

# (Through the Bible) Romans 15-16

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of love, patience, and hope in the Christian life, and the role of the Holy Spirit in making the word of God real.*

**Duration:** 1:18:34

**Scripture:** Psalm 42:11, Romans 15:1-2, Romans 15:4, Romans 15:9, Romans 15:21, Romans 15:27, Romans 15:33

**Topics:** "Through The Bible"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker expresses his concern about television preachers who deceive believers with clever and entertaining speeches. He emphasizes the importance of being wise in good things and ignorant of evil. The sermon then transitions to a discussion of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, specifically focusing on the topic of walking in love and respecting the differences in convictions among believers. The speaker also highlights the need for self-reflection and humility, acknowledging our own faults before pointing out the flaws of others.

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## Transcript

So we turn to the 15th chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. In the 14th chapter, Paul was dealing with the subject of walking in love within the body of Christ. Recognizing that we have differences of feelings, convictions, or opinions on the different issues involving the Christian walk.

Paul said those that are strong in the faith can eat meat. Those who are weak in the faith have convictions against eating meat, so they eat vegetables. But we need to recognize that people have different convictions that not everybody is going to see the thing the right way like I see it.

And so you've got to respect the right of people to be wrong and not create a big dissension over the differences is basically what Paul is pleading for. That if we disagree, we disagree agreeably. That we not split over issues and get in a big controversy over these little issues.

It is tragic how the church has been split and divided over the most ridiculous things. So the encouragement in chapter 14 by Paul is to accept those weaker brothers in the faith. Don't get into arguments with them.

And also you should not flout before them your liberty because you might stumble them when they see the liberty that you have. So walk in love. And if you're eating meat stumbles the weaker brother, then for the

sake of the Lord, don't eat meat in front of him.

You have the liberty to eat the meat, then have it to yourself. Do it in your own home. But do not flout your liberties in such a way that you could offend a weaker brother and thus destroy one for whom Christ died just because you're going to insist on exercising your liberty.

Now he is continuing in that very vein of thought as he begins the 15th chapter. And here he puts the final few touches on this subject. But chapter 15 is a continuation of this very subject of our treatment towards the differences within the body and especially towards weaker brothers.

We then that are strong, strong in the faith, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves. I shouldn't just be thinking about my own pleasure. I'm going to eat this prime rib.

I don't care what he thinks. Well, if it's going to stumble him and offend him, if I am strong in the faith, then eating prime rib doesn't bother me spiritually. Then I need to bear the infirmities of the weak.

I need to put up with him and not live for my own pleasure. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up. And so rather than living to please myself, should live to please others.

As a Christian, many times we are called upon to live by the standards that other men have set. Not that we share those convictions, not that we would feel guilty if we did them. But walking in love, not in not living to please myself, but living actually to please the others.

Walking more rigid than I would if I were just, you know, following my own convictions. And Paul gives to us then the example of Jesus Christ who did not please himself, but as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. So Christ, our example, he came not to please himself.

But when he came, he said, I do always those things that please the Father. For I came not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. So a good rule is live to please God, not live to please yourself.

Living to please yourself can create a stumbling block for weaker brothers. So in love, because it would please God, be gracious. Don't exercise your liberty in such a way as to cause offense.

Now he goes on to another subject. For whatsoever things were written before time or aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the scriptures, we might have hope. And so the twofold purpose of the word of God, the scriptures that were given to us, a twofold purpose listed here.

First of all, for our learning, the Bible was given to us to reveal God. For our learning about God, our understanding of God, that we, through the patience and the comfort of the scriptures, might have hope. Now God and hope are inextricably connected together.

There is no real hope apart from God. But it's amazing how that when you have God, hope is extended, hope is expanded. The psalmist said, why art thou cast down on my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God.

He is our hope. And all the way through, the hope of the believer is connected with God. So that God has given us the scriptures to understand his nature, his character, his faithfulness, so that we, in the time of trouble, will not despair.

We will not give up, but we will continue to hope in that work of God and in that work of God's victory within our lives. That position of despair and hopelessness is not one that the Christian should find himself in. Like the psalmist found himself cast down, but he talked to himself about it.

He said, why are you cast down? Why are you depressed, oh my soul? Why are you upset? Why are you disquieted within me? And the reason why was because he forgot for a while that God was on the throne. And when we forget that God is on the throne and ruling over our lives, it's possible that we can get discouraged and upset over the situations. It's interesting how quickly we can forget that God reigns, how quickly we forget that it's his church.

And suddenly we get all worried and we get all concerned and we begin to wonder, well, what are we going to do? Over and over, the Lord reminds me that it's his church. And because it's his church, I have no business worrying about it. He can take care of it.

