOUNDED UPON PRINCIPLES OF RIGHT AND ETERNAL TRUTH. The OBJECT of all civil government is to protect their subjects, the rights of their person, property and liberty, and suitable to punish evildoers. Such government must not interfere with the Christian’s duty to God in any way.

Any Christian has the right to question the motives and principles and deeds of his government. Whenever civil law conflicts with religious duties, the Christian OUGHT TO DISOBEY IT REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES. When the Jewish leaders forbade Peter and the apostles “not to teach in this name” or preach the resurrected Christ (Acts 5:28), “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said,

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We OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN” (Acts 5:29). And PREACH THEY DID without ceasing (Acts 5:40-42; Dan 6:7-10),

“Whosoever therefore resisteth... receive... damnation” (Rom. 13:2): To line up against a government “Of the people, by the people, and for the people” is to oppose justice, individual rights and privileges. This verse does not condemn resisting evil. The Christian should try every means to keep order and protect life, before he resorts to revolution. To resist right is to bring the judgment of God and rulers upon one’s head.

“Do that which is good .. have praise” (Rom. 13:3): Government exists to promote good and suppress evil. “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (I Tim. 2:1, 2; I Pet. 2:13-17). Such government will not only protect BUT ALSO HONOR the law-abiding citizen.

Who has a bothered and guilty feeling when he sees an officer? NONE BUT THE EVIL DOER. Recently a fugitive from justice was arrested because of this very thing. He was about to cross the street when he saw a police car and so instinctive was his reaction to guilt that he darted back and tried to evade the officers who arrested him. He then began to protest innocence of a particular crime. ONLY THE GUILTY HAVE REASON TO FEAR, Under ordinary circumstances if we respect good government, government will respect us.

“For he is the minister of God to thee for GOOD.” (Rom. 13:4): Even Nero was “The minister of God” for good. “For good” is the ideal, the goal. Paul did not approve all that rulers do, of course. He is talking of men who enforce justice, not about men who pervert their office. The Christian has no fear of the officer of the law, but the fugitive from justice has!

Genesis 9:5, 6 gives the first intimation of human government. This was our FIRST DEMOCRACY. It was the institution of CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE THAT IS THE SACRED TRUST OF ALL GOVERNMENT. Later on God gave the people a theocracy (God was the Ruler), and then a monarchy (Saul the first, king). God is back of all order and decency.

“For he beareth not the sword in vain”: “The sword” is the symbol of authority, as today policemen carry clubs or pistols. The Emperor Trajan presented to a provincial governor on starting for his province, A DAGGER, with the words, ‘FOR ME. IF I DESERVE IT, IN ME.’

“Minister of God”: The ruler will inflict penalties when they are demanded and he will do so as an administrator of divine justice.

II. The Conscientious Obedience (Romans 13:5-7)

“Wherefore ye must needs be subject... for wrath... for conscience sake” (Rom. 13:5): Christians should obey ruling authorities for two reasons: (1) If a Christian fails to obey the ruler, he will be subject to “WRATH” or judgment, and be punished. (2) It is God’s will that we should obey our civil rulers. Our conscience is our sense of right, which is formed by the Word of God. Ruling authorities are appointed by God. Civil officers are God’s servants or ministers. God tells us this in His Word. We KNOW IT. To DISOBEY LAWFUL AUTHORITY is WRONG and will bring punishment from the state and our conscience.

“For this cause pay ye tribute also...” (Rom. 18:6): The tribute here is the common tax of the country that every citizen has to pay. It is wrong to try to cheat our local or federal government of taxes that are proportionately assessed upon all citizens. Paying taxes recognizes authority over us.

“Render therefore to all their dues...” (Rom. 13:7): Paying debts needs emphasis today. Christians

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must pay taxes when they are due, customs or duties imposed by law upon imported or exported merchandise. A wholesome fear of punishment will restrain us from disobeying the authorities. We should honor the office, and if possible the man who occupies it. To obey the law, brings to a Christian respect and praise from civil rulers, peace to pursue our duties and freedom from legal prosecutions and fines.

“Tribute”: Direct taxes, whether upon persons or property. “Custom”: A toll on goods, similar to the modern tariff. “Fear”: Respectful awe for one in power.

“Honor”: Paid to a ruler.

III. The Christian’s Practice (Romans 13:8-10)

“Owe no man anything...” (Rom. 13:8): After insisting upon loyalty to the officials of the State, Paul proceeds to enforce the principle of love that must control the relations of a Christian toward all his fellow citizens in the State. The apostle has been saying that the Christian must pay every lawful obligation to the government.

Paul does not forbid going into debt. He does forbid owing a thing after it is due. We must not refuse to pay a debt we honorably owe. We must not leave a debt unpaid. Christian citizens are not deadbeats. They pay their bills. They meet their obligations, If you assume an obligation, do not rest until it is paid.

“Love one another”: The debt of love is one obligation we must continue paying, even though it can never be discharged fully. “This debt can never be paid off, but we should keep the interest paid up.” Love is the solution to all problems – social, national and worldwide. Is love really an obligation? Yes, it is. When one “loves” he fulfills the law. The law is cited and certain commandments are given, all of which are declared to be comprehended by the one commandment to “love thy neighbor as thyself” (Read Rom. 1:14, 15; Matt. 22:37-40). The Christian loves “one another,” not because a law says we must, but because our life has that kind of a nature. The Christian loves not because he has to, but because he can’t help it. Love is more than an obligation -- it is an opportunity.

“For this, Thou shalt not commit...” (Rom. 13:9): Godly love has never committed adultery, killed anyone, stolen anything, or borne false witness or coveted that which is another’s. God’s own decree against the murderer in Gen. 9:6 has never be repealed, revoked, or set aside. Uphold it.

“And if there be any other commandment...” That is, a commandment which deals with a man’s relation to another in society. The law is summed up in a single sentence, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (see Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:43; 22:30; Luke 10:27; Gal 5:14; James 2:8).

“Thy neighbor” is any human being who chances to be near you. Love is not a SUBSTITUTE FOR THE LAW, but the BASIS UPON WHICH WE FULFILL THE LAW. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15; Gal. 5:13, 14; I John 5:1-4). Read I Cor. 13. One who loves one’s neighbor as himself will fulfill all the law requires, and all that love demands.

Dr. Doddridge one day asked his little daughter how it was that every-body loved her. “I know not,” said she, “unless it be that I love everybody.”

IV. The Crisis of Service (Romans 13:11-14)

To enforce the duties on which he has been dwelling the apostle now appeals to the home of the completed salvation that Christians are to enjoy at the return of Christ. It is “HIGH TIME ...”

A. To “awake out of sleep” (Rom. 13:11).

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“And that... it is high time to awake...” (Rom. 13:11): Like our “the hour” has come. This is the sleep of those who were alive, but asleep at the post of duty. Carelessness and indifference must be put aside. It is not fitting that Christians should be dullards any more than drunkards, It is “high time.”

B. Because “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (verse 11).

“Salvation nearer...” This refers to one’s final salvation whether it comes by the second coming of Christ, or by our physical death when we go to be “at home” with the Lord. Eternity is as near as the next heart beat! Jesus is coming again (John 14:3). Let us awake and arise and be about our Father’s business. Not dreaming about the future, but doing something about the present!

C. Because “The night is far spent, the day is at hand” (Rom. 13:12).

“The night is far spent...” (Rom. 13:12): Here night and day stand in contrast,. Of course, they are not physical day and night, but refer to this “whole period of alienation from God.” The Christian’s life is constantly being shortened. “Day” stands for eternity that is swiftly approaching for us all! It is “at hand” This means it has drawn near. It was near when Paul wrote. It is much nearer today. If the crisis of the times was great to Paul, how much greater is it to us?

D. To “Cast off” and to “Put On” (Rom. 13:12b-14).

“Let us therefore cast off...” (Rom. 13:12b) Paul seems to borrow his figures of speech from the actions of a Roman soldier who, as the dawn approached, awoke from slumber, laid aside the garments in which he had been sleeping, put on his gleaming armor, and stepped forth gladly to greet the day.

Paul declares that his readers should regard the “night” of their distress and sorrow as nearly passed, and the “day” of their deliverance and glory as about to dawn. They should “cast off” the deeds and habits which belong to the unbelieving world and to the kingdom of darkness. They should “put on” the bright armor of the Christian soldier, the matchless “armor of God.” Read carefully Eph. 4:22; Col. 2:11; 3:8, 9; I Pet. 2:1 about “putting off” evil. Study Eph, 4:23, 24; Rom, 6:4; II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Col. 3:10; Eph. 6:11-18 about what to “put on!”

“Let us walk honestly...” (Rom. 13:13): Dishonesty seeks the night. The children of “the day” walk honestly. This implies honest, upright, pure lives. Christians are to walk worthily of their heavenly calling.

“Not in rioting and drunkenness”: “Rioting” or revelings refers to noisy and intemperate frolics. Nocturnal revels characterized the Roman Empire of Paul’s day. Today’s “night parties” where age or youth drink to excess are to be shunned by the Christian.

“Not in chambering and wantonness”: The word “chambering” occurs here and three other times in the New Testament (Luke 11:7; Rom. 9:10; Heb. 13:4). The plural number here suggests its horrid meaning. Schaff and Riddle say: “Various forms of secret vice are here indicated by the plural. These sins are closely connected with the preceding (revelings and drunkennesses), often caused by them. The word translated ‘wantonness’ points to an abandoned sensuality.” David said: “The floods of ungodliness (Heb.: Belial) made me afraid” (Psa. 18:4). So earth’s steadily increasing tide of Noah’s day wickedness would terrify us, did we not know that the Lord IS COMING, to deliver His saints and to judge this very wickedness.

“Not in strife and envying”: Brawls, troubles, “wounds without cause”; hatreds and envying or jealousies follow the train of indulgent sins, How often an innocent youth begins an evening in revelry and dancing, then drink, then sexual uncleanness, then in strife to murder – or be murdered! “Put away anger, wrath, malice, railing” (Col. 3:8).

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ...” (Rom. 13:14): Gal. 3:27 tells us how to put on Christ. To

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“put on” Christ is to enter into fellowship with Him. The Christian who is in fellowship with Christ cannot fulfill the lusts of the flesh. “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25).

The full title of our Lord Jesus Christ awakes, almost startles us. Jesus is His personal name (Matt. 1:21). As Christ, the anointed one, He does His SAVING WORK. As lord, He is OVER ALL THINGS.

“Make not provision”: Make no forethought. It denotes the attitude of mind toward the flesh, as secretly expecting to gratify it – now, or sometime. See Gal. 5:24. The Christian must sustain the fleshly life He must not pamper it. We must so live that with gladness we could greet our returning Lord – TODAY!

Questions

1. Is it generally true that a good Christian is a good citizen?
2. What command does the apostle give in Rom. 13:1?
3. What is the meaning of “higher powers?”
4. How are the authorities that exist “ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1b; Gen. 9:6; Dan. 2:21; 4:17, 25, 32)?
5. Did Jesus think there was essential conflict between the claims of God and those of the state (Matt. 22:21)?
6. What is the limit of our obedience and subjection to the civil authorities (Acts 5:28-29, 40-42; Dan. 6:7-10)?
7. What will those who resist rightful civil authority bring upon one (Rom. 13:2)?
8. To whom are rulers a “terror” (Rom. 13:4)?
9. How is the civil ruler “a minister of God to thee for good” (I Tim. 2:1, 2; I Pet. 2:13-17)?
10. To what state of things do these instructions apply?
11. For what two reasons should a Christian “be subject” to civil authority (Rom. 13:5)?
12. Is it right to pay “tribute” of taxes (Rom. 13:6)? Define “tribute,” “custom,” “fear,” and “honor.”
13. Is it wrong to go in debt (Rom. 13:8)?
14. What one debt will we never be able to pay (Rom. 13:8b)?
15. Will love break the summary of commandments listed in Romans 13:9)?
16. Is love a substitute for the law, or the basis upon which we fulfill the law (John 14:15; Gal. 5:13, 14; I John 5:1-4; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:43; 22:30; Luke 10:27; James 2:8)?
17. What incentive did Paul use to holy living (Rom. 13:11, 12; I John 3:2, 3)?
18. What are we to “cast off” and “put on” (Rom. 13:12)?
19. How is the Christian to walk (Rom. 13:13)? Define the evil trio of things for the Christian to avoid.
20. How do we “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27), and for what are we not to “make provision?”

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Third Quarter

Lesson 33
Romans 14

Page 1
Memory Verse: Romans 14:12

Memory Verse:

“So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12).

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS

In Romans 14 Paul turns the discussion to some of the difficulties which may arise in the Christian Church. The chapter is devoted almost wholly to the mutual duties of Christian brethren who happen to be STRONG or WEAK in BELIEF REGARDING THE USE TO BE MADE OF CERTAIN MEATS AND DAYS.

The duties are in regards to things “INDIFFERENT IN THEMSELVES,” that is, they are MATTERS OF OPINION and not of REVELATION. Revelation cannot be changed, even by angels (Gal. 1:6-10), certainly by NO MAN FOR ANOTHER.

Where God has not specifically pointed out the exact way we should WALK IN MATTERS OF OPINION, we are at liberty to USE OUR OWN BEST JUDGMENT. Even here we may be bound to GIVE UP OUR LIBERTY TO SAVE A “WEAK” BROTHER.

“Opinions... Liberty”

A slogan of the Restoration movement is appropriate here: “In essentials, unity; in opinions, liberty; in all things, love.”

I. We Must Be Tolerant in Matters of Opinion (Romans 14:1-12)

A. Matters of opinion (Rom. 14:1-4).

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye...” (Rom. 14:1): “Faith” here has NO REFERENCE TO FAITH IN CHRIST, but FAITH IN THE RIGHTFULNESS OF ONE’S CONDUCT. It is faith in what one does. Here it means faith in the RIGHTFULNESS or FITNESS of “EATING ALL THINGS” (verse 2). One man has faith (THINKS IT IS RIGHT AND PROPER) to “eat all things.” Another, who is “weak,” DOES NOT THINK IT RIGHT AND PROPER to eat “all things.” He “eats herbs.”

Some things are unquestionably right and others are unquestionably wrong. There are still other things as to which the consciences of men differ. These “questions of conscience” arise among Christians and may become the source of serious troubles.

Way speaks of the man “weak in the faith” as “a man who overlays his faith with tender scrupulosities.” He is a person who is under-spiritual and over-scrupulous. But here he is. What are we going to do with him?

“Receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations”: Take him into your fellowship, but not to discuss and pass judgments on any doubts he may entertain. We are to cherish him in love. He may be a Jew or Gentile Christian with “weak” belief in regard to certain DAYS and MEATS (I Cor. 8). This belief in matters of opinion is his private opinion. He has the right to hold it without interference from others!

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“For one believeth... eat all things...” (Rom. 14:2): This Christian believes he has the LIBERTY or RIGHT TO “eat all things” – meat or vegetables. “Another, who is weak, eateth herbs” ONLY.

In Paul’s day the flesh of animals offered in idol sacrifices was offered in the markets, and one buying could not always be sure he did not get it. Jewish Christians or Judaizing troublemakers believed it wrong to eat any food forbidden by the law. Others, like the Essenes, believed that the regenerate or Christian man should EAT ONLY VEGETABLES, like the primitive race in Eden. Hence, some thought MEATS OUGHT TO BE ABSTAINED FROM ENTIRELY. Disputes arose over this difference!