He's created it and he is able to maintain it. And I don't have to lie awake at night wondering, oh, what are we going to do now? Or what are we going to do next? That God is in control. Now, I need to bring that to my own life.

I need to realize that God is in control, that God is going to work. Not to get upset, not to get discouraged, not to be in turmoil. For the Lord reigns and he shall bring to pass his work if I just patiently wait for him.

But that's the problem, isn't it? That thing called patience. We are exhorted in reading of the Old Testament saints to realize that they, through faith and patience, inherited the promises of God. And again, we were told that we have need of patience, that after we have done the will of God, we might obtain the promise.

There is that time after I have done all that I can do in following the will of God, there is that time where I have to then by faith patiently now wait for God to do his work. Now, there is where I am tempted to meddle and mess things up because I don't wait for God. Somehow he always seems to be slow according to my calculations.

Of course, when it all works out, I realize he was right on time, I was fast. But that's because I'm impatient. I want God to do his work in their life right now.

God, I don't want to wait for a week. I don't want to wait for a month. God help me, I don't want like Abraham to wait for 13 years.

I can't take that, Lord. So we have need of patience. And through the patience and the comfort of the scriptures, we might have hope.

Now the God of patience, and isn't he patient? God is so patient. And another word for it is long suffering. God is so long suffering, he is so patient to bring to pass his purposes.

But that's because God is outside of our time dimension. God lives in the eternal. I live in seconds.

And of course, now in milliseconds, you know, the scientists have divided them down. Minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years. God lives in aeons.

The eternity and a thousand years is as a day to the Lord. A day is as a thousand years and say, Lord, it's been so long. When is Jesus coming back? It's only been a couple of days.

What's your hurry, you know? So, because God is outside of the time dimension, and we move in this dimension of time, it seems that God is so patient in bringing to pass his kingdom, his work upon the earth. And so we continue our prayer. Oh God, give us patience right now.

The God of patience and consolation, the God of comfort, he's called. Grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Jesus Christ. How are we to be? We're to be patient with one another.

As God is the God of patience and consolation, so we are to be to each other. We are to be comforting to one another, and we are to be patient with one another. Now there's an interesting thing.

I appreciate God's patience with me. I'm thankful for that. However, I'm not so patient with him.

I appreciate other people's patience with me, but I'm not always so patient with them. Now, as you would that men should do unto you, that is the way you should do to them likewise. Comfort, be patient according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wherefore, receive ye one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Now the church, as we minister to each other in the love of Jesus Christ and through the word of God, we do glorify God through this life of love, consolation, patience with one another, and we are to receive then one another how? As Christ received us. Now how did Christ receive you? Were you absolutely the ideal, perfect person? Did he say, go out and clean up your act, and then I'll accept you? No, he received us with all of our imperfections.

Isn't it amazing how horrible our sins look when someone else is committing them? How blind we are to our own faults, how astute we are in being able to pick out the flaws of others. But as Jesus said, hey, first take the four by six out of your own eye, and then you can see more clearly to take the splinter out of your brother's eye. But why is it that I have such a hard time seeing the four by six in my own eye, and yet I can see so clearly that splinter in your eye? Well, it's all a matter of love.

Love covers a multitude of sins, and I just love myself so much I don't pay any attention, you see. But I'm to love you as I love myself, and if I love you as I love myself, then I won't be seeing and picking at all the little flaws in you. But I will then receive you even as Christ has received me.

It was interesting during the counterculture revolution, the hippie period, there were many churches that were willing to receive the hippies and allow them to fellowship with them if they would go out and get a haircut and a three-piece suit, a white shirt and a tie. You'll be welcome. Come on in, you know.

Now you look like us, and we will receive you. But it was amazing how many churches were unwilling to receive them with their long hair and dirty jeans and the whole hippie attire. Conform to my standards.

Live like I want people to live around me, and I will accept you as my friend and my associate. You know, you're welcome. But that's not how we're to receive each other.

We're to receive each other with our differences, and that love that we have in Christ should be greater than any difference that we possess. It should be the unifying power within the body of Christ. Now, I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers.

In other words, he came to the Jews because God had made the promise to the fathers that he would send the Savior unto them, the seed of David, the seed of Abraham. And so he came to minister unto those whom God had made the promise, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for this cause, or as it is written. And I love Paul, he makes a statement and then he begins to back it up with Scripture.

And when you can back up your statements with Scripture, three or four references, for in the mouth of two or three witnesses, let every word be established. It shows me, one, Paul's vast working knowledge of the Old Testament. I mean, he's grabbing Scriptures out of several different books, putting them all together on the same subject.

This fellow's a walking topical index. Give him a subject and he'll quote you all the Scriptures from the Old Testament that deal with that particular subject. So he's introducing now the fact that Christ came directly to the Jews, and yet the prophecies expanded beyond the Jews to the ministry to the Gentiles.

He came to confirm the promises to the fathers, which he did. But then that the Gentiles might glorify God through the mercy that they receive, as it is written, for this cause, I will confess thee among the Gentiles and sing unto thy name. Isaiah 42, 6 and 7. And again, he saith, Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people.

Deuteronomy 32. And again, praise the Lord, all ye nations. Praise him, all ye people.

Of course, you all know where that one is. Psalm 117. And again, Isaiah saith, There shall be a root out of Jesse and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, and in him shall the Gentiles trust, or hope.

Isaiah 11. And so he is stringing together all of these various prophecies out of the Old Testament, relating to the gospel coming to the Gentiles through the mercy of Jesus Christ. Now, Paul said, May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.

Again, the subject of hope, which comes from the scriptures, the God of all hope. Hope is one of the most important things. We must not lose hope in God.

He is the God of all hope. May he fill you, the result of hope is joy and peace. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted? You see, he's talking about depression and unrest.

The opposite of that is joy and peace. The result of the hope that we have is joy and peace in believing. Believing what? The scripture, the word of God.

So our belief is based upon the fact that God said it. And the result of that belief is joy and peace. Now, people oftentimes put their faith in the joy and peace, or in a feeling that they had.

Are you a child of God? Oh, yes. How do you know you're a child of God? Oh, I feel such peace in my heart. Oh, I have such joy.

I know I'm saved because I've never felt such joy. Oh, wait a minute. It isn't believing in the joy and the peace.

It's believing in the word of God. You see, if you say that you are saved because you have such peace and joy in your life, you may wake up tomorrow morning on one of those Mondays, and it is one miserable day, and you feel horrible. You knew you shouldn't have gone to Bob's after the service and had onion on a hamburger.

And now you're suffering for it, and you're irritable, and you're upset. What does that say? Oh, I'm not saved today because I don't have the joy and I'm all irritable. You see, the faith is not in the feeling.

It is not believing in a feeling. It is believing the word of God, what God has said. And so my faith is founded in the fact of God's word.

It doesn't change. Feelings do. My feelings are changeable.

As you get my age, even the weather can change them. You know, I can wake up in the morning and tell you how long the fog's gonna last by how much my knee is aching, you know, and stupid things that you can tell weather now by your body. Feelings can change.

They can be altered. The word of God is forever established. And because my salvation and relationship with God is predicated upon His sure word, my relationship with God never changes.

It's established. And so it is the believing that has brought me the peace and the joy. Paul said, after 14 days tossed in the ship, be of good cheer for this night the angel of the Lord stood by me.

And he assured me that though the ship is destroyed, there will not be the loss of life. And I believe the word of the Lord. Paul was cheerful.

He was happy. He was encouraging them to be cheerful when they had lost all hope of ever being saved. They had given up hope of ever being rescued, ever coming out of this alive.

And to have a guy getting up and whistling and smiling, they probably wanted to have him walk the plank. Be of good cheer. Are you kidding, man? I'm so seasick.

14 days bobbing like a cork on the Mediterranean. Haven't seen the sun or the stars. He didn't say, be of good cheer.

I feel good today. I feel a peace in my heart. No, I have the word of the Lord and I believe the word of the Lord.

And so the faith is established and it is solid and it's secure because it's established in the word, in the scriptures. So be careful of that. It's an easy trap to fall into where people get faith in their feelings.

And it is interesting. We have to express so often by feelings and experience that we had. We use our feelings to express the experience, but in expressing our experience of say salvation.

Oh, I had such peace. I never felt such peace in all of my life. Oh, I felt like there was just warm water poured over the top of my head and just down over my whole body.

And I just felt this great warm all over me. And as we are expressing, you see our experiences, then people get in their mind. Well, I've got to have that kind of experience or I'm not saved because when he was saved, it was like lights turning on strobe lights, flashing, you know, and who is glory.

And I haven't seen the strobes yet, you know, and so I can't be saved. And because we describe our salvation by the experiences of feelings or whatever that we have, people begin to relate to the feeling rather than to the word of God. You can't do that.

I am saved because God's word declares that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. I know I am saved because here is where God said it. You see, and I can point right to it, and thus it doesn't waver, it doesn't change, it doesn't alter with my feelings.

Again, I love the way Paul can just get right to the heart of the issue. And now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace and believing that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who makes the word of God real to my heart.

It is the Holy Spirit that teaches me God's truth. He leads me into all truth. He shows me the things of God.

He makes the word of God alive in my heart. And so through the work of the Holy Spirit, working through the word of God in my life, hope abounds. Thanks be unto God who hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

A blessed hope of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. A living hope, a blessed hope, an abounding hope that we have through the word. Now Paul said, I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able to admonish one another.