Verses 1, 2 and 23 show that if a man STICKS FIRMLY TO HIS CONVICTION of what is proper, HE IS STRONG IN HIS FAITH; if he weakly fails to ABIDE BY HIS CONVICTIONS, HE IS WEAK IN HIS FAITH!

If you are in doubt about anything, KEEP AWAY FROM IT! This is a safe course. Be like the man who was undecided about wearing a certain collar. His wife said: “IF IT’S DOUBTFUL, dear, IT’S DIRTY!”

“Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not...” (Rom. 14:3): “Eating or not eating was, with Paul, a matter of indifference; but UNCHARITABLE CONDUCT TOWARD A CHRISTIAN BROTHER WAS NOT A MATTER OF INDIFFERENCE – IT WAS SIN!” Today we have no controversy over MEAT SACRIFICED TO IDOLS, but the PRINCIPLES APPLY to instrumental music, publishing houses, pleasure and methods of work. Matters of OPINION MUST NOT BE SET UP AS TESTS OF FELLOWSHIP. Note again, WHERE CHRIST HAS SPOKEN, there is NO ROOM FOR OPINION. Obey Christ (Mark 16:15, 16; Gal. 3:27; I Cor. 11:23-31; Acts 20:7).

“God has received him”: God took both sides into His fellowship without requiring that they be vegetarians or meat-eaters. A Christian is not to look with contempt on what he considers the weakness of the other. We must not “judge” or condemn as guilty the weakness of the other. “God hath received him” in spite of your sharp criticisms of one another. The secret of contented Christians is the will of God (I John 5:2, 3; John 14:15; 15:14), You can turn a Christian loose in the limits of God’s will and say with Chrysostom, “LOVE GOD AND DO AS YOU LIKE.”

“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant?” (Rom. 14:4): If God approves you, I must. Remember this supreme principle: EVERY MAN STANDS OR FALLS TO HIS MASTER in eating meats, or not eating meats. The same principle applies to the observance of days.

B. We are the Lord’s (Rom. 14:5-9).

“One man esteemeth one day above another...” (Rom. 14:5): Jewish Christians when Paul wrote generally continued to reverence and observe the Sabbath, new moons and festival days as Moses commanded. These things ARE NO PART OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIAN who regards “ALL DAYS” as equally good and holy and to be spent in the fear or reverence and service of God!

Doubtless some Jewish converts or Gentiles did not understand that the OLD COVENANT or TESTAMENT was ended (Gal. 4:9-11; Col. 2:13-17).

“Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”: Whether in keeping holy days or refraining from food, let the action of the Christian be regulated by the LORDSHIP OF CHRIST. In all matters of opinion where Christ has given NO DEFINITE COMMAND, each Christian must follow his own judgment and conscience. Show love and forbearance toward those who differ with you in matters of opinion.

“He that regardeth the day regardeth it unto the Lord...” (Rom. 14:6): The day is regarded “unto the Lord” if he keeps it, because he thinks it is the Lord’s will. IF ANOTHER REFUSES TO KEEP IT, BECAUSE HE BELIEVES IT IS THE LORD’S WILL THAT HE SHOULD NOT, his NOT KEEPING IT

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IS TO THE LORD! IF OUR OBJECT IS TO PLEASE GOD, we will be able to answer rightly, “Is this PLEASURE or that one RIGHT?”

ALL DAYS ALIKE ARE SACRED. Sunday or the Lord’s Day is no better than Monday, as such. However, ALL DAYS ARE NOT TO BE USED FOR THE SAME PURPOSE. The Lord’s Day to the Christian must be used or spent in the worship and service of God (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2) and not in mere idle pleasures!

“He that eateth... giveth God thanks”: This indicates that grace was the practice of Christians before meals (Luke 9:16; 22:17-19; 24:30-35).

“For none of us liveth to himself... dieth to himself” (Rom. 14:7): Life and death focus in the Lord. Whether in life or death, “we are the Lord’s (verse 8). We are Christ’s by redemption and purchase (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 1:18, 19; I Cor. 6:19, 20). In life or death, we are His. By His death and resurrection He has become the Lord of “the dead and living” (verse 9)

When some promising Christian young man or some beautiful Christian young woman seems to be cut off from a useful life by death, let us remember that in reality LIFE IS NOT CUT OFF FROM THEM. Life’s sphere of operation has changed. Let us learn here HOW TO LOVE, HOW TO LIVE, and HOW TO DIE. The present for a Christian is BRIGHT, the future with Him is BRIGHTER. Read I John 3:2 and REJOICE!

C. God is the Great Judge (Rom. 14:10-12).

“But why dost thou judge thy brother?” (Rom. 14:10): All of us are sinners for whom Christ died. This should prevent the “strong” and “weak” Christians from judging and despising each other. Judge less. Love more. We are accountable to God, We are not the judge. “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”

“For it is written, As I live... every knee shall bow” (Rom. 14:11): In Isaiah 45:23. The passage declares that the whole world will yet make humble acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Jehovah.

“So then every one of us shall give account...” (Rom. 14:12): Since God is the Universal Sovereign He has the RIGHT to call EVERY ONE OF US to account. Hence let us leave all judgment to God, and refrain from judging one another, especially in matters of moral indifference (John 8:7; Matt. 7:1, 2). How is YOUR ACCOUNT with God? If you want to give a good account of yourself before the Lord, give a good account of yourself before the world each day (Matt. 5:16; Rev. 2:10c)!

II. The Law of Brotherly Love (Romans 14:13-23)

A. Regard for another’s conscience (Rom. 6:13-15).

“Let us not therefore judge... put a stumbling block... in his brother’s way” (Rom. 14:13): Since God is to judge us all, brethren should not condemn each other for differences of opinions. This is a warning both to “weak” and “strong” brothers. The stumbling block to the “weak” was the eating of meat by the “strong.” How could the “weak” brother “FALL?” He might be driven off from the church, and become an apostate. Or, he might go against his conscience and in time become an idolater!

A Macedonia emperor commanded a painter to sketch the monarch. In one of his great battles, the ruler had been struck with a sword upon the forehead, and a very large scar had been left on his right temple. The painter, who was a master-hand in his art, sketched him leaning on his elbow, with his finger covering the scar on his forehead. And so the likeness of the king was taken, but without the scar.

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As Christians, let us put the finger of charity upon the scar of the Christian as we look at him, whatever it may be – the finger of a tender and forbearing charity, and see, in spite of it and under it, the IMAGE OF CHRIST notwithstanding.

“I know... nothing unclean of itself: BUT...” (Rom. 14:14): It is true that Old Testament distinctions between clean and unclean foods are no longer in force. But if a man does not understand this and regards certain foods as “unclean,” then so far as his conscience is concerned, that FOOD IS UNCLEAN and he does wrong to partake of it.

The Holy Spirit taught Paul that Christ abolished all CEREMONIAL UNCLEANNES. No food is any longer religiously unclean in spite of what our Seventh Day Adventist friends teach (Matt. 15:11; Mark 7:18; Acts 10:14-28; 1 Tim. 4:4). But “if a man acts contrary to his conscience he DEFILES IT. Hence food, clean of itself, may work sad havoc in his spiritual nature who eats contrary to his conscience” (I Cor. 8:7-18).

Paul takes his stand with the “strong” as in I Cor. 8:4f, but he is not a libertine. Paul’s liberty as to food is regulated by his life in the Lord. God made all things for their own uses. The exception lies not in the NATURE OF THE FOOD, but; in the man’s view of it!

“But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat...” (Rom. 14:15): The liberty of the strong must not become license (Gal, 5:1). We must use liberty in LOVE, and not cause our brother to lapse back into the sin of idolatry. “Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.” Is ANY PLEASURE (“meat” as used by Paul) so sweet that we deliberately seek it to the loss of a brother’s soul by this measure, look at ANY PLEASURE OR PRACTICE and draw a Christian conclusion! To destroy a soul is too great a price to pay for personal liberty as to food.

B. The true nature of the kingdom or church (Rom. 14:16-18).

“Let not then your good be evil spoken of...” (Rom. 14:16): It is not important that we should eat and drink everything that we desire and that we regard as right. Self-denial for the sake of others may be far more necessary.

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink...” (Rom. 14:17): The present spiritual kingdom, the reign of God in the heart, of which Jesus spoke so often. “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). The kingdom is not found in externals like food and drink, but in spiritual qualities and graces. The organ of life’s richest delight is not the stomach but the heart. “No-meat-on-Friday” has no meaning spiritually.

“Righteousness”: Justification; the forgiveness of sins.

“Peace”: Reconciliation to God, and peace of soul as the result. “Peace with God” (Rom. 5:1). Then “The PEACE OF GOD... shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ” (Phil 4:7).

“Joy in the Holy Ghost”: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace.” (Gal. 5:22, 23).

“For he... is acceptable to God, and approved of men” (Rom. 14:18): Christ accepts and approves these things in anyone who serves Christ. “If any man serve me, him will my Father honour” (John 12:26). All good men will “approve” such living and service.

C. The law of brotherly love (Rom. 14:19-23).

“For meat destroy not the work of God...” (Rom. 14:19): We must seek the “things which make for peace” (verse 19). These are the things that do not create strife and division so far as others are concerned. Charitably yield what grieves a brother in matters of opinion. We must not insist on our liberties to the HURT of LOSS OF SOUL OF OUR BROTHER (I Cor. 9:19; 10:24, 33).

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The little girl who said to one of our faithful women who had meat on Friday: “MY GOD WON’T LET US EAT MEAT ON FRIDAY” needs to be taught that “ALL THINGS ARE PURE” (I Tim. 4:8-5).

“It is good neither to eat flesh .. drink... nor any thing...” (Rom. 14:21): Here is a course of action described as “GOOD.” If eating any kind of meat, or drinking wine, is in the way of your brother’s peace and security, it is BETTER TO ABSTAIN FROM BOTH. It is better to DENY SELF THAN OFFEND, or cause a brother to stumble (I Cor. 8:13). It is good to give up every trifling indulgence in order to SAVE A MAN!

It is a “beautiful” thing to live with respect to others, to remember their weakness, fancies, foibles and to refrain from sometimes harmless things for the sake of being helpful. But how far should we carry this? If the stronger Christian has all this self-denying consideration for the weaker Christian, should not the weaker Christian be charitable in return? Should he not in return respect the liberty of the fellow-believer? Should he not also yield himself to the means of grace by which he will GROW IN STRENGTH AND CHARACTER (II Pet. 3:18)?

“Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God...” (Rom. 14:22): If we have faith to do a certain thing, which to others is doubtful, then we ought not parade it before them so as to cause offense. We are to have that faith before God! Let God take note of it. We are not to flaunt the feelings of others. Paul declares the man is “happy” who can eat what he pleases and drink what he pleases, without any qualms of conscience, to condemn him while he does so. However, such a man must not insist on his “right” to the injury of his brother, or he condemns himself and tramples on the law of love!

“For whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23): This is perhaps the most searching and severe test of conduct in the New Testament. Whatever a man does, NOT BELIEVING IT TO BE RIGHT FOR HIM TO DO BELIEVING IT TO BE RIGHT FOR HIM TO DO IT, to him it is SIN! “To thine own self be true.” Act in harmony with yourself. It is a sin for a man who doubts the rightness of eating meats, to eat meat, The man who has faith (BELIEVES IT RIGHT) to eat all things, does not sin in eating. Nor does his conscience “damn” or condemn him.

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Questions

1. Where God has not specifically pointed out the exact way for us to walk in matters of opinion, are we at liberty to use our own best judgment?
2. Is the Christian free to change matters of revelation (Gal. 1:6-10)?
3. What Restoration slogan is appropriate in studying Romans 14?
4. What two kinds of believers are described in this lesson (Rom. 14:1)?
5. What constitutes a weak brother (Rom. 14:1; 15:1; I Cor. 8:7-13)?
6. How should we treat a “weak” brother in the assembly (Rom. 14:1; 15:1)?
7. How does Way describe the man “weak in the faith?”
8. How should we treat a deliberately wicked man (or woman) in the church (I Cor. 5:1-5, 13)?
9. In dealing with the “weak” brother, what does God forbid (Rom. 14:1, 3, 10, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21; 15:1)?
10. What is the “weak” Christian’s relationship to God (Rom. 14:3, 4)?
11. To whom is every believer’s FIRST RESPONSIBILITY (Rom. 14:4, 6, 8, 10, 12)?
12. Where must every believer give a strict account unto God (Rom. 14:7-10)?
13. When must a Christian refrain from things that might be permitted at another time (Rom, 14:13, 15, 21)?
14. Is the distinction between “clean” and “unclean” meats binding on the Christian of today (Rom. 14:14; Matt. 15:11-20; Mark 7:18-23; Acts 10:14-28; I Tim 4:4)?
15. If we have the “liberty” to eat, do we have the “higher liberty” of giving up our right for the sake of our brother “for whom Christ died” (Rom. 14:14, 15)?
16. Why is it impossible for all Christians to engage in the same activities (Rom. 14:14, 20, 23)?
17. What characterizes the true kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17)?
18. Who is “acceptable to God, and approved of men” (Rom. 14:18)?
19. In what two ways may one Christian influence another (Rom. 14:19-21)?
20. What principle must govern all that we do (Rom. 14:23)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Third Quarter

Lesson 34
Romans 15

Page 1
Memory Verse: Romans 15:1

Memory Verse:

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Romans 15:1).

CHRISTIAN LABORS

The most powerful argument for Christian conduct is the example of Christ. Brotherly unity (Rom. 15:1-13) is a continuation of the exhortations of Rom, 14:1-23. From Rom. 16:17 and the discussion in Rom. 14 about “meats” and clays,” it is true that Paul had learned in some way that certain Jewish leaders in Rome were determined to enforce Jewish habits on Gentiles and Christians.

As Christ received all who come to Him, so must we (Rom. 15:7). Paul indicates his deep interest in the Roman Christians (Rom. 15:1-13), and closed the chapter with some intimations of his future purposes (Rom. 15:14-33).

I. Pure Devotion to Others (Romans 15:1-13)

A. Christ’s example (Rom. 15:1-3).

“We then that are strong ought to bear... weak” (Rom. 15:1): Those strong in the gospel (I Cor. 9:19-22) are under obligation to bear with the weak, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). The “strong” here is the man who has FAITH (THINKS IT IS RIGHT AND PROPER) to EAT ALL THINGS (Rom. 14:1, 2). Way translates this, “WE OF THE ROBUST FAITH.” “ROBUST FAITH” can be had by observing the DIET OF TRUTH IN THE WORD and the nutrition of holiness (II Tim. 2: 15).

The “weak” brother does not think it right to eat meat which has been sacrificed to idols, and so he eats herbs. Both are to receive the other (Rom. 14:3, 4). The “weak” can not yield without violating his conscience. The “strong” can yield and not violate his conscience regarding meats, special days, or today he could WORSHIP WITH or WITHOUT AN organ or piano in the worship service.

Note again that we for the sake of unity should be willing to yield to majority wish IN ALL MATTERS OF OPINION. The Christian can never yield any matter of divine revelation (Gal. 1:8, 9) regardless of the cost or consequences.

“Let every one of us please his neighbor... edification” (Rom. 15:2): In matters of opinion, yield to another graciously. In matters of principle, we must stand for the right as God has spoken. “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (I Tim. 5:20). We are not to “please” others just for popular favor, but for their “edification.” Water without an outlet becomes a place of filth. It is like the Dead Sea – always receiving, never giving. A life without an outlet becomes unlovely. The Christian man who succeeds in the world and rises to the top of the crowd is the man who gives something extra of his service.