I'm confident, brethren, that you're capable of doing this. Full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able, capable of admonishing one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly unto you in some sort as putting you in mind because of the grace that is given to me of God.

Now I know that you can admonish each other and yet, and you have all knowledge, but yet because of the grace God has given to me, I'm writing boldly now these things to you. That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the good news of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. So Paul, writing to the Gentiles, is declaring unto them that they are accepted by God.

The offering up of the Gentiles, that would be the offering of their praises and worship unto God because of the work of the Holy Spirit, is accepted to God. You don't need the priesthood. You don't need the washings and the cleansings of the law, but God accepts you because of the work of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God that is given to us.

I therefore, I have therefore, whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient by the word and deed. Paul the Apostle had a very powerful ministry among the Gentiles, but it was more than just the ministry of the word.

It was the word confirmed by the work of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Mark, the last verse, it says, and they went everywhere preaching the word, the Holy Spirit working with them, confirming the word with signs following. Paul, when he wrote to the Corinthians, said, and my speech was not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but with the demonstration and the power of the Spirit.

Paul, in the beginning of this epistle to the Romans, declared that he desired to come to them that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift to the end that they both might be built up. So Paul's ministry was in word and in deed. The word of God is wonderful.

It is important. It is powerful. It is alive and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, but it has to also work in our lives and be demonstrated through our lives.

Many times what I say is totally lost on the ears of the hearers because of what I am. If the word doesn't work in my life and I cannot demonstrate the power of the word of God through my life, then all of the principles in the world, if they're not practical, if they don't work, no matter how good a principle they may be, they're of no value. So it is the Holy Spirit that takes the word and then makes the word operable in my life, and the deeds then are demonstrated.

That of love, that of power, and the Holy Spirit can manifest Himself in many different ways. And so Paul said, I really don't speak of anything except what the Lord has wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient by the word and deed. Jesus appealed to His works as the verification of the truth of what He said.

Philip said, Lord, just show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. And Jesus said, have I been so long a time with you, Philip, and haven't you seen Me? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. How is it that you're saying, show us the Father? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me and the works that I do, I don't do of Myself, but the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works.

Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me, or else believe for the very works sake. Jesus spoke of how His works testified of Him. And so our lives are witnesses of that work of God and His Holy Spirit in us.

Our lives are a greater witness than our words. We've always thought of our words as witnesses, and we've always thought as witnessing in a verbal sense, verbalizing my faith to someone else. Verbalizing their need for Jesus Christ.

But a greater witness than your words are your works wrought through the Holy Spirit in love. And by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, that ye love one another. And so it is important that our deeds match the glorious gospel that we proclaim through the Word.

And Paul here declares, the deeds were through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God. It must have been exciting to be around Paul and to see those mighty signs and wonders that were wrought by the Holy Spirit and the power of the Spirit in his life. So Paul says, so that from Jerusalem and around about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ, or I have preached the full gospel of Christ.

Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation. It is always rather amusing to me how many people feel called to start churches close around Calvary Chapel here. I must, well I guess I shouldn't, but I do.

I shouldn't say I must. I do oftentimes question their motivation. It would appear that they're seeking to build upon another man's foundation because we have stacks of letters of people all over the United States begging for us to start Calvary Chapel ministries in their area because there's such a total dearth of the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit.

And it seems to me the Holy Spirit is sort of not really using, you know, talent efficiently by calling them all within a few mile radius of Calvary Chapel here as though, you know, we didn't have the Word and the Spirit of God working here. So they feel that they've got to come close by here rather than going where

there was a true need. Of course, they know that I am offensive and I, you know, I shoot from the straight and always people getting upset so they can always pick up the disgruntles around and get a good start with the new fellowship.

But I have problems with this. Paul said, yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel not where Christ was named. I don't want to build upon another man's foundation.

Now, I really believe that every church needs an excuse to exist. And I think that you have to be presenting to the people a different ministry than what they can receive elsewhere or else you really don't have any right to exist. Now, I do believe that God has a purpose for many varieties of churches because there are many varieties of people.

And there are some people who need a highly emotional, highly charged kind of a meeting. And God knows that. And so we need churches that are highly emotional and supercharged.

There are some people who need things extremely quiet and reverent and very somber. They like the smell of incense and the psyche of the candles. And so God has the ritual churches where they can go and touch God and feel blessed.

But every church needs an excuse for being. And I don't believe that it is good to have four full gospel, struggling full gospel churches in a little community. All of them just barely struggling to make it.

In fact, some of them hardly making it. The pastors all living on starvation wages. I think that they all ought to go together and have one strong work.