“For Christ pleased not himself...” (Rom. 15:3): The EXAMPLE of CHRIST is our STANDARD. “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an EXAMPLE, that we should FOLLOW HIS STEPS” (I Pet. 2:21-24). Had He pleased himself, hell itself might shudder at the consequences.

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“Written, the reproaches of them... fell on me” (Rom. 14:3): Paul quotes Psa. 69:9, a Messianic Psalm, and represents the Messiah as bearing the reproaches of others, instead of pleasing Himself.

We must be “unselfishly fair... self-denyingly generous” to our “weak” brothers. Have you visited the crippled man, the widow who needs assistance, or the invalid in your neighborhood recently? This responsibility is for EVERY CHRISTIAN, not just for the preacher, or elder, or deacon, or teacher!

B. Value of the Old Testament scriptures (Rom. 15:4).

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime...” (Rom. 15:4): The Old Testament is invaluable to an understanding of the New Testament. “Wherefore the law (of Moses) was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.” (Gal. 3:24; see I Cor. 10:1-6),

“Our learning... patience and comfort... hope”: By reading God’s Word we obtain patience to bear with the “weak” brother. “Comfort” is the consolation arising from a sense of doing right. This gives us hope, helps us hold it fast. How the world needs the “hope” of the Christian!

C. The unity of believers (Rom. 15:5-12).

“Now the God of patience... hope... peace” (Rom. 15:5, 13, 33): Paul speaks of “The God of patience” in verse 5; in verse 13, “The God of HOPE”; in verse 33, “the God of PEACE.” God is the source of our patience or endurance; the security of our hope, the secret of our peace. God enables all Christians to be “like-minded,” united. Foolish differences, petty frictions disappear when EACH MEMBER OF THE CHURCH, like Christ, receives each other and like a mighty choir renders praise to God (verse 6).

“Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ received us...” (Rom. 15:7): Let the strong receive the weak, all receive each other into full fellow-ship, even as “Christ also received us to the glory of God.”

As Christians we are to be one. We are not to be divided. “UNITED WE STAND; DIVIDED WE FALL,” the Kentucky State motto, was borrowed from Christ (Matt. 12:25). Our cordial and considerate reception of another is to be on the basis of Christ’s reception of us. IN CHRIST is the place where bitter racial and social differences may dissolve. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus!” (Gal. 3:26-28)

“Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision...” (Rom. 15:8): Christ, according to the flesh, was a Jew and came to save them. God in carrying out His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through His Son showed that His promises contained blessings for the Gentiles (Gen. 22:18; John 4:22). “And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:27, 28). Study Eph. 2:11-22).

“And that the Gentiles might glorify God...” (Rom. 15:9): It was a part of God’s plan that Christ, “born under the law,” should save the Gentiles, and enable them to “glorify God for his mercy.”

“As it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles...” This quotation is from Psalm 18:49, and implies that God shall be confessed, and His praise sung among the Gentiles.

“Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people” (Rom. 15:10): This is found in Deut. 32:43, and is a direct command to Gentiles to worship with the Lord’s people.

“Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles...” (Rom. 15:11): This command, clearer and stronger, is found in Psa. 117:1 (cf. 97:1) with slight variations from the LXX text

“And again, Esaias saith... root of Jesse... in him shall the Gentiles trust” (Rom. 15:12). This quotation is from Isa. 11:10 -- a passage that is a prediction of Christ and his kingdom. Jesse, the father of David, was an ancestor of Jesus. The passage shows clearly that Christ was to be the Saviour and King of the

Gentiles. The nucleus of an ETERNAL RACE is in this GREAT CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD of Jew and Gentile. It is not a brother-hood by Adam's blood but Christ's. It is not a brotherhood of flesh BUT FAITH. It is not a brotherhood of the FIRST BIRTH but of the SECOND BIRTH (John 3:3-5).

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace..." (Rom. 15:13): Paul closed his argument with a benediction, "The God of hope." What a wonderful title, suggesting that God is the reason for all the hope that brightens the way, and that because He is Himself full of hope. The Christian should be the greatest OPTIMIST because of the optimism of God.

"God of hope": Read Rom. 5:2; 12:12; Eph. 2:7. God wants us all to be "filled" with "all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Like an overflowing fountain, the Christian has joy and peace when he receives all others as "laborers together with God" (I Cor. 3:9). No wonder we sing: "I have the joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart... DOWN IN MY HEART TO STAY!"

II. Paul's Reference to Himself (Romans 15:14-33)

A. Mutual edification (Rom. 15:14).

"And I myself also persuaded of you..." (Rom. 15:14): The argument of the Epistle has been completed both in the main line (Rom. 1-8), Israel's rejection (Rom. 9-11), and Practical Exhortations (Rom. 12:1-15:13). Here begins the Epilogue, the personal matters of importance.

Paul gives the Roman Christians, chiefly Gentiles, high praise. God wants all Christians to be "full of goodness, knowledge, and ability to admonish" each other in the gospel. God wants to work through us, but He cannot until we yield ourselves to him as "living sacrifices" (Rom. 12:1, 2).

Only one who has suffered loss knows the sorrow of a great loss. Charles W. Eliot was one of the greatest men America has produced. In 1860 he became president of Harvard University and served with great honor and success for forty years. Dr. Eliot had a handicap. One whole side of his face was terribly disfigured by a birthmark. One day he was walking down a street when he came across some boys teasing one of their companions because he had a birthmark on his face. Driving the others away, Dr. Eliot put his arm around the lad, smiled and said: "Look, son, my face is marred too." That deeper sympathy and understanding was one of the fruits of suffering. He knew how to edify.

B. Worldwide missions (Rom. 15:15-21).

"I have written... grace that is given to me of God... minister ...to the Gentiles" (Rom. 15:15, 16): God chose Paul to minister to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:5; 12:3; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:7-11; Acts 26:15-19). Though the Romans were able to "admonish one another," he has written them boldly and plainly, as was his right, "because of the grace" of apostleship that God gave him.

"Ministering the gospel... offering up... Gentiles": The many Gentiles whom Paul won to Christ through the gospel, he presented to God as a great offering placed upon the altar of God and dedicated to His service. The Holy Spirit sanctified or set apart the Gentiles as an offering to God (Rom. 8:1, 2; 12:1, 2).

"I have... whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ..." (Rom. 15:17): Paul could boast of his labor in Christ as an apostle to the Gentiles (verse 18; II Cor. 12:1, 11, 12; 11:21-30). He glories not in himself, but only "through Jesus Christ in those things that pertain to God." Paul magnifies the Master, yet he does not minimize the instrument.

"From Jerusalem... unto Illyricum" (Rom. 15:19): God gave Paul extraordinary help – the power to work miracles and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Paul did his work thoroughly as he went. The great curve of

his ministry begins at Jerusalem and ends at Illyricum in the west. Jerusalem was near the southeast corner of the Mediterranean. Illyricum lay north of Greece, on the Adriatic. Paul's gospel ministry embraced a circuit clear around the east and northeast shores of the Mediterranean. Paul preached and founded churches where there were none (verse 20). He did not want to duplicate other's labors. Read II Cor. 10:12-16. As no apostle or great evangelist had yet visited Rome, the letter to the Romans was no violation of his principle.

"But as it is written... they shall see" (Rom. 15:21): This is from Isaiah 52:15. The passage declares that God's name shall be carried where it was unknown. Paul's method of evangelizing was in harmony with the will of God.

C. The support of God's ministry and the care of the poor (Rom. 15:22-29).

"For... I have been much hindered" (Rom. 15:22): The greatest hindrance to his coming to Rome before this time was his aim to preach in places where Christ was unknown. Since he had labored all around the eastern Mediterranean, the name of Christ had been preached and churches had been established in all the chief cities. Seeking new fields, Paul had a "great desire these many years to come unto you." See Rom. 1:11; Acts 19:21.

"I trust... to be brought on my way thitherward by you" (Rom. 15:24): Paul delicately suggests they give money and other aid for his missionary journeyings. Paul purposed to go to Spain as a new field. The New Testament does not record that he ever carried out his purpose, though it is the testimony of the early church that he did. Paul planned only a brief stay in Rome since a strong church already existed there. God lengthened his stay (Acts 28:30, 14, 15).

"Brought on my way": See Acts 15:3; 20:38; I Cor. 16:6; II Cor. 1:16.

"But not I go unto Jerusalem... contribution for the poor saints" (Rom. 15:25, 26): Paul's projected extensive journey to Spain was to be pre-ceded by an errand to Jerusalem. Why was he going to Jerusalem? He was going "to minister unto the saints" (verse 25), This ministry was possible because of the generosity of other Christians. Macedonia, northern Greece, and Achaia, southern Greece, made "a certain contribution for the poor saints" at Jerusalem. This collection had been one of Paul's chief cares for over a year now (II Cor. 8:4; 9:1-13). Paul wanted to gather this offering among the Gentile Christians for the poor Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem. He hoped to make Jew and Gentile Christians think more highly of each other (I Cor. 16:1-3). He partly succeeded (II Cor. 9:12-15). The offering was doubtless large as it took seven men to carry it (Acts 19:21, 22; 20:1-4; 24:1?).

"It hath pleased them... their debtors they are" (Rom, 15:27): It pleased the Gentile Christians to help the poor Hebrew Christians at Jerusalem. They were under obligation to them, for the church at Jerusalem was the center from which the gospel had been spread abroad (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 8:4). We Gentile Christians still owe the Jews a debt of gratitude. Through them came Christ and the Scriptures (John 4:22; Rom. 3:1, 2). Those who receive the gospel are in material debt to their minister today (vss 27-29; Gal. 6:6).

D. The importance and need of prayer (Rom, 15:30-33).

"Now I beseech you, brethren... strive... with me in your prayers" (Rom. 15:30): Paul urgently asks here for a spiritual partnership in prayers. He invites these Christian friends to a battle royal. It was to be a "striving," an agonizing wrestling with unseen spiritual forces. The Christian's enemy is not defeated on the battlefield but in the prayer closet, "In Luther's closet we have the secret of the Reformation." Paul prayed for

1. His personal safety – for deliverance from evil workers (Rom. 15:31a).
2. A successful mission with the offering (Rom. 15:31b).
3. Divine permission to come to Rome (Rom. 15:32).

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4. Joyful rest at Rome (Rom. 15:33). “Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.” Here is the completion of the triad of characteristics of God. He is the “God of patience” (verse 5), the “God of hope” (verse 13), and the “God of peace” (verse 33).

A Christian has “peace with God” (Rom. 5:1). With this Paul and we can face every turn in the road with confidence, for we have “the peace of God” (Phil. 4:7), and “peace in God” (John 16:33).

Questions

1. What is the most powerful argument for Christian conduct?
2. What does Paul say the “strong” should do (Rom. 15:1; Gal. 6:2)?
3. Who are the “strong” (Rom. 14:1, 2; II Tim. 2:15)? The “weak” (Rom. 14:3, 4)?
4. Who is pleased with self-indulgence (Rom. 15:1)?
5. Why are we to “please” our neighbor (Rom. 15:2)?
6. Who is set forth as an incentive to unselfish living (Rom. 15:3; I Pet. 2:21-24)?
7. Can you tell why the Old Testament was written (Rom. 15:4; Gal. 3:24; I Cor. 10:1-6)?
8. How were the “weak” and the “strong” to be “like-minded one toward one another according to Christ Jesus” (Rom. 15:5)? And why (Rom. 15: 6, 7)?
9. How was Christ “a minister of the circumcision” (Rom. 15:8; John 4:22 Gen. 22:18; Matt. 20:27, 28)?
10. Was it God’s plan for the Gentile to be saved (Rom. 15:9-13; Psa. 18:49; Deut. 32:43; Psa. 117:1; 97:1; Isa. 11:10)?
11. By what three titles is God described (Rom. 15:13, 5, 33; see Rom. 5:2; 12:12; Eph. 2:7)?
12. How did Paul feel toward the Roman Christians (Rom. 15:14)?
13. Where had Paul’s ministry begun in the east and to what point had it extended in the west (Rom 15:19)?
14. Where did Paul “strive” to preach the gospel (Rom. 15:20)?
15. Was this method in harmony with the will of God (Rom. 15:21; Isa. 52:15)?
16. What necessary ministry kept Paul from going to Rome immediately (Rom. 15:25-29)? Meaning of “brought on my way” (Rom. 15:24; Acts 15:3; 20:38; I Cor. 16:6; II Cor. 1:16)?
17. Did it please the Gentile Christians to “make a certain contribution” for the poor Hebrew Christians at Jerusalem (Rom. 15:26, 27)?
18. In what sense were Gentile Christians, then and now, “debtors” to Jewish Christians (Rom. 15:27; John 4:22; Rom. 3:1, 2; Gal. 6:6)?
19. Where did Paul intend to evangelize after he visited Rome (Rom. 15:28, 29)?
20. For what four things did Paul ask the Roman Christians to join him in prayer (Rom. 15:30-33)? Why?

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Lesson 35

Page 1

Romans 16

Memory Verse: Romans 16:17

Memory Verse:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

GREETINGS TO THE BRETHREN

Paul’s letter to the Roman Christians closes with a list of 26 names of church leaders who were the apostle’s personal friends. They are all strangers to us. But interwoven with these names are expressions that breathe the spirit of the early church. Two-thirds of the names are Greek, which in all probability are names of persons the apostle had actually known in his work in Asia.

No Houses of Worship

The church of Paul’s day had no buildings of worship. Christians met in the homes of believers, as verse 5 shows “Likewise greet the church that is in their house.” Of course, New Testament Christians would never make the mistake of confusing a church building with “the church,” which is a spiritual fellowship, a living thing, independent of architecture.

Let us study

I. Portraits of Early Christians (Romans 16:1-16)

A. Woman’s work in the early church (Rom. 16:1, 2).

“I commend unto you Phoebe...” (Rom. 16:1): Paul recommended this Christian woman and her character. Nothing else is known of her, though her name means bright or radiant.

Women have a prominent place in the church. How much all women owe to the Son of God. Phoebe was a “female servant.” “Deaconess” is a correct translation of the word “servant.” Her work met with Paul’s approval. Her work was serving among the women, the poor, the sick, the untaught, erring, and unfortunate. She was doubtless an elderly woman, and possibly wealthy.

“Church... Cenchrea”: Cenchrea was the eastern harbor of Corinth, nine miles from Corinth on the Saronic Gulf. It had a great fortress that commanded the vital harbor.

The strict separation of the sexes made something like deaconesses necessary for baptism, visiting the women, etc. The deaconesses were on a par with the deacons in the sense they were servants, the basic meaning of “diakonos” whether male or female in gender. They may be the widows alluded to in I Tim, 5:9f.

“That ye receive her... succourer of many” (Rom. 16:2): The apostle urges that she be received “in the Lord,” “receive her in a way worthy of the saints,” and in a manner worthy of Christians. “Assist” her as a legal one. Phoebe’s business is unknown. The collection of a debt, the prosecution of a lawsuit, or an effort to obtain justice for some grievance in the province may have taken her to Rome.

“Succourer”: Phoebe had helped many, Paul included. The apostle urges them to help her. How grateful we are to her for bearing the letter to the Roman Christians.

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B. Salutations to those in Rome (Rom. 16:8-16).

“Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers...” (Rom. 16:3): Paul met them at Corinth A. D. 53 (Acts 18:1-18; I Cor. 16:19). Two years later they were with him at Ephesus (Acts 19).

Priscilla may have been a noble Roman lady, but her husband was a Jew of Pontus and a tent-maker by trade. Driven from Rome by Claudius, they came to Corinth, then to Ephesus, then back to Rome, and again to Ephesus. They were good travelling Christians. They “laid down their own necks” to have the life of Paul (verse 4; I Cor. 15:32; Acts 19:23-41).

“Greet the church that is in their house...” (Rom. 16:5): The early Christians had no church buildings. They met in the homes of prominent brethren. In a large city like Rome there would be several such groups. Read 1 Cor, 16:19; Acts 12:12; Philemon 2; Col. 4:15.

“Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus”: “Asia,” as in the Revision, is the true reading. Nothing is known of him except this item, “the first-fruits of Asia.” He was Paul’s first convert in the province of Asia. Do you remember the first person you definitely won to Christ?

The chief interest in this section centers in the common relationship to Christ. Notice carefully the phrases that indicate this. “In the Lord,” “in Christ Jesus,” “unto Christ,” “in Christ,” “in the Lord,” “in the Lord,” “in the Lord,” “in the Lord” (verses 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13). The IMPULSE OF LOVE, the BOND OF SERVICE, and the principle of fellowship are always IN UNION WITH CHRIST.

“Greet Mary... much labor” (Rom. 16:6): Early Christians were useful workers. The name indicates a Jewish Christian in Rome. Paul praises her toil. There were no drones in the hive no soldiers on parade, but all were servants “for Jesus’ sake” in the early church. Note verses 2, 6, 9, 12, 13. What would happen if EACH MEMBER of this church would GET BUSY DO HIS OR HER BEST FOR GOD EACH DAY?

“Salute Adronicus and Junia, my kinsmen... fellow prisoners” (Rom. 16:7): They were Jews, fellow-countrymen (Rom. 9:3) of Paul They became Christians before Paul. These two men may have been among the “strangers of Rome” (Acts 2:10) at Pentecost. If so, they doubtless started the church in Home. Where they were prisoners with Paul we do not know. Paul was in jail often (II Cor. 11:23).

Bishop Moule remarks: “Not improbably these two early converts helped to ‘goad’ (Acts 26:14) the conscience of these still persecuting kinsmen, and to prepare the way of Christ in his heart.” “Adronicus” means to “excel others.”

“Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord” (Rom. 16:8): Probably a convert of Paul’s own, dear to him. “Amplias” means “Enlarged” or “ample” in growth in grace.

“Salute Urbane, our helper... and Stachys my beloved” (Rom. 16:9): “Urbane” means belonging to the city with special reference to politeness. “Stachys” is a Greek name, rare, but among members of the imperial household. It means a head or ear of grain (see Matt. 12:1).

“Salute Apelles approved in Christ...” (Rom. 16:10): A name among Jews and a famous tragic actor also. When he was “tried” by fiery ordeal he did not fail. He was a tried and true saint.

“Aristobulus’ household”: The younger Aristobulus was a grandson of Herod the Great. Lightfoot suggests that some of the servants in this household had become Christians, Aristobulus being dead. After his death his servants would be his retainers and after his death hold their master’s name.

“Salute Herodian my kinsman” (Rom. 16:11): Probably one belonging to the Herod family like that above, “Kinsman”: Merely fellow-countryman.

“Household of Narcissus”: There was a famous freedman of this name who was put to death by Agrippa. He was prominent Christian with numerous family members – children, relatives, retainers and servants.

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“Salute Tryphaena and Tryphosa... Persis” (Rom. 10:12): The former were probably sisters and possibly twins, Both names come from the same root, the verb ‘trupphao,’ “to live luxuriously” (James 5:5). Denney suggests “Dainty and Disdain,”

“Persis”: A freedwoman was so named. She was not Paul’s “beloved,” but the “beloved” of the whole church.

“Rufus chosen in the Lord... his mother and mine” (Rom. 16:13): A very common slave name, possibly the Rufus of Mark 15:21. The word means “red.” His mother was Paul’s by service and affection, not Paul’s real mother (Matt. 19:29).

“Asyncritus...” (Rom. 16:14): There is an inscription of a freedman of Augustus with this name.

“Phlegon”: Speaks of “zeal” and applied earnestness. No light was shed on this name until the historian of the second century A. D.

“Hermas”: Not the author of the Shepherd of Hermas, Common as a slave name, shortened form of Hermagoras, Hermogenes, etc.

“Patrobas”: Name of a freedman of Nero, abbreviated form of Patrobius.

“Hermes”: A very common slave name.

“The brethren which are with them”: Perhaps a little church in the house of some one.

“Salute Philologus...” (Rom. 16:15): Another common slave name, meaning “Lover of learning.”

“Julia”: The commonest name for female slaves in the imperial household because of Julius Caesar. Possibly these two were husband and wife.

“Nereus”: Found in the inscription of the imperial household. But the sister’s name is not given,

“Olympas”: Possibly an abbreviation for Olympiodorus. “And all the saints which are with them” was possibly another church in the house. These unnamed, “and others,” constitute the great majority in all our churches. Taken as a whole, we see that the early Christians were industrious, excelling in good works, courteous, prudent, zealous, learned! WHAT WORKERS TO IMITATE!

“Salute one another with an holy kiss” (Rom. 16:16): Greeting by a kiss has always been common in the east (II Sam. 20:9; Luke 7:45; Matt. 26:49). The apostle did not create the custom. It was prevalent, as handshaking is today a form of greeting. We are not compelled to kiss, but if we do it must be a HOLY kiss. Promiscuous kissing is disastrous. It soon degenerates into the wildest abuses.

In China one shakes hands with himself. Men kissed men and women kissed women. See I Thess. 5:26; I Cor. 16:20; II Cor. 13:12.

“The Churches of Christ salute you”: Having concluded his own salutations, Paul adds those of the Gentile Churches he had just been visiting (Rom. 15:20). Does the church of which you are a member have the “right” name (Matt 16:18; I Cor. 3:11; Col. 1:18)?

II. Problems of Early Christians (Romans 16:17-20)

A. Our attitude to dissenters (Rom. 16:17).

“Mark them which cause divisions... avoid them” (Rom. 16:17): Division existed or was in danger of breaking out in Rome. It seems tragic that into the midst of this scene of unity there should be sown the seeds of discord and dissention. The questions of “days” and “meats” (Rom. 14:1; 15:1) would naturally produce divisions. “Divisions” here means “little factions or parties in the congregation.” “Mark” or keep an eye on so as to avoid them “which cause divisions.” Paul told the Roman Christians not to listen to troublemakers, and to “avoid them.”

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An unnamed philosopher offers the following as a means of permanent peace: “If a man cheats you, quit dealing with him; if he is abusive, quit his company; if he slanders you, take care to live so that nobody will believe him. No matter who he is, or how he misuses you, the wisest way is to let him alone; for there is nothing better than this cool, calm, quiet way of dealing with the wrongs of persons or nations.”

Sometimes a class or group in the church is divisive. They are contrary to the teaching of Christ. When such a group tries to introduce false teaching contrary to God’s Word, the leaders must be removed and if necessary the group disbanded. Withdraw fellowship from them as long as they produce division and stumblings. Unless such repent, the separation must be final.

B. The reason for dissention (Rom. 16:18).

“For they... serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.” (Rom. 10:18): They are “abdominal” Christians. A blunt phrase like the same picture in Phil. 3:19 “whose god is the belly,” more truth than caricature in some cases, These men, like many other false teachers, were more devoted to their appetites than to Christ. They are “smooth talkers.” They bear the wrong fruits (Matt. 7:20). Their walk and their talk were wrong (Phil. 3:18). Shun persons whose talk and walk don’t agree with the gospel, unless they repent.

C. Our philosophy of success (Rom. 16:19).

“For your obedience is come abroad...” (Rom. 16:19): The reputation of the Roman Christians is so well known that they ought not to be deceived by these false teachers. “Wise unto that which is good” means exactly what it says No wisdom apart, from God can be good. Remember that “the world by wisdom knew not God.”

Good is never gained out of evil. One does not need to practice evil in order to be wise in evil. Purity never comes out of impurity. “Simple concerning evil” means “unmixed with evil, unadulterated.”

The New England hurricane a few years ago laid waste so many thousands of trees. Elms, maples, birches, and oaks went crashing to the ground with little resistance. The prevailing winds in that region are from the northwest arid in consequence of that, usual condition the trees sent out sturdy roots in that direction in order to hold the tree steady against those prevailing gales. BUT ALONG CAME A HURRICANE FROM A DIFFERENT DIRECTION, the SOUTHEAST. There were NO ROOTS IN THAT DIRECTION TO HOLD THE TREES AND DOWN THEY CAME.

Many of the fatalities of life result because trouble comes from the OPPOSITE DIRECTION, and we haven’t sent out roots of protection. It is well to be prepared for the unexpected and never to leave unguarded the outposts of our strength.

D The assurance of victory (Rom. 16:20).

“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan... shortly” (Rom. 16:20): Blessed promise of final victory over Satan by “the God of peace.” “Shortly” - as God counts time. Let us “resist the devil, and he will flee” (James 4:7; I Pet. 5:9; Gen. 3:15).

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you”: Seven times “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” is pronounced on the saints in the epistles!

III. Prospects of the Christ (Romans 16:21-27)

A. Fellow-workers send greetings (Rom 16:21, 22).

“Timothy my workfellow...” (Rom. 16:21); Now come the salutations to the Christians at Rome from Paul’s fellow-workers, from his gracious host, and others.

We learn from Acts 20:4 that Timothy was with Paul at the time. So vast were Paul’s labors that he always needed and used several assistants. Lucius (Acts 13:1). Jason was once Paul’s host (Acts 17:5-9) in Thessalonica. Socipater may be the longer form of Sopater of Acts 20:4. They were all Paul’s fellow-countrymen.

“I Tertius... wrote this epistle” (Rom. 16:22): The amanuensis to whom Paul dictated this letter. See II Thess. 3:17; I Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18.

B. Christian hospitality (Rom. 16:23)

“Gaius mine host, and the whole church, saluteth you” (Rom. 16:23): Paul baptized a Gaius at Corinth (I Cor, 1:14; Acts 19:29; 20:4). He was noted for his hospitality (Heb. 13:1, 2). He entertained Paul when Romans was written.

“Erastus the chamberlain of the city...” The city treasurer, a man of high position. The name occurs in Acts 19:22 and II Tim. 4:20. “Quartus”: Latin name for fourth.

C. Be established in the gospel: a sublime doxology (Rom. 16:24-27).

“Grace... be with you all” (Rom. 16:24): Second bestowal of a match-less benediction, written by Paul’s own hand (II Thess. 3:17). He also adds a doxology – a noble conclusion, The youngest Christian should know this benediction and be able to use it to dismiss the congregation.

“Now to him that is of power to stablish you...” (Rom, 16:25): Verses 25-27 conclude the noble Epistle with the finest of Paul’s doxologies. This doxology carries with it the divine and the human element. We have an able God. He is able to “stablish” or makes us stable (Rom. 8:31, 37), Our prospects are rosy when we trust and obey the Redeemer (I Cor. 15:57, 58). The doxology is a lofty ascription of praise to God.

“My gospel”: Not a book, but Paul’s message as here set forth. “The preaching” is the proclamation or heralding of “Jesus Christ,”

“The revelation of the mystery”: The “mystery” revealed is but another title for the gospel of Christ (Rom. 11:25). A mystery is a divine purpose that had been kept secret. When God’s glorious purpose was revealed the mystery was made known.

Christ was the full and complete manifestation of God’s will (Luke 2:30-32; John 1:14-18; Heb. 1:3). God Himself caused the Word to be written (Deut. 5:22; Jer. 36:27, 28; I Pet. 1:20, 21; II Tim. 3:16) that we might know fully God’s will (verse 26).

“To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen” (verse 27).

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Questions

1. How many names are included in Romans 16?
2. Did the church in Paul's day have church buildings? If not, where did the church assemble (Rom. 16:5)?
3. What is the name of the woman whom Paul commends to the church at Rome (Rom. 16:1)?
4. Where was her home (Rom. 16:1)? What was her work?
5. Why did Paul ask the Roman Christians to help Phoebe (Rom. 16:2)?
6. What do we know about Priscilla and Aquila (Rom. 16:3-5; Acts 18:1-18; I Cor. 16:19; Acts 12:12; Philemon 2; Col. 4:15)?
7. What probably caused Paul to "Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus" (Rom. 16:5b)?
8. What phrases indicate that the chief interest in this section centers in the common relationship to Christ (Rom. 16:2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)?
9. As a whole, what characterized the lives of the early Christians as seen in this chapter?
10. What was the "holy kiss" (Rom. 16:16a; II Sam. 20:9; Luke 7:45; Matt. 26:49; I Thess. 5:26; I Cor. 16:20; II Cor. 18:12)? Does this permit promiscuous kissing?
11. Who doubtless is included in "The churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16b)?
12. What limitation is placed on the admonition concerning those who "cause divisions and offenses" (Rom. 16:17)?
13. How "mark them" and "avoid them" (Rom. 16:17)?
14. How are those who "serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly" rightly known as "abdominal" members (Rom. 16:18; Phil. 3:18, 19)?
15. What may be called the Roman's philosophy of success (Rom. 16:19)?
16. What is the Christian's assurance of victory over Satan (Rom. 16:20; James 4:7; I Pet. 5:9; Gen. 3:15)?
17. Who wrote the epistle to the Romans for Paul (Rom. 16:22)?
18. Who was his host? For what was he noted (I Cor. 1:14; Acts 19:29; 20:4; Heb. 13:1, 2)?
19. In his matchless doxology, what is the meaning of "my gospel" (Rom. 16:25)?
20. With a study of this chapter what place does woman, home, and work have in the church?

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Third Quarter

Lesson 36

Page 1

I Corinthians 1

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 1:9

Memory Verse:

“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (I Corinthians 1:9).

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS CALLING

Paul the apostle wrote I Corinthians at Ephesus in the spring of 57 A. D. before Pentecost (I Cor. 16:8). He was planning to come to Corinth, by way of Macedonia (northern Greece; I Cor. 16:5-8; Acts 18:21-20:1; II Cor. 2:12f).

Corinth

Corinth in Paul’s day was the commercial metropolis of Greece, one of the largest, richest and most important cities of the Roman Empire. Only Rome, Alexandria and Antioch surpassed its population of 400,000. Situated on the isthmus of Greece, on the principal trade route of the Empire, through its harbors flowed the commerce of the world.

It was a “renowned and voluptuous city, where the vices of the East and West met.”

Paul stayed at Corinth a year and a half and founded one of his greatest churches (Acts 18:1-18).

Why Written?

About three years after Paul had left Corinth, while he was in Ephesus, some 200 miles to the East across the Aegean Sea, a delegation of leaders of the Corinthian Church was sent to Ephesus to consult Paul about some serious problems that had arisen in the church. “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me...” (I Cor. 7:1).

Factions, immorality, lawsuits, meat offered to idols, abuses of the Lord’s Supper, false apostles, problems about marriage, disorderly conduct of assemblies, woman’s part in the church, heresies about the resurrection – these and other problems plagued the Corinthian Church.

Paul had written a letter previous to I Corinthians 5:9 which is now lost, possibly many of them!