Why duplicate the efforts? And to have 22 Southern Baptist churches. I think it's 37 now in Tucson, Arizona. It seems to me they would be better if they would combine and have one strong work rather than 37 starving pastors.

I think you have to have an excuse to exist. You're offering to the people something they can't get in another church. So Paul sought to preach Christ where he wasn't heard of.

He didn't want to come in and build on another man's foundation. He wanted to go where there was a true need and that is commendable. But it is as it is written.

You see, he uses even a scripture base for this. Paul was so filled with the knowledge of the word of God. I love it.

I love reading Spurgeon. That guy was like Paul. He used just all the way through scripture and scripture examples and and oh, how I love his sermons because they are so chock full of the word of God.

But as it is written to whom he was not spoken of, they shall see and they that have not heard shall understand Isaiah 52 15. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you because I've been wanting to go where there was a need where people had not heard. I've really been hindered coming to you, but now having no more place in these parts.

Hey, that is quite a witness. I've told everybody around here, so I got to move on, you know, having no more place in these parts to go where no one is not heard yet and having a great desire for many years to come to you. Whenever I take my journey to Spain, I intend to drop by for I trust to see you in my journey and to be brought on my way through the word by you.

If first I'd be somewhat filled with your company, but now I'm going to Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. Now Paul was in Corinth when he wrote this and he had gone to Corinth and to the churches in Macedonia to collect an offering to take to the poor saints in Jerusalem to help them in their need. He had written to the church in Corinth to take up a collection before I get there.

I don't want any offerings taken while I'm there, but each man has his purpose in his own heart. So let me get it. And I'm going to take it, you know, to the church in Jerusalem.

The church in Jerusalem had experienced some real financial problems, probably stemming from that early communal sharing where everyone sold their possessions, brought the money, laid it at the disciples' feet and all, and in time it ran out. And so they were left without property and all. They had sold it.

And so they were in a sad state in Jerusalem and Paul is seeking to take them help. And so I'm going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints for it has pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. And it has pleased them truly.

I mean, this was a good thing that they did for they are debtors. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, it is their duty also to minister unto them in carnal things. So they have benefited spiritually and so it is only proper that they minister to the carnal needs or the fleshly or When therefore I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

And I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. The fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. I know when I'm coming.

That's the way I'm going to come. Why? Because that's the way Paul went everywhere. Just in the fullness is life overflowed.

Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake and for the love of the spirit that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. Paul here is requesting that they join with him in his prayers for himself. I think that one of the great, great blessings and they sort of pyramid.

It has a pyramidal effect that the more your ministry influences more people, the more people you have praying for you and the more people you have praying for you, the more effective and broader is the base of your ministry. It is such a thrill to go places like we went to Tucson this last week. And there were close to a thousand people who came out there on Tuesday night in Tucson.

And afterwards, as I was shaking hands, person after person said, oh, you don't know what a blessing your ministry has been. The word for the day I eat breakfast with you every morning, you know, or you go with me to work every day. And my life has been so blessed.

And I want you to know I'm praying for you. And all over the country, there are people praying for us. We got a beautiful letter from a body of believers in Siberia and one of the persons speaks English.

And so they have our tapes and he listens and then translates it for these people in Siberia. And they smuggled the letter out and it said, we in Siberia are praying for you and those in Calvary Chapel. Now, how does that make you feel? Siberian believers praying for you.

God help us. Are we praying for them? They need, I'm sure our prayers much more than we need theirs. And that just made me really feel humbled and convicted because I haven't always remembered to pray

for those blessed believers in Siberia.

And that's where you usually end up if you're a true believer in Russia. And so there are a lot of believers in Siberia, a lot of beautiful Christians up there in Siberia praying for you. God help us.

Let's return the favor and let's pray for them. But Paul here is asking now prayers of the people join me in my prayers for me. Paul is saying that I may, and this is what Paul wants prayer for that.

I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea and that my service, which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted by the saints. Paul wasn't on the best of terms with those in Jerusalem, not because he didn't want to be, but they were just always suspicious of him. And it seemed that wherever Paul went, there were trouble with the Jews and for him to go right back to Jerusalem.

Uh, when he came back, they said, no, look, Paul, you know, rumors going around about your preaching among the Gentiles and, and all this kind of stuff. And look, behave yourself while you're here. Don't create problems now, you know, here's a couple of guys and they need to take their vows so they can observe the feast.

And why don't you sponsor them and just show everybody that you're a, you know, you're a good Jew now, you know, be good Paul. And so Paul was trying to be good. And the Jews caught him anyhow, and we're going to kill him, but, uh, they, they, they were concerned whenever Paul would come around because he was so straightforward.

And so, uh, he wasn't always that welcomed even within the church. And so he's going to take them some money. So just pray that they'll accept, you know, accept me and accept the money and that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God and may with you be refreshed.

Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen. Now, Paul is asking that they might pray that he might come to them with joy, according to the will of God, Jesus.

When Paul probably had one of the nights of greatest discouragement, he kept arguing with the Lord over the issue that he was sure that if he could preach to the Jews, they'd listen. God said, get out of here. They won't listen to you.

But Paul was obedient. He got up, but he always felt that the Lord was wrong in that issue. If the Lord would just let me preach to them, I know where they're coming from, Lord.

I know what they feel. You see, I was one of them, Lord. And just, if I could just share with them.

And Paul's moment came. He was there in the temple going through the purification rites with these two fellows he was sponsoring. And some of the Jews from Asia saw him.

And they said, this is the guy that has been preaching to the Gentiles, that they don't have to follow Moses' law. They can be saved by just believing, you know, and, and they stirred up the Jews and they grabbed him or beating him to death. When Lucius, the captain of the Roman guard came down, rescued Paul.

And when he got back on the porch of the Antonio fortress, overlooking the temple mount, Paul said to him, Hey, can I speak to these people? My big moment, you know, my big chance. The fellow says, you speak Greek? Paul said, of course. He said, I thought you were an Egyptian.

No, he said, you got the wrong guy. He said, well, go ahead and speak to him. So Paul said, brethren, hearken unto me.

My big moment. And Paul started to say, Hey, you know me, you know where I'm from. You know, I was around here.

I was zealous, just like you guys are. Man, I figured to wipe out the church, you know, I was just ready to murder anyone who called upon the name of the Lord. In fact, the high priest sent me to Damascus with letters of authority to imprison those that called upon the name of the Lord.

And while I was on the road, there was a bright light from heaven. And the voice spoke to me and said, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And I said, who are you Lord? Then I might serve you. And he said, I'm Jesus whom you're persecuting.

And I am going to send you to the Gentiles. Now, the minute he said Gentiles, the thing exploded. The people began to take off the tear, their clothes and wave them in the air, throw dirt in the air and scream, kill him, kill him, kill him.

Now he was talking to them in Hebrew and the captain of the Roman guard didn't understand him. And he said, get him inside before they kill him. And then he said, what in the world did he say to those people that made them so incensed, scourge him, find out what he said.

And so as he got ready to discourage him, Paul said, is it customary to scourge a Roman citizen who hasn't been condemned? And so the executioner went in and said, Hey, you better be careful. That guy's a Roman citizen. The captain came out and said, are you a Roman citizen? Paul said, you bet I am.

He said, well, I am too. I had to buy my citizenship. Cost me quite a bit.

Paul said, I was free born. Now he had his moment. It ended in a riot, not the revival he was hoping for.

And Paul, no doubt was discouraged. And that night, the Lord came and stood beside him and said, Paul, be of good cheer. Now, when the Lord says be of good cheer, it means that, you know, you're down.

You don't say be of good cheer to a person who's happy. You say it to a person who's sad. Be a good cheer for as you have borne witness of me here in Jerusalem, all you had your day, you bore witness of me here.

So must you also bear witness of me in Rome, Rome. Did you say Rome? Then wanting to go to Rome by the will of God. And so the Lord is declaring to Paul, it's my will that you go to Rome now.

And so Paul began the journey to Rome. He had a little detour in Caesarea for a couple of years. And then when he went to Rome, it was not as he expected.

He didn't have to pay his own passage. He was taken care of by the Roman government, Roman board. God had a few people he wanted to save on the island of Malta.

And so God parked the ship at Malta in order that Paul might have opportunity to witness to the governor and many of the people before going on to Rome, but pray that I might come by the will of God. Now chapter 16 is just personal greetings to many of those in Rome. We're going to go rather rapidly through it.

Just pointing out a few things. First of all, Paul commends unto you, Phoebe, our sister who is a servant of the church, which is in Centuria or she was a deaconess. Centuria was the port of the city of Corinth.

And so she, uh, no doubt met Paul when he was ministering there in Corinth, but was serving there in the church. And, uh, some of those male chauvinists seem to have a little difficulty with this, that she was there as a servant in the church. Receive her in the Lord as become a saints and that you assist her in whatsoever business she has need of you.

For she has been a sucker of many and of myself also. So Phoebe was probably going with those who were carrying Paul's letter from Corinth to Rome. And so he gives to her a letter of recommendation.

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my life laid down their own necks unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Now, Priscilla and Aquila were gadabats. They began in Rome.

Our first encounter with them is when Paul came to Corinth and their trade was tent making. And because Paul was a tent maker, he went to work with them in Corinth, making tents in order that he might provide the food and all for his ministering party while they were there in Corinth. And if you will remember when Paul was with them in Corinth, they had come from Rome because of Claudius persecution of the Jews.