I. Fraternal Greeting of the Apostle (I Corinthians 1:1-8)

A. The writers (I Cor. 1:1).

“Paul, called to be an apostle...” (I Cor. 1:1): Literally he was a “called apostle.” “To be” is not in the text. Paul knows he is not one of the twelve apostles, but he is on a par with them because, like them, God chooses him, God called him (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; I Tim. 1:1; Acts 26:15-19). His enemies said he was not an apostle. Paul reminds the Corinthians that what ever he is going to write, whether corrective or constructive, is the “will of God!”

“Sosthenes our brother”: Literally “The brother.” This Sosthenes, now with Paul in Ephesus, is probably the same man who was beaten instead of Paul (Acts 18:17) If so, the beating did him good for he is

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now a follower of Christ. He was not the co-author of the Epistle, but merely associated with Paul because they knew him in Corinth. He may have been compelled by the Jews to leave Corinth when he, a ruler of the synagogue, became a Christian.

B. The readers (I Cor. 1:2-8).

1. Defined (I Cor. 1:2).

“Unto the church of God... at Corinth” (I Cor 1:2): Paul did not say the “church of Corinth.” The church is universal. In Corinth is a local manifestation of the church (John 17:14-17).

“To them that are sanctified... called saints”: The character of the church is indicated in the words “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints.” God through Christ has sanctified all Christians. He has set us apart from the world. We are “called saints,” “to be” is not in the text. Ours is a high calling.

“With all... in every place”: The humblest Christian is a saint, as well as Peter or Paul. This verse includes you and me! We are saints, separated ones, We didn’t pay \$50,000 for the privilege of becoming a “saint” either. In faith we surrendered our all to Him in obeying the gospel from our heart (Rom. 1:8; 4:12; 16:19; Gal. 3:27). When we “call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” we recognize him as our divine Saviour.

“Both theirs and ours”: The Lord of the saints everywhere as well as ours (I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:5). Since there is only “ONE LORD” and Master, all Christians should be brethren.

2. Greeted (I Cor. 1:3).

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God” (I Cor. 1:3): Grace is unmerited favor. God gives us salvation by faith (Rom. 3:28; 6:23b). “Peace” is the result of grace -- a peace that is the ending of strife and conflict. These things come “from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Grace and peace would be one of the greatest blessings, especially appropriate to a church that was torn by factions and strife.

3. Described (I Cor. 1:4-8).

“I thank my God always on your behalf...” (I Cor. 1:4): Even in the church in Corinth Paul finds something to thank God for, though in II Cor. there is no expression of thanksgiving because of the acute crisis in Corinth. Paul was thankful for the “grace” and “peace” from God in the Corinthians. He was not thankful for many things in them. Find something to commend, before speaking of the factions which one must rebuke.

“In everything ye are enriched by Him...” (I Cor. 1:5): The equipment of the church is indicated in the phrase, “enriched in Him.” They were able to preach, teach, prophesy and speak with tongues (I Cor. 12:8-12; II Cor. 8:7; 11:6), Christians are plutocrats. God has DEPOSITED WITH US HIS MESSAGE. The Christian finds his real riches in Christ! He expects us to take it to others (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 8:4). “The testimony of Christ was confirmed in you” (verse 6) by the fruits which it brought forth, and the spiritual gifts which were bestowed upon some of them.

“Ye come behind in no gift...” (I Cor. 1:7): They were “enriched” by the grace of God so they were not inferior to other Christians in “no gift.” It is a wonderful record here recorded. But in II Cor. 8:7-11 and II Cor. 9:1-7 Paul will have to complain that they have not paid their pledges for the collections, pledges made over a year before! Does this complaint sound modern?

“Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”: They eagerly waited the second coming of Christ,

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“As if that attitude of expectation were the highest posture that can be attained here by the Christian” (F. W. Robertson).

“Who shall confirm you... blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 1:8): Confirmation is not an act but an effect. To confirm means to make sure. Christ “it is who shall keep you steadfast until that final consummation, so that none shall dare arraign you in the Great Day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Way). Christ alone can free us from blame (Rom. 8:33; Col. 1:22, 28) – now and when we are called to meet the Lord.

II. The Fundamental Fact (I Corinthians 1:9)

“God is faithful...” (I Cor. 1:9): We can depend upon God. He will faithfully discharge His part of the covenant. God will do what He has promised. The fact that He had called the saints to fellowship with His Son, is proof THAT THEIR SALVATION WILL BE COMPLETED.

Paul closes the great resurrection chapter by saying, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch, as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor, 15:58), Are YOU FAITHFUL (Rev. 2:10c).

“Called unto the fellowship of His Son”: We are partners, sharers of every good thing in Christ Jesus! As partners we have mutual interests, devotion and activity. Are you holding up your end of the partnership?

III. The Factions Among Christians (I Corinthians 1:10-17)

A. The plea for unity (I Cor. 1:10).

“Now I beseech you...” (I Cor. 1:10): This is a word of tender, urgent appeal and argument through “our Lord Jesus Christ,” a GREAT TITLE appearing NINE TIMES in nine verses (I Cor. 1:1-9).

“That ye all speak the same thing... no divisions among you”: As Christians we are to have the “mind of Christ” (Phil. 2:5f), the same mind and the same judgment. If you get your thinking right, your action and speech will be right. “No divisions” is “no schisms” in the Greek. They were to be “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” Like a jigsaw puzzle, each piece must be in place to complete the picture. Christians are UNITED IN CHRIST! While the Corinthians had not separated into various church organizations, they had formed several parties within the church. Organized sects claiming to be “branches of the church” were unknown till centuries later. Secure a copy of “The History of the Lord’s Church” to trace the events leading up to the great “Papal Schism” and the rise of Protestant denominationalism.

B. The presence of factionalism (I Cor. 1:11).

“For it hath been declared unto me...” (I Cor. 1:11): Paul plainly tells them HOW HE HAD LEARNED OF THEIR DISSENSIONS. “Them that are of the house of Chloe” may be the children, her relatives, or the servants of Chloe. We do not know whether Chloe lived in Corinth or Ephesus, probably Ephesus because to name her if in Corinth might get her into trouble. Christianity was working a social revolution in the position of women and slaves. Chloe means “verdure,” and was one of the epithets of Demeter the goddess of agriculture and for that reason Lightfoot thinks that she was a member of the freedman class like Phoebe (Rom. 16:1, Hermes (Rom. 16:14) and Nereus (Rom. 16:15).

“Contentions among you”: Wranglings and quarrels. They were carnal. They were not spiritual (I Cor. 3:1). They were living on the level of the flesh, not on the level of the Spirit. The spirit of the city of

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Corinth got into them, as Sodom got into Lot's family, with disastrous results! They were divided and glorying in their division!

C. The perversion of liberty (I Cor. 1:12-13).

"I am of Paul..." (I Cor. 1:12): "Now this I say" means "I explain more fully what I mean." Paul shows there were four existing parties. Little groups were putting false emphasis upon partial truths. They forgot the WHOLE TRUTH in so doing. Scores of small groups which met in the homes of members (I Cor. 16:19) were developing into rival, competing units instead of cooperating in the work. We must not be divided over preachers (I Cor. 1:12-4:21)!

A Pauline party clung to the founder of the church at Corinth – Paul. The party of Apollos was probably carried away by their admiration of his Alexandrian philosophy. The Judaizers clung to Peter, here called by his Hebrew name of Cephas. The fourth party claimed to turn from all these human leaders, and to be only of Christ,

"Is Christ divided?" (I Cor. 1:13): The body of Christ is ONE. It cannot be cut in pieces and given out to human leaders (I Cor. 12:12, 13, 27). Neither Paul, nor any leader, was crucified for them. They were not baptized into Paul's name, but into Christ (Gal. 3:27). Let your faith and allegiance be totally and wholly given to Christ.

D. The priority of preaching (I Cor. 1:14-17).

"I thank God that I baptized none of you, but..." (I Cor. 1:14): Paul usually did not baptize his converts. "Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples" (John 4:2). Paul's assistants usually did the baptizing. Crispus was the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth (Acts 18:8). "The Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized." Since some of the Corinthians were claiming to be of his party, he was glad that he had not personally baptized them, lest some should say he had baptized in his own name (verse 15),

"Gaius" was Paul's host at Corinth when the Epistle to the Romans was written (Rom. 16:23).

"I baptized also the household of Stephanas" (I Cor. 1:16): This household was the "first fruits of Achaia" (I Cor. 16:15). Stephanas was one of the three Corinthian brethren then visiting Paul at Ephesus (I Cor. 16:15). There is no proof in this, or any other household named in Scripture, that infants were included. There is proof that most of them did not. "The household" does not mean the same as "the family," but those dwelling in the house -- often the servants only.

"For Christ sent me not to baptize..." (I Cor. 16:17): Paul does not intend to belittle baptism. Baptism is a part of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16). It was not necessary that Paul himself do the baptizing. To Paul, Baptism was essential to get into Christ (Rom. 6:3-11; Gal. 3:27).

"Not with wisdom of words..." Instead of seeking to be a mere performer and juggler with words which might hide the cross, Paul told the simple story of the gospel in plain and simple language! He refused to "en-cumber the gospel message with any philosophical reasoning."

IV. The Factor of the Cross (I Corinthians 1:18-31)

A. The foolishness of preaching (I Cor. 1:18-21).

"The preaching of the cross is... foolishness" (I Cor. 1:18): Observe that it does not say the preaching of foolishness. The gospel of a crucified Saviour is "to them that perish foolishness."

The cross is viewed differently by two different classes. Worldly wisdom would lead to a crown, but

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NEVER TO A CROSS! To the worldly wise, the cross is silliness, purely absurd. Such are perishing because they treat the cross thus.

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise...” I (Cor. 1:19): Paul shows the folly of those who were attempting to deal with Christian truth after the manner of that “wisdom of words” which characterized the age, and who were thus causing schism in the body of Christ. Read Isa. 29:14. Dr. A. T. Robertson, world-renowned Greek scholar, says “There is such a thing as the ignorance of the learned, the wisdom of the simple-minded. God’s wisdom rises in the Cross sheer above human philosophizing which is still scoffing at the Cross of Christ, the consummation of God’s power.”

“Where is the wise?” (I Cor. 1:21): Paul makes use of Isa. 33:18 without exact quotation, referring to the sudden retreat of Sennacherib with the annihilation of his officers. “On the tablet of Shalmaneser in the Assyrian Gallery of the British Museum there is a surprisingly exact picture of the scene described by Isaiah” (Robertson and Plummer) There is a note of triumph in these questions.

“Wisdom of God... save them that believe” (I Cor. 1:21): God will save all who believe the gospel. It “pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” The preaching of the cross seemed foolishness to the “wise ones” then – and now. The cross is God’s wisdom and good-pleasure!

B. The substance of preaching (I Cor. 1:22-25).

“For the Jews require a sign... Greeks... wisdom” (I Cor. 1:22): The Jews required not merely miracles such as the apostles worked, but a SIGN FROM HEAVEN (Matt. 12:38). “Let Christ come down from heaven, if he be risen,” they said! The Greeks were “seekers, speculators” as in Acts 17:23, 18.

“But we preach Christ crucified...” (I Cor. 1:23): Paul proclaimed, “we do not discuss or dispute” (Lightfoot). Christ (Messiah) as crucified, as it I Cor. 2:2 and Gal. 3:1, “not a sign-shower nor a philosopher” (Vincent). Unto the Jews such preaching was “a stumbling block.” They had an entirely different conception of the Christ. It was predicted that he should be “a stone o stumbling” (Matt. 21:24).

“Unto the Greeks foolishness”: Folly as shown by their conduct in Athens (Acts 17:32). Greeks felt that a being who died such a death could not be divine.

“But unto... called... Jews and Greeks...” (I Cor. 1:24): Th called themselves. Christ crucified is God’s answer to both Jew and Greek and the answer is understood by all with open minds.

“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men...” (I Cor. 1:25) The world called Christ crucified foolishness. But God’s “foolish” act in giving Christ on the Cross is greater wisdom than in all the philosophers (John 3:16; The Cross seemed God’s defeat. It is conquering the world. It is the mightiest force on earth.

C. The instruments of preaching (I Cor. 1:26-31).

1. The instruments of God’s choice (I Cor. 1:26).

“Not many wise men after the flesh...” (I Cor. 1:26): Conceit keeps the wise, mighty and noble from accepting the gospel invitation in many cases. God bypasses culture, power and birth, three claims to aristocracy, and take the “world’s nobodies” and carries on His work!

Lady Huntington was an English woman of great distinction who ha been converted under the flaming, street preaching of Rowland Hill. She remarked once that she owed her salvation to the letter “m.” If it had bee “not ANY wise... might... noble” she could NOT HAVE BEEN SAVED!

2. The purpose of their choosing (Cor. 1:27-28).

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“But God hath chosen the foolish things... to confound the wise” Cor. 1:27): “Men whom the world would call foolish, with a gospel that called foolishness.” These “confounded the wise” and upturned and uprooted the world’s philosophies. The gospel creates a NEW NOBILITY. It takes the base, the despised, and the nobodies and makes them saints, martyrs, and heroes (verse 28).

3. The principle of their choice (I Cor. 1:9).

“That no flesh should glory in his presence” (I Cor. 1:29): In view of the salvation secured by divine grace, Paul showed that the power was of GOD.

4. The sufficiency of their calling (I Cor. 1:30-31).

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus...” (I Cor. 1:30): We draw our life, our hope, and our sufficiency not from men like Paul, Apollos and Pete but from God through Christ. We are made righteous, holy and redeemed Christ Jesus alone. Redemption comes here last for emphasis through the foundation of the other two.

“He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Cor. 1:31): Read Jer. 9:23. As Christ is our all in all, He imparts every grace that we enjoy, and bestows every blessing. There is no ground for glorying in Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, but in the Lord alone!

Questions

1. Who wrote I Corinthians (Cor. 1:1)? When? From where was it written?
2. To whom was it written (I Cor. 1:2)? What do we know about the Corinth of Paul’s Day?
3. Why was I Corinthians written (Cor. 7:1)?
4. Can you explain “called to be an apostle” (I Cor. 1:1; Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Acts 26:15-19)?
5. Who was with Paul, and what do we know about him (I Cor. 1:1; Acts 18:17)?
6. Is every Christian a “saint” (I Cor. 1:2)? Why (Rom. 1:8; 4:12; 16:19; Gal. 3:27)?
7. What things come “from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 1:3)? For what was Paul “thankful” (Cor. 1:4, 5, 6; Acts 8:4)?
8. For what day were these Corinthians waiting (I Cor. 1:7-9)?
9. What is the fundamental fact of I Corinthians (I Cor. 1:9; 15:58; Rev. 2:10c)?
10. What had Paul heard about the church at Corinth (I Cor. 1:10, 11)?
11. What was the cause of their division (I Cor. 1:12)? Were the Corinthians divided because these human leaders were teaching false doctrine (I Cor. 3:5-8)?
12. What two kinds of “wisdom” are contrasted in these chapters (Cor 1:20; 2:7)?
13. What are the different titles used for the wisdom of the world (Cor 1:17, 19, 20; 2:4, 5)?
14. What is the wisdom of the world unable to do (Cor. 1:21)?
15. What is God’s verdict upon the “wisdom” of the world (I Cor. 1:19, 20; 2:6)?
16. Does Paul intend to belittle baptism (I Cor. 1:13-17)? Is baptism a vital part of the Great Commission, and did Paul so accept it (Acts 18:8; Matt. 28:18-20; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-11)? Who baptized for Paul, and Jesus (John 4:2)? Why?
17. What did the Jews and Greeks require (I Cor. 1:22)?
18. Why had God chosen the “weak” and despised things (I Cor. 1:27-31)?
19. Who is the “wisdom” of God (I Cor. 1:23, 24)?
20. Is Christ, as the Great Teacher, the “wisdom” of God (I Cor. 1:23, 24; 3:2:1-8)? What does the world think about the “wisdom” of God (I Cor. 1:18, 21, 23)? Why does the unsaved man fail to appreciate the “wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:25; 2:9, 14)?