So they had first been in Rome, no doubt had a business in Rome. But when Claudius began to persecute the Jews, they left Rome and came to Corinth. Now there in Corinth, they met Paul and they were established in the faith and they moved to Ephesus before Paul had a chance to come to Ephesus.

And while in Ephesus, this man who was mighty in the scriptures by the name of Apollos came to Ephesus and began to preach Jesus Christ unto the people. But Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and began to explain the word of God to him more completely, for he'd only known John's baptism. So then Paul followed and again met Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus where he ministered with them.

Now they go back to Rome and are in Rome at the time that Paul is writing this epistle. And so they have become close associates to Paul, beloved friends in Christ. And Paul writes to them in Rome.

Now the last place we find them is back in Ephesus again. So they moved around and we do read that there was a church in their home in Ephesus. And here Paul greets the church that is in their house.

So wherever they went, they would open up their house and invite people to come in and study the word of God. And so their house became the meeting place for the believers. And they evidently were just outstanding, gracious people.

And I'm really looking forward to meeting Priscilla and Aquila. They're just the kind of people that you like to know. And it will be fun to meet them when we get to heaven.

So greet the church that is in their house and salute my well-beloved Eponitis, who is the firstfruits of Achaia under Christ. Now greet Mary, don't know who she is, who bestowed much labor on us. Salute Adronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners who are of note among the apostles whom also were in Christ before me.

Now interesting, Junia is a feminine name and Paul declares that she was an apostle. So something that perhaps you never considered, that there is a possibility that there were women apostles as well as men.

Now there is another way to translate this and those who don't like that idea translate it the other way.

Salute Adronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and fellow prisoners who are of note among the apostles or whom the apostles know, who are noted by the apostles. And not that they are noted apostles, but they are noted by the apostles and that's the way other people translate that to say, oh no, no, couldn't have a woman apostle. The other apostles who were in Christ before me, referring to Peter and John, they know these gals, they are this gal, you know, so greet her also.

You have to, in the Greek language, sort of bend it a bit to get that particular idea out of the translation. The plain understanding of the Greek is that Junia was indeed an apostle, well noted apostle, that Paul is seeking that they greet, who actually was in Christ before Paul. So this will be interesting too to find out who is right in the interpreting of this woman.

So Paul then sends his greetings to these others, names that were meaningful, no doubt, in the church in Rome, but really don't mean anything to us. Salute Rufus, verse 13, chosen in the Lord and his mother and mine. There is another Rufus, there could be the same Rufus, the son of Simon the Cyrenian, who was compelled to bear the cross of Jesus.

Some believe that it is the same Rufus. Now Paul gets down to 16, salute one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

It is interesting to me how that in different places they have different customs of greeting. We were down in Mexico a couple of weeks ago, and down there it's customary for the men to shake hands, and then they hug, and then they shake hands a second time. So when you're down there greeting the brothers, you'll shake their hand, you know, hermano, mucho gusto, and then you hug them, and then you shake their hands a second time.

In Italy, you kiss on either cheek when you greet. The men, you know, they kiss you on the cheek, and they greet one another with a kiss. And Paul, they're still doing that in Rome.

Paul tells the Roman church to do that. Salute one another with a holy kiss, or greet one another with a holy kiss. And the churches of Christ greet you.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark those which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. There are always those that have some weird trip to lay on the body of Christ, and they feel it is their God-given duty to lay this weird understanding on the body. Now, I feel that if God has given you a special understanding of the Scripture, some insight which is sort of unique and different, but God has given this to you, and it is important that the entire church receive the same understanding that you have.

I think it would be well for you to, first of all, allow us to observe how this understanding has brought you into a closer, deeper relationship with God. How it has benefited your own walk and made you more in the image of Christ, walking in love. And when we have the opportunity to see how this truth has transformed you into the image of Christ, then we will be coming and say, tell me, brethren, share with me, what is it that makes you different? But just to go laying your trip on people, when it hasn't had any fruit in your own life, causes me to wonder, do I need to have that same understanding that you have? What's it done for you? I think that's only fair.

Unfortunately, those that get these weird trips up don't think it's fair. And they just have to lay their trip on everybody. But mark those which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine, the basic biblical doctrines that you've been taught.

No scripture is of any private, no scripture of prophecy of any private interpretation. I don't think really that we need new revelations. I feel that we need new experiences in the old revelations.

That God has given to us all that pertains to life and to godliness in his word. It's all there. I don't need some new great revelation from God.

What I need is a new experience. There are things in there that I have not yet experienced. I've still got a ways to go to experience all that's here.

I don't have to go outside of the scripture to some balmy experience. I would like to experience more of what's in the word rather than going to extra scriptural experiences. And I will confess to you, I'm extremely leery of any extra scriptural experience, nor am I interested in any extra scriptural experience.