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I Corinthians 2

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 2:9, 10

Memory Verses:

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the thing which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Corinthians 2:9, 10).

GOD’S WISDOM VS. MAN’S IGNORANCE

We have a simple gospel, thank God! Do not forget that this simple gospel is rooted in the deep things of God. Its simplicity is created by the fact that it has come through Jesus Christ. Our little children can hear, understand, love it and grow up in it until they, at the end of life, can say what devout Sir Isaac Newton said in the presence of the universe, “I am a little child, standing by the seashore picking up a pebble here and a pebble there, and admiring them, while the great sea rolls in front of me,”

Paul showed us in I Cor. 1:18-31 that it was God’s plan to overthrow the vain wisdom of the world by the weak and lowly ones whom the world despised He regarded himself as one of God’s chosen “weak things” who founded the church at Corinth (Acts 18:1-18).

I. Jesus Christ and Him Crucified (I Corinthians 2:1-8)

A. The preaching (I Cor. 2:1, 2).

“And I... came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom” (I Cor. 2:1): Paul was educated at Tarsus, a great university center. At Athens in his notable address at the Areopagus on the subject of the Unknown God, Paul affirms, “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.” (Acts 17:28) Here and in Titus 1:12 and I Cor. 15:33 Paul quotes Aratus, Cleanthes, Menander and Epimenides – heathen poets. All such knowledge is dross compared to the gospel of Christ (Phil. 3:8). It is possible to “cover up” God’s message with the flowers of rhetoric. Paul determined not to do it.

“Excellency of speech” means excess or superfluity, “not in excellence of rhetorical display or of philosophical subtlety” (Lightfoot). Paul had displayed no tricks of oratory among the Corinthians, no flights of eloquence, no pretensions of philosophy, in giving them his testimony of the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus.

“For I determined not to know any thing... save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (I Cor. 2:2): Paul chooses the “cross” as the center of his message. “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (I Cor. 1:18). Neither Athens nor Corinth could laugh him out of this message! The only message for carnal, fleshly hearts is the cross – to the Person of that cross. I am not saved because I believe. John 3:16; 5:24, RUT BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AND OBEY HIS WORDS FROM MY HEART (John 14:15, 23). The cross reveals man as a sinner, and God as the divine Lover. The cross marks the defeat of sin, as the tomb marks the defeat of death. Poetry, philosophy, astronomy, and economics can not save us from sin!

B. The power (I Cor. 2:3-5).

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“And I was with you in weakness...” (I Cor. 2:3): Paul had a tendency to physical weakness and depression (II Cor. 4:9-12). “Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first” (Gal. 4:13). At Corinth “I not only eschewed all affectation of cleverness or grand eloquence, but I went to the opposite extreme of diffidence and nervous self-effacement” (Robertson and Plummer). Paul had been in prison at Philippi, driven out of Thessalonica and Berea, politely bowed out of Athens. No wonder he “trembled” as he faced hard conditions at Corinth. His companions were absent, he was out of money, and he had to work for Aquila. So “fear” beset him. It is a common feeling of the most effective preacher. “Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, ‘Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set o thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.’” (Acts 18:9, 10)

“And my speech... preaching was not with enticing words of man’ wisdom...” (I Cor. 2:4): As he discoursed on the gospel, Paul did so relying on divine aid, rather than upon human learning. Corinth put a premium upon the veneer “false rhetoric and thin thinking.” Paul did not resort to either He was a herald for King Jesus.

“Demonstration” is making plain. The Holy Spirit did this through Paul. His words were supported by the power of the Spirit shown in miracle (‘Rom. 15:19; II Cor 12:12).

“Your faith... stand... in the power of God” (I Cor. 2:5): Faith is established in God, not in human wisdom. We must not put our faith in Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, but in God. The only secure place for faith to find rest is in God’s power, not in the wisdom of man

C. The higher teaching (I Cor. 2:6).

“Howbeit we speak wisdom...” (I Cor. 2:6): A continuation. There is something else to be said. Way translates verse 6: “And yet for an audience of ripe understanding, I have a higher teaching, a divine philosophy. But is not a philosophy which this world will recognize as such; no, nor the ruler of this world, who are on the point of passing into nothingness.”

“Perfect”: Full-grown. There is a necessary difference for babes Cor. 3:1) and adults or grown men (I Cor. 14:20; Phil. 3:15; Eph. 4:13; Heb. 5:14). “Perfect” does not mean sinless, but matured, fully developed. We begin the Christian life as “babes” in Christ. We must not remain babes, but fully develop in Christ (II Pet. 3:18).

D. The untaught world (I Cor. 2:7-8).

“But we speak... a mystery... hidden wisdom, which God ordained” (I Cor. 2:7): God’s wisdom is contrasted with the wisdom of this age. “World” in verses 6, 7, and 8 is “aion,” or age, referring to a time period. Each age of the world has a conceit of its own. God’s wisdom is eternal and superior to the wisdom of any age or time.

“Mystery”: Is Christ crucified (Col. 2:2). This was once hidden from the ages (Col. 1:26). It is now made plain in Christ (Rom. 16:25f). The mystery has now been revealed. It may be grasped by the mind of man. Paul says that if the rulers of the world had grasped this wisdom of God, “they would not have crucified” Christ (verse 8; Acts 17:30, 31). The wisdom of that age was saturated with philosophy, but it was still ignorant of God.

Dr. William Osler was making a visit to a very modern hospital in London. The staff was proudly showing him every part of the building. Dr. Osler picked up some patients’ charts in the course of his tour. He noticed a system of abbreviation. S. F. for scarlet fever, T. B. for tuberculosis, D. for diphtheria. Turning to one of the doctors he said, “I observe that you have a sweeping epidemic of GOK on your hands. I am unfamiliar with what it means. Just what is GOK?”

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“Oh,” said the doctor, “when we can’t diagnose a disease we say GOD ONLY KNOWS and it becomes GOK.”

Whether true or not, as far as those medicos were concerned, we add up our ignorance of life’s problems with the same GOK. We indeed have a sweeping epidemic of GOK. It is everywhere. But it need not be so. God’s avenue through Christ and His Word are open to us all. Let us follow Him into peace and blessing.

“After the United States entered the World War, a soldier leaving for the front asked President Wilson if he would join in an agreement to read a chapter of the Bible each day. The President promised to do so. Mrs. Wilson, in her Memoir, says that the President’s working day during the war began at 6:00 A.M. It often continued until midnight. But, as Mrs. Wilson testifies, the President did not allow the pressure of the presidency to crowd out the daily Bible reading. As one thinks of the terrific burdens that rested upon his slender shoulders during these crucial years, it is more than likely that his moments with the Bible helped to sustain him. They found their way into the noble state papers President Wilson gave to the world.”

II. God’s Revelation of Himself (I Corinthians 2:9-13)

A. The revealing Spirit (I Cor. 2:9, 10)

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen...” (I Cor. 2:9): Paul combines freely Isa. 64:4; 65:17; 52:15 as a free chain of quotations, as in Romans 3:10-18. God is one who WORKS for him that WAITS for him. God prepares for those who love and wait for Him those things that eye saw not, ear heard not, and which did not enter into man’s heart. That is the wisdom of God. Now that wisdom has been shown to us in Jesus Christ. NO UNINSPIRED MAN IN ANY WAY SURMISED OR ANTICIPATED THE CRUCIFIXION of Jesus Christ for our sins. “The prophecy includes the unseen glories of heaven.”

“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” (I Cor. 2:10): The Old Testament is the preparation time. There we have God’s people a. children going to school, learning through symbols and types and shadows but with no realization of the wonderful truths of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph, 2:6). Every Christian knows this! “Search the scriptures!” Get hold of this Word until it gets hold of you! God’s Holy Spirit is qualified to make the revelation claimed in verses 6-10.

B. The Spirit of man and the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:11, 12).

“For what man knoweth the things of a man...?” (I Cor. 2:11); One must be on the human level to know the human mind, so one must be on the divine or Spirit level to know and understand the divine mind. A man’s dog has certain things in common with his master on the physical level. The dog can eat food, drink water and sleep like his owner. But last night as we enjoyed a beautiful symphony, dad’s dog howled at the music. He cares nothing for the Bible we read before him in the family circle!

God’s Spirit knows the Divine secrets, and imparts these wherever He dwells in full measure as the Spirit of knowledge.

“Now we have received... the spirit which is of God” (I Cor. 2:12) We apostles. The Spirit received by all the apostles was not the spirit of this world, but the Holy Spirit which Christ promised them as a guide into all truth (John 14:16-18, 26). This is a distinct claim of the Holy Spirit for understanding or illuminating the revelation received from God. God gave the revelation. He gave the apostles, and all that obey the gospel, the Spirit that we might “freely” know that which has been freely given. The Spirit of God OPENS THE TRUTH TO THOSE WHO DEPEND UPON HIM (Acts 5:32).

C. The teaching of man and the teaching of God (I Cor. 2:13).

“Which things also we speak... comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (Cor. 2:13): God gives the revelation – “the hidden wisdom,” “the mystery of God,” “the deep things of God” (verse 10). God’s Spirit gives the illumination (verse 11), and the inspiration (verse 13). Paul claims the help of the Holy Spirit for the reception of the revelation, for the understanding of it, and for the expression of it. Paul claimed this authority for his preaching (I Thess. 4:2) and for his epistles (II Thess. 3:14). The apostle claims the help of the Holy Spirit in the utterance of the revelation extends to the word. They are supercharged with the energy of God,

“Comparing spiritual things with spiritual”: “Interpreting spiritual truths to spiritual persons” (LXX), or “Matching spiritual truths with spiritual persons.”

III. The Natural Man and the Spiritual Man (I Corinthians 2:14-16)

A. The natural man (I Cor, 2:14).

“But the natural man...” (I Cor. 2:14); This natural man is an unspiritual man, He has not been “born again” (John 3:3, 5). He is unregenerate. His perceptions are limited to body and mind (or soul), whereas the Scriptures belong to the realm of the Spirit.

A sea captain once paid \$5.00 to hear Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale, sing. He had a curious eye, but no ear for music. He slept through the whole concert! The human spirit must be filled with the SPIRIT OF GOD, OR THE BIBLE REMAINS LITERATURE WITHOUT LIFE TO US. We get the Holy Spirit by being baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Gal. 3:27).

“Receiveth not”: The natural man does not accept, he rejects, and he refuses to accept “the things of the Spirit of God.” Read Rom. 8:7. It is only when a spiritual hunger is felt, when one is “born again,” and when man be-comes a spiritual instead of an animal being, that he can understand “the deep things of God” (verse 10). The ABC’s of the gospel, which the ignorant and unlearned and children of accountable age CAN UNDERSTAND, are sufficient to convert and prepare one for a higher knowledge.

B. The Spiritual man (I Cor. 2:15, 16),

“But he that is spiritual...” (I Cor. 2:14): Note three things about the spiritual man.

1. His identity. He is “spiritual.” He is “born again.”

2. His ability. He “judgeth all things.” He is able to discern or examine and comprehend the truths of God’s Word, which must be “spiritually discerned” or examined. He comprehends truths in the Bible that the keenest intellect will consider “foolishness” (I Cor. 1:23-25).

3. His immunity. He is “judged by no man.” Man may pass judgment on him, hut the spiritual man refused to accept the judgment of his ignorant judges. He stands superior to them all as Polycarp did when he preferred to be burned to saying, “Lord Caesar” in place of “LORD JESUS.” He was unwilling to save his earthly life by the worship of Caesar in place of the Lord Jesus. Polycarp was a “pneumatikos” or spiritual or renewed or born again of the Spirit of God man.

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord.” (I Cor. 2:16): The quotation is from Isa. 40:13. No man, not even the most spiritual, “knows the mind of the Lord” to “instruct him.”

“But we have the mind of Christ”: Paul and all spiritual men are superior to those who try to shake their faith in Christ, the mystery of God. Paul can say, “I know Him whom I have believed...” (II Tim. 1:12). “I believe; therefore I have spoken” (Psa. 116:10).

Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the moral and intellectual faculties of the spiritual or Christian

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man are so quickened and enlightened that he can understand the way of salvation proclaimed by Christ, wrought out by Christ, approved by Christ, and made plain to men by the Spirit of Christ!

Because the gospel is DIVINE IN ITS ORIGIN and its NATURE, why should Christians who accept this gospel allow themselves to be divided into parties by the men who proclaim this gospel? If men are true to their one message, these men will agree, and if they are faithful in this ministry they will not obscure their gospel by human devices and rhetoric and philosophy. When Christians are so illumined by the Spirit of Christ that they can understand the gospel of Christ, THEN DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH WILL CEASE and we shall be “ONE... that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21).

Questions

1. Do we have a simple gospel?
2. What must we remember about this simple gospel which even children can understand?
3. To what did Sir Isaac Newton liken himself in the presence of the universe?
4. What is the meaning of “excellency of speech” in I Cor. 2:1? To what did Paul compare such speech (Phil. 3:8)?
5. What did Paul determine at Corinth (I Cor. 2:2)?
6. Why was Paul “in weakness... fear, and in much trembling” at Corinth (I Cor. 2:3; Gal. 4:13)?
7. What did the Lord command Paul to do in spite of his depression (Acts 18:9, 10)?
8. How did the Lord back up Paul at Corinth (I Cor. 2:4, 5; Rom. 15:1; II Cor, 12:12)?
9. To whom did Paul “speak wisdom” (I Cor. 2:6; 3:1; 14:20; Eph. 4:13; Heb. 5:13, 14)?
10. What is the “mystery” which Paul preached (I Cor. 2:7, 2; Rom. 16:25f)?
11. Would men have “crucified the Lord of glory” had the rulers of this world grasped the “wisdom of God” (I Cor. 2:8)?
12. What is the meaning of “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man” (I Cor. 2:9)?
13. Is Christ, as the great Teacher, the “wisdom of God” (I Cor. 1:18, 21, 23, 24, 30; 2: 1-8)?
14. Through whom does the spiritual man grasp “the things that are freely given us of God” (I Cor. 2:10-12)?
15. To whom does God give the “spirit which is of God” (I Cor. 2:12; John 14:16-18, 26; 16:13; Acts 2:38; 5:82; I John 2:20, 27)? What is the first prerequisite for understanding the Scriptures (I Cor. 1:21; 2:12)?
16. Why does the unsaved man fail to appreciate the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:25; 2:9, 14; Jude 19)?
17. Why are the writings and opinions of the most learned unsaved men on all spiritual subjects utterly worthless (I Cor. 2:14)?
18. Can you clearly define the “natural man” (I Cor 2:14; John 3:3, 5)?
19. What about the identity, ability and immunity of the “spiritual man” (I Cor. 2:15)?
20. Who knows the mind of the Lord (I Cor. 2:16; Prov. 3:5, 6)?

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I Corinthians 3

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 3:9

Memory Verse:

“For we are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.”
(I Corinthians 3:9)

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

“The service of Jesus true pleasure affords,
In Him there is joy without an alloy;
‘Tis heaven to trust Him and rest on His words;
It pays to serve Jesus each day” (Frank Houston).

The closing verses of I Cor. 2:14-16 and the first verse of I Cor. 3 deal with three kinds of men:

1. The natural man,
2. The spiritual man, and
3. The carnal man.

“The Natural man,” is the unregenerate man. He may be civilized, educated, and cultured in the natural realm. He is not a Christian. He does not “grasp” spiritual things.
In I Cor. 3 and 4 the causes of carnality are noted and corrected.

I. Spirituality and Carnality (I Corinthians 3:1-8)

A. The nature of carnality (I Cor. 3:1)

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as spiritual, but as unto carnal... babes” (I Cor. 3:1): The “spiritual” man is a “born again” man (John 3:3, 5). The Spirit of God regenerates him. “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18; I Pet. 1:23; Luke 8:11). The spiritual man begins as a spiritual infant. He possesses PHYSICAL and SPIRITUAL life, TWO LIVES because he has had the PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL BIRTH

“Carnal”: “As men of flesh” (Braid Scotts). “As worldlings” (Moffatt “Unspiritual” (Phillips). Paul’s instruction was so simply done that false teachers (II Cor. 11:12-15) called him a “shallow” teacher (II Cor. 10:10 They were “brethren,” but they were “babes in Christ.” They were not able to take “DEEP” teaching (I Cor. 2:6, 14; Eph. 4:13). They were “carnal Christians, still swayed by the PASSIONS and PREJUDICES of the old sinful life out of which they have been saved. They had not GROWN UP. It was a case of ARRESTED SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT. Prolonged infancy pitiable.

A BABY MIND in a child of SIX or SIXTY is a tragedy – in both the physical or spiritual realms! If we yield ourselves to and live after the flesh we are “carnal” (Rom. 8:5, 6). Are YOU “spiritual” or “carnal,” my friend?

B. The capacity of carnality (I Cor. 3:2).

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“I have fed you with milk... not with meat” (I Cor, 3:2): Paul taught them the ABC’s of spiritual principle. “Milk” is simple teaching. “Meat” refers to stronger and deeper doctrines. The Corinthians were not able to take an adult diet spiritually (Heb. 5:11-14; I Pet. 2:2; Mark 4:33; John 16:12). They were glorying in their long spiritual babyhood. They ought to be TEACHERS OF THE GOSPEL instead of belonging to the cradle roll. Paul’s goal was to “present every man perfect (MATURE) in Christ Jesus” (Col. 1:28).

Which diet do you take? YOU must work, think, study, pray, absorb and LIVE GOD’S WORD (Psa. 119:11, 105; Acts 17:11; II Tim. 2:15; 3:15-17).

C. The conduct of carnality (I Cor. 3:3).

“For ye are yet carnal... envying... strife... divisions” (I Cor. 3:3): Someone remarked that great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.

They were living according to the flesh. The proof of the immature, undeveloped, worldly state of the Corinthian Christians was found in their envying, strife and divisions. “For when one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?” (verse 4).

How sad when Christians start showing undue reverence for men, are envious, and do not rejoice at the good fortune of others (I Cor. 12:26; Rom. 12:15; Acts 9:4; Gal. 5:19, 20; James 3:16). To try to make factions and divisions among God’s people is the work of the devil’s “BIG BABIES!” We must be united, not divided over true men of God!

D. The mistake of carnality (I Cor. 3:5-8).

“Who then is Paul... ministers by whom ye believed” (I Cor. 3:5): Corinthian carnal mindedness showed itself in choosing and following human leaders. One said he was a Paulite. Hence the apostle asks, “Who then is Paul,” or Apollos? They were “ministers” (diakonoi) or servants, not leaders of parties or sects, but merely servants through whom they believed. They were “deacons,” not in our modern sense, but in the sense of errand boys, men who run errands for someone else, under authority, going where they are sent, doing what they are bidden. This is what Paul and Apollos were.

“I have planted, Apollos watered... God gave the increase” (I Cor. 3:6): Planting and watering are important, but the SECRET of GROWTH is in the SEED. God alone can give the increase. Imagine starting sects around the planters and waterers! The Corinthians were doing it.

How Paul “planted” is told in Acts 18:1-18. How Apollos “watered” or irrigated the church is seen in Acts 18:24-19:1.

Reports of revivals sometimes give the glory to the evangelist or to both the evangelist and pastor. Paul GIVES IT ALL TO GOD! He and Apollos co-operated as successive ministers of God’s Word

“So then neither is he that planteth any thing... but God” (I Cor. 3:7): Paul had asked, “Who then is Paul... Apollos?” He applies his logic relentlessly. God is the whole and we are not anything.

“Now he that planteth... watereth are one... receive his own reward” (I Cor. 3:8): The planter and waterer work together. If no one planted, the watering would be useless. If no one watered, the planting would die. Paul and Apollos were co-laborers, not competitors. They are one in purpose. They are not rivals. God will give each worker the reward his labor deserves.

II. Works and Rewards (I Corinthians 3:9-17)

A. The workers (I Cor. 3:9).

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“For we are laborers together with God...” (I Cor. 3:9): In this work we work with God” (Phillips). “For we are God’s fellow-workers” (Revision) Paul and Apollos were fellow-laborers belonging to God (of God, not with God) They were fellow-laborers with each other, OF GOD. “Co-workers” of God has a new dignity here. God is the major partner in the enterprise of each life, but He lets us work with him. Witness the mother and God with the baby as the product.

“Ye are God’s husbandry... God’s building”: Paul suddenly changed the figure of speech.

The Corinthian church was God’s field in which they labored. Th Greek word means “tilled land,”

A little old lady over seventy knocked at the door of her preacher’s home. Handing him a basket, she said: “Here are some things the Lord and raised.” The basket contained an assortment of vegetables. The farmer works with God in God’s field. Without the sun, the rains, the seasons, the farmer is helpless.

We are fellow workers engaged in erecting the great temple that is being built for a habitation of God. God is the Great Architect. We work under him and carry out the plans of the Architect. We must never forget the God SEES and CARES what we do in part of the building where we work for Him.

Workers, field and building -- ALL BELONGED TO GOD! Read Act 20:28; I Pet. 1:18, 19.

B. The work (I Cor. 3:10).

“According to the grace of God... as a wise master builder. Cor. 3:10): The “grace of God” was given when Paul was called to be a apostle (I Cor. 15:10; Acts 26:16-19; Rom, 1;5; Eph. 3:8).

“Wise master-builder”: Paul retains the figure of the building. He is discreet master-builder, Paul absolves Apollos from responsibility for the divisions at Corinth. He denies that he is to blame. The Judaizers caused the trouble at Corinth. A preacher sometimes has to defend himself against attack. Paul did. FACTIONS were a fact in the church at Corinth. God gave him the grace to do what he did.

“I have laid the foundation”: He laid the foundation at Corinth when he was preaching Christ and working through faith in him (I Cor. 2:4, 5; Acts 18:8). Note it was not “a” foundation, but “THE FOUNDATION,” because God’s spiritual temple (verse 16) can have only one.

“Another buildeth thereon”: After Paul left Corinth, Apollos and other teachers continued to build on the foundation Paul had laid. The successor to Paul did not have to lay a new foundation, but only to go on building on that already laid. Successive architects of great cathedrals carry on through centuries the original design. The result becomes the wonder of succeeding generations!

C. The beginning (I Cor. 3:11).

“For other foundation can no man lay...” (I Cor. 3:11): There is only ONE FOUNDATION of the church (Matt. 16:16). This foundation stone was laid by God (Isa. 28:16). Under God Paul’s work was to point the Corinthians to this foundation and induce them to believe and thus build them upon it. His preaching laid it in their hearts. To preach Christ is to preach the fundamental or foundation truth of the church!

“There is no room on the platform with Jesus for another Saviour, whether Buddha, Mahomet, Dowie, Eddy, or what not. Jesus Christ is the one foundation and it is gratuitous impudence for another to assume the role of Foundation,” Apostles and prophets go into this temple of God, but Christ Jesus is the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20). All believers are living stones in this temple (I Pet. 2:5). BUT there is only one foundation stone.

D. The materials (I Cor 3:12).

“Now if any man build upon this foundation...” (I Cor. 3:12): There is only the one foundation for

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ALL BUILDERS TO BUILD UPON. It is possible to build upon this foundation, structures of various materials.

The six materials fall into two classes of three each: The first three are IMPERISHABLE, the last three PERISHABLE.

The ancients in their palaces freely used gold. Their marble and granite pillars are still the wonders and despair of modern man. Does Paul's metaphor refer to God's building (verse 9), or to the character of the teaching (verse 13)? Probably both ideas are involved. Look at the penalty on shoddy work (verse 15) and shoddy men (verse 17) Teaching may not always be vicious and harmful. It may be only indifferent and worthless. A co-worker of God in this great temple should put in his very best effort.

Anything that develops and applies all that is in Jesus Christ IN US is worthy, imperishable building ("gold, silver, precious stones"). Anything that lowers the gospel of the PERSON, the PURPOSE and PASSION of our Lord is unworthy, perishable building – "wood, hay, stubble,"

E. The testing (I Cor. 3:13-15).

"Every man's work shall be made manifest..." (I Cor. 3:13): The kind of work that every builder does will be manifested. There is no escape from this final testing.

"The day shall declare it": Probably the day of Christ's coming. Apparently "the day" is the subject of the verb, not the work, not the Lord.

"It shall be revealed by fire... fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is": "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). As fire destroys wood, hay, stubble, but leaves gold, silver, precious stones, so the work of some builders when tested will vanish. They do not build with the imperishable – gold, silver, precious stones.

Salvation we receive through obedient faith (Mark 16:16; Rom. 4:12; 6:23). Works were something rewarded (John 15:2, 5, 8). We shall stand "before the judgment seat of Christ" (II Cor. 5:10) to be tested as to the worthy or unworthy building we did on the ONE FOUNDATION, Jesus Christ (verse 11).

"Fire shall try every man's work": This is no more a literal fire than the materials of our lives are LITERAL GOLD, silver, stones, wood, hay, stubble. Roman Catholic purgatory would cleanse sin out of the individual. Here there is no "hint that the evil in the individual is to be purged by fire." Our sins are not PURGED BY FIRE, but by the BLOOD OF CHRIST (Heb. 9:22; I Pet. 1:18, 19).

"If any man's work abide... receive a reward" (I Cor. 3:14): Character and quality shall be rewarded in our lives. When fire has done its work, what is left? If our disciples stand the test, we shall be rewarded (Thess. 2:19; Phil. 2:16). The faithful minister shall be saved (verse 15), even if his disciples are not. "But he will be saved as a steward who has lost the things of his stewardship; as a tenant who had his harvest burned, or as a contractor whose structure has gone up in flames!" "Must I go and EMPTY HANDED?" Not unless you choose to!

F. The temple (I Cor. 3:16, 17).

"Ye are the temple of God... Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor 3:16): "Ye are God's building" (verse 9). Paul denounces the judgment o' God upon all that would defile his house by their carnal divisions. "Ye are the temple" – all the Christians are the sanctuary, "NAOS," the sacred enclosure, but the holy place and the most holy place of God. The individual is called a "temple" in I Cor. 6:19.

The "Spirit of God dwelleth in you," not in temples made with hand, (Acts 7:48; 17:24). God has put us into business partnership and fellowship and companionship with Jesus Christ. The church has many members, and it is "one body in Christ" (Rom, 12:5). We are in PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD! God will

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“destroy” (verse 17), spoil or mar us, if we “defile the temple o God.” This may well include eternal punishment. The church-wrecker God will wreck.

It is not the building or house of which Paul speaks as “the sanctuary of God,” but the spiritual organization or organism of God’s people in whom God dwells, “which temple ye are.” The Corinthians in their angry disputes, disorders, and immorality had forgotten their holy heritage and calling. Their failure was no excuse for their leaders who had led them on.

II. Wisdom and Folly (I Corinthians 3:18-23)

A. No glory in human wisdom (I Cor. 3:18-20).

“Let no man deceive himself.” (I Cor. 3:18): The false wisdom of the world (I Cor. 1:18-20, 23; 2:14), this self-conceit, had led to strife and wrangling at Corinth. Paul tells them to “cut it out!” Let the church take God’s standard (verse 19). Paul quotes Job 5:13 (verse 19).

“And again...” (I Cor. 3:20): Another confirmatory passage from Psa. 94:11.

B. No glory in human leaders (I Cor. 3:21-23).

“Therefore let no man glory in men...” (I Cor. 3:21): Do not glory in preachers like Paul, Apollos and Cephas. The spirit of glorying in part is a species of self-conceit and inconsistent with glorying in the Lord Cor. 1:31).

“For all things are yours...” All, the preachers as well as all beside (verses 22, 5). “World”: The world is not to be the master, but the servant of God’s children “Life”: Life is given to do God’s work and to insure eternal life. “Death”: To the saint, “death is gain.” “Things present, or things to come” will work for the Christian’s good (Rom. 8:28) here and hereafter “All are yours.” What a climax!

“And ye are Christ’s...” (I Cor. 3:28): Christ has procured for i all things, but has “bought” us with a price. “Christ is God’s,” God’s So and belonging to the Father. The wealth of the Christian includes all things, all leaders, past, present, future, Christ, and God. We own all else, but WE DO NOT OWN OURSELVES. Hence there is NO ROOM FOR factions, dispute or any unseemly thing here.

Questions

1. What three kinds of men are described in I Cor. 2:14-16; 3:1?
2. Can you define the natural, spiritual and carnal man?
3. How did Paul treat the carnal believers (I Cor. 3:1, 2)?
4. What is the meaning of “milk” and “meat” diet (I Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:11-14; I Pet. 2:2; Mark 4:33; John 10:12)?
5. What was Paul’s goal toward his converts (Col. 1:28)?
6. How does the carnal believer walk (I Cor. 3:3)?
7. What is a sure sign of carnality (I Cor. 3:3, 4)?
8. For what purpose were Paul and Apollos ministering (I Cor. 3:5)?
9. Who “planted,” Who “watered” and Who “gave the increase” in Corinth (I Cor. 3:6)?
10. What will God give to the faithful planter and waterer (I Cor. 3:8)?
11. What relationship do the minister and the members of the church sustain to God (I Cor. 3:9)?
12. What is the meaning of “God’s husbandry... God’s building” (I Cor. 3:9)? To whom do workers, field and building belong (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 1:18, 19)?
13. As a wise master builder what did Paul do at Corinth (I Cor. 3:10; 2:4, 5; Acts 18:8)?
14. Who is the only “foundation” that any man can lay (I Cor. 3:11; Matt 16:16; Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:20; I Pet. 2:5)?
15. What two classes of building materials are described in I Cor. 3:12?
16. When will God reveal the character of every believer’s works (I Cor. 3:13; Rom. 14:10,12; II Cor. 5:10)?
17. What two kinds of men are contrasted (I Cor. 3:14, 15)? What is the result for the man whose works abide? Result for the man whose works are burned?
18. What does Paul call the Corinthians, and who “dwelleth in you?” (I Co) 3:16, 9; 6:19; Acts 7:48; 17:24)? What is God’s penalty for shoddy work and shoddy men (I Cor. 3:15, 17)?
19. To what is “the wisdom of this world likened” (Cor. 3:18, 19)? Why (I Cor. 3:19b, 20)?
20. In whom are we to glory (I Cor. 3:21; 1:31)? Why (I Cor. 3:21b-23)? Who is our ultimate security (verse 23b)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year V

Third Quarter

Lesson 39

Page 1

I Corinthians 4

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 4:2

Memory Verse:

“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (I Corinthians 4:2).