If you come up to me wild eyed and say, last night at three in the morning, there was a bright creature sitting on the foot of my bed and he woke me up and the room was just all illuminated with his brightness. And I was frightened and I said, who are you? And he said, I'm Gabriel. And he began to tell me glorious things about the things of God.

And he tells me that we don't have to pray anymore. All we have to do is claim it. All we have to do is blab it and grab it.

I'll say, no, thanks, friend. I don't care if Gabriel did tell you that. It's contrary to what God's word has told me.

So mark those. For they are such who serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own desires. I do believe that it is incumbent to that minister, servant of God, who is living from the ministry.

I believe that it is incumbent upon him to live a very simple life. I do not believe that he should be spending a lot of money extravagantly on fancy clothes, fancy cars, fancy this or that. I think that the servant of God should live a simple life.

I believe in that. I not only believe in that, I practice that. Now, God has blessed us financially.

I thank God for the blessings that he has given to us. I thank God that we have all that we desire. And thus I feel that I'm extremely rich.

But I do believe that as a servant of Jesus Christ, a minister of the gospel, that it's important that I live simply and not extravagantly. Lest I could be accused of being one who is serving his own desires and not really serving the Lord Jesus Christ. And they, by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple.

It is such a heartache for me to watch these guys on television deceiving the hearts of the simple believers. Oh, fair speeches to be sure. Clever.

Humorous. Interesting. But the emphasis is wrong.

For your obedience has come abroad unto all men. I could say more, but I just get myself in trouble. For your obedience has come abroad unto all.

I am glad, therefore, on your behalf, but yet I would have you to be wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil. That's a good rule. Be wise in things that are good, but be dumb in things that are evil.

Well, how do you take a fix? You know, I don't know and I don't care. I'm dumb in the things of evil. I would just as soon remain dumb, simple-minded as far as evil things are concerned.

When I was in seminary, a bunch of guys wanted to go down to the burlesque theater because they had to know what we're going to preach against. I said, oh, that's stupid. You know, let's, let's understand all of the evil.

Let's, let's delve into it and understand it's working so that we'll be able to really be knowledgeable when we preach against these things. No. Be wise concerning that which is good, but be simple concerning that which is evil.

Thank God for that mind that is pure and unknowledgeable in things of evil. So the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Paul has the hardest time ending this epistle. This is the second amen now. And he, he just one more, one, one more thing, you know, now at this point, Tertius who was the man who Paul was dictating the epistle to puts in his own little greeting.

I Tertius who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord. You remember, Paul brought attention to the Galatian epistle. You notice what large letter I've written to you in my own hand.

For the most part, Paul dictated his epistles. Tertius was the fellow who Paul dictated this epistle to, but he greets them. I greet you in the Lord.

Gaius my host. Now you remember Gaius was one that Paul baptized there in Corinth. I thank God I didn't baptize any, but Crispus and Gaius, Gaius my host and of the whole church salutes or greets you.

Erastus the chamberlain of the city is greeting you as Quartus a brother and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Again, you're trying Paul.

Now to him, he's getting there. He just now to him that is a power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began. This glorious mystery, really of the gospel of grace coming to the Gentiles, Christ in dwelling us, our hope of glory.

But now this mystery is made manifest. It was once not revealed, but God is now revealing it. And by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God has made known to all nations, his glorious truth that they might obey through faith.

And so through the obedience of faith, God's grace is bestowed upon all nations. It's no longer just an exclusive Jewish privilege salvation, but through the obedience of faith, the door is open unto all men to God, only wise be glory through Jesus Christ forever. A man, he finally got there.

And so the end of Paul's epistle to the Romans, fabulous book. And now we started in the Corinthians and it's an exciting book because the Corinthian church was such a mess and Paul is having to write to them. And it's basically a corrective epistle as he seeks to correct all of the stuff that was going on in Corinth.

And so we find the Corinthian epistle, an extremely interesting epistle as he deals with the various issues that had cropped up the various practices that had cropped up in Corinth. And as he seeks to correct these abuses. So you're going to have some exciting reading as we move into the Corinthian epistle.

Just a lot of good reading in this Corinthian epistle, a lot of good teaching, good understanding. You're going to find it extremely beneficial to your walk and to your growth in your knowledge and understanding of the ways of God. So get into it and study it this week.

And then next week we'll join together in this fascinating Corinthian epistle. May the Lord be with you and bless and keep you in his love. Causing you to abound in the grace of God.

Being filled with the knowledge of him. May you walk in a way that will please the Lord this week. Walking in love.

Walking in the Spirit. Being led by the Spirit. For Jesus' sake.

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