PAUL’S EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY AND SERVICE

Christianity is of divine origin. The gospel originated in the mind and heart of Almighty God (I Cor. 2:7, 10). The church is not in the world to chart its own course. It was handed its orders on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1f).

Paul has shown to the Corinthians that divisions are wrong (I Cor. 1:10-12), that they must not rally round men to exalt them, but recognize that all leaders are God-given ministers or servants of the whole church (I Cor. 3:8-10).

Now Paul considers the responsibility of the servants of Christ, the rule by which “apostles and evangelists are to be estimated.”

I. Leaders and Their Calling (I Corinthians 4:1-5)

A. The leaders and God (I Cor. 4:1, 2).

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ.” (I Cor. 4:1): The word means literally “under-rowers,” not merely a name given to a preacher. It is a designation of rank, a delegation of work. Paul applies the term to himself and all ministers. All are to be regarded as “ministers” or servants of Christ, not as leaders (I Cor. 3:5). This defines their responsibility.

Great ships of that day had sails and great oars manned by “under-rowers under the supervision of a master rower.” Christ is the chief navigator who has “all authority” (Matt. 28:18-20). He orders. We obey.

“Stewards of the mysteries of God”: Paul changes the figure, but still the idea is that they were servants. A manager entrusted to the management of his master’s house is a “steward.” “The church is a household, God the Householder, the gospel truths are the food and other provisions which are dispensed by the evangelists or stewards.” That defines their work.

“Mysteries of God”: The gospel now revealed “unto us by his Spirit (I Cor. 2:10). The ministry is more than a mere profession or trade. It is a calling from God (Col. 1:25; Eph. 1:9-12).

“Required in stewards... found faithful” (I Cor. 4:2): God does not require that His stewards be found popular, or successful, or worldly-wise, BUT FAITHFUL in dispensing the gospel! We must be honest in handling the gospel as honest as a bank clerk handling the money of others.

B. The leaders and man (I Cor. 4:3-5).

“But with me... very small thing... judged of you” (I Cor. 4:3): Paul does not despise public opinion. But “God gave the office and fixed the manner in which its duties should be discharged, and so GOD ALONE CAN JUDGE THE OFFICER” (Rom. 14:12). The Corinthians were not competent to judge his motives or service. We would spare many a faithful worker; broken heart and ourselves bitter feelings if we were more temperate in our judgments and more charitable in our estimates.

“Judge not mine own self”: God, not others or even I, shall judge my work. No servant of God is capable of appraising his own service. We may not be conscious of anything in our service of a harmful nature (verse 4) Failure to be conscious of one’s own sins does not mean that one is innocent Most prisoners plead “NOT GUILTY.” Who will judge the steward of the “mysteries of God?” It is the Lord that judgeth me!

“Therefore judge nothing before the time...” (I Cor. 4:5): The Corinthians are commanded to stop passing judgment, to stop criticizing. This faultfinding habit was ruining the Corinthian Church. The Lord will take care of final judgment (see Matt. 7:1). It is not passing judgment WHEN WE SEE “evil fruit” coming out of a person’s life (Matt. 7:18). The Lord’s coming will make known our MOTIVES as well as our DEEDS. He will PRAISE and REWARD FAITHFUL MEN AND WOMEN (verse 5). Let us carry on and wait for that day. If “honor” is withheld for some task we faithfully do now, God shall give the praise we deserve then!

II. Leaders and Their Followers (I Corinthians 4:6-13)

A. Their humility (I Cor. 4:6-8).

“And these things .. I have in a figure transferred to myself.. (I Cor. 4:6): The factions and divisions that had grown up in Corinth around Paul and Apollos and other leaders. Neither Paul nor Apollos had headed a division in Corinth. He speaks as if they had to SPARE the feeling of the REAL LEADERS OF DIVISION in Corinth, He DEMOTES HIMSELF TO DEFLATE THE FOOLISH PRIDE and JEALOUS RIVALRY OF THE PEOPLE AT CORINTH. If they saw that it would be wrong for an apostle to lead a faction, they could plainly see the evil of any local men leading a faction. It is foolish to “puff up” or exalt one minister to make him a leader, while seeking to “pull down” another!

“For who maketh thee to differ from another?” (I Cor. 4:7): Pride, intellect, of blood, of race, of country, of religion is shut out. If one has GIFT FROM GOD, he is to USE IT FOR THE GLORY OF GOD, not to attract attention to himself. Why go strutting in conceit, Paul asks, as though the had a right to boast, “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” Study Romans 12:3-8.

“Now ye are full... rich” (I Cor. 4:8): Paul had just rebuked the glorying over gifts bestowed upon them. They were “full” of self-satisfaction and intellectual pride (see Rev. 3:17, 18). This is withering sarcasm. The Corinthians had received all the good things God’s ministers or servants ha brought them, they congratulated themselves that they were saved and going to heaven, and then settled down to enjoy the world. This is suffering time, not reigning time, Paul reminds them!

B. Their suffering (I Cor. 4:9-12a).

“For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles... appointed to death” (I Cor. 4:9): In contrast with the Corinthians, the state of the apostles is given. The figure is drawn from the Roman amphitheater. While the people had been indulging in childish jealousies and carnal rivalries over Paul and his fellow-apostles, the apostles had been FACE TO FACE WITH THE STERN REALITIES OF LIFE. They FACED DEATH DAILY.

“Appointed to death”: At the end of the gladiatorial contests, when the spectators had been sated with the lesser sights, the condemned criminals were brought in to fight, unarmed, the wild beasts. There was NO HOPE FOR THEIR ESCAPE. They “were appointed to die,” “doomed to die.” The LXX (Bel and the Dragon 31) has it for those thrown to the lions. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (A. R. vii. 85) uses it of those thrown from the Tarpeian Rock. The gladiators would say ‘morituri salutamus.’ All this in violent contrast

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with the kingly Messianic pretensions of the Corinthians! Paul saw himself and his fellow-apostles in such a light as “appointed unto death.”

“Spectacle”: Is “theatron,” our word for theatre. Like condemned criminals paraded before the people in the amphitheater, so the apostles seemed to be exhibited to public contempt before the world, the entire universe.

“We are fools for Christ’s sake... ye are wise in Christ” (I Cor. 4:10): Paul here gives a triple contrast of the apostle and the Corinthians. It is keenest satire. The three antitheses refer to teaching, demeanor and worldly position.

The apostles were not only like condemned criminals. They were “fools for Christ’s sake,” while the Corinthians were “wise in Christ.”

The apostles were marked for loyalty to the gospel, but the Corinthians had so cleverly presented the Word of the Cross with the “wisdom of words” that they had lost the stigma of “foolishness.” It made them appear “clever” and it made them acceptable.

“We are weak”: See I Cor. 2:3.

“Ye are strong”: In your own conceits.

“Unto this present hour.” (I Cor. 4:11): “just now, this very minute” accents the continuity of the contrast as applied to Paul. Ten verbs and four participles from verses 11-13 give a graphic picture of Paul’s condition in Ephesus when he is writing this epistle. All through his ministry the apostle suffered for the Saviour. He lacked the needs of life such as food, drink and clothing.

“Buffeted”: To strike a blow with the clenched fist.

“No certain dwelling place”: Fields in Notes, p. 170 renders this verse, “and are vagabonds” or spiritual hobos! Read Matt. 8:20; 10:23.

“And labor, working with our own hands...” (I Cor. 4:12a): Paul was a “tentmaker” by craft (Acts 18:3), along with Aquila and Priscilla, as he explains in Acts 20:34. This personal touch gives color to the outline. Paul alludes to this fact often (I Thess. 2:9; II Thess. 3:8; I Cor. 9:6; II Cor. 11:7). “Greeks despised manual labor; St. Paul glories in it” (Robertson and Plummer).

C. Their attitude (I Cor. 4:12b-13).

“Being reviled, we bless” (I Cor. 4:12b): We hold back and do not retaliate (Luke 6:27). Like Jesus “when he was reviled, reviled not again”

Pet. 2:23). Contrast this attitude of the apostle with that of one who says, “I got my feelings hurt. I’m quitting. I’m going somewhere else.” Such a one needs to go to the prayer closet, repent genuinely, and get busy for God to whom he shall give account (Rom. 14:12; II Cor 5:10)!

Study Paul’s other picture of his experiences in the vivid contrasts of II Cor. 4:7-10; 6:3-10 for an interpretation of his language here.

“Being persecuted, we suffer it”: They meet persecution with uncomplaining self-control.

“Being defamed, we entreat” (I Cor. 4:13): Paul is opening his very heart now after the keen irony above. They answer calumny, entreating men to repent and turn to Christ.

“We are made as the filth of the world... off-scouring”: For such conduct what do the apostles receive but more complete contempt? They are regarded as the sweepings, rinsings, cleansings around, dust from the floor as scum, as refuse utterly worthless and repulsive.

“Off-scouring”: Dirt removed by scraping or scouring, Each neighborhood to which the apostles came hastened to be cleansed of the presence The Ephesians hated Paul (Acts 19:23-41; I Cor. 15:32). “I had the answer of death” (II Cor. 1:9) alludes to some terrible experience.

III. Leaders and Their Honor (I Corinthians 4:14, 15)

“I write not... to shame... warn you” (I Cor. 4:14): Paul did not contrast their pride and glorying with his humiliation to “shame you,” but; a fatherly admonition to beloved children.

“If you would imitate Christ, take sin by the throat and the sinner by the hand.” Paul writes to bring them to repentance. He loathed their sin. He loved them. The harsh tone has suddenly changed (see II Thess. 3:14).

“I have begotten you...” (I Cor. 4:15): In the highest sense, God begets us by His will (John 1:13). In a secondary sense they are begotten by the teacher of gospel truths (James 1:18). They might have many “instructors or tutors who sought to train them as children, but Paul was their father who had begotten them in the gospel. He converted them. Paul preached the gospel. They believed and obeyed it. They were his spiritual children! Apollos and the rest were their tutors in Christ.

III. Leaders and Their Influence (I Corinthians 4:16-21)

A. Paul’s influence (I Cor. 4:16).

“I beseech you, be ye followers of me” (I Cor 4:16): “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (I Cor. 11:1). As their spiritual father, the Corinthians ought to imitate him in his lowliness and self-denial. Children should seek to be like the parent, rather than like the tutor.

B. The secret of Paul’s influence (I Cor. 4:17).

“Timotheus... bring you into remembrance of my ways...” (I Cor. 4:17): Timothy was Paul’s “son in the gospel” (Acts 16:1-3). He had already been sent onward toward Corinth (I Cor. 16:10), but going round by land would not arrive until after this letter – if it went across by sea.

“Of my ways that be in Christ”: Timothy will revive their remembrance of Paul’s life, conduct and teachings, so that they can better “follow” Paul.

“Have you ever heard the gospel?” inquired a missionary of a Chinese merchant.

“No,” he replied, “BUT I HAVE SEEN IT. I know a man who was a terror in this region. He was as fierce as an animal. He was an opium addict. But when he accepted the JESUS RELIGION, he CHANGED COMPLETELY. Now his wickedness is gone, He is quiet and gentle.”

“Religion is caught, not taught,” affirms the Christian Nurture Series. The WALK of a Christian is many times a more powerful witness than the TALK of a Christian.

Paul had TALKED and Corinth had LISTENED. Now Paul was WALKING, and Corinth HAD TO WATCH. Paul expected his teachings and practices to be followed in every church (I Cor. 14:33).

C. The proof of Paul’s influence (I Cor 4:18-21).

“Now some are puffed up...” (I Cor. 4:18): This was directed against certain individuals who were discounting Paul’s sincerity. They said that since Paul was sending Timothy, he would not come himself. This encouraged them to continue their factious conduct.

“But I will come shortly, if the Lord will...” (I Cor. 4:19): If God permitted, Paul would soon follow Timothy (I Cor. 16:7, 8). He will put to test those “puffed up.” He will face the “puffed up” Judaizers. Are they living the gospel, or just talking about it? He will come and know their real strength. He changed his plans to SPARE THEM, not from timidity. It will become plain later that Timothy failed on this mission and that Titus succeeded.

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“For the kingdom of God...” (I Cor. 4:20): For in the kingdom of God it is not words or professions that avail, but the **POWER OF GOD IN THE HEART**.

“What will ye? ..come... rod, or in love... spirit of meekness” (I Cor. 4:21): The shepherd leaned on his rod, staff, walking stick. The pedagogue had his rod also. Paul gives them the choice. They can have him as their spiritual father or as their pedagogue with a rod!

“Shall I come” and find it necessary to rebuke and exert my apostolic authority, or will the condition of the church be such that only love and gentleness will be called for?

Did you even consider how slight a difference there is in the construction of the words “minion” and “dominion?” Minion means “a servile dependent,” while dominion means “to rule.” The simple difference in both the spelling and the significance of the two words is the letters “d” and “o.” They spell “DO.” Yes, a MINION may have DOMINION. He may have it in his life and all about him if he will do God’s will. It will release both divine power and blessing upon him. Let us **DARE TO DO!**

Questions

1. Is Christianity of divine origin (I Cor. 2:7, 10; Acts 2:1f)?
2. If divisions are wrong in the church (I Cor. 1:10-12), are we to rally round men to exalt them, or to recognize that all leaders are God-given ministers or servants of the whole church (I Cor. 3:8-10)?
3. What is the meaning of “ministers of Christ” and “stewards” (I Cor. 4:1; 2:10; Col. 1:25; Eph. 1:9-12)?
4. What does God require of stewards (I Cor. 4:2)?
5. Who is the Christian worker’s judge (I Cor. 4:3-5; Rom. 14:12)?
6. What is the meaning of “I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos” and why “for your sakes” (I Cor. 4:6)?
7. What balloon-pricking question did Paul put to the Corinthians in verse 7? Why does the Christian have no ground for proud boasting (verse, 6, 7)?
8. Were the Corinthians really “full” or “rich” (I Cor. 4:8)?
9. What is the meaning of “appointed unto death” (I Cor. 4:9)?
10. Can you explain the meaning of “spectacle” (I Cor. 4:9)?
11. Can you name the triple contrast of the apostle and the Corinthians (I Cor 4:10)?
12. How many verbs and participles give the graphic picture of Paul’s condition in Ephesus where he is writing this epistle (I Cor. 4:11-13)? Can you read verses 10-13 without your blood pressure rising? What are YOU willing to SUFFER for Christ’s sake?
13. What is the meaning of “buffeted” (I Cor. 4:11)?
14. Of whom does “and have no certain dwelling place” remind you (Matt. 4:20; 10:23)?
15. To what did some liken Paul (I Cor. 4:13; Acts 19:23-41; I Cor. 15:32; II Cor. 1:9)?
16. Who had “begotten” the Corinthians with the gospel (I Cor. 4:15)?
17. Why could Paul urge the Corinthians to follow him (I Cor. 4:16, 17)?
18. Whose will determined Paul’s way (I Cor. 4:18, 19)?
19. What is more important than eloquence (I Cor. 4:19, 20)?
20. What choice did Paul give the Corinthians (I Cor. 4:21)? What is the meaning of “rod” (II Tim. 3:16, 17)?