

(Romans) Romans 15:30-16:27

by Zac Poonen

Paul's sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer, the role of women in the church, and the warning against false teachers.

Duration: 48:17

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, Matthew 5:44, Romans 8:14, Romans 9:11, Romans 11:29, Romans 12:1-2, Romans 16:20

Topics: "Spiritual Purity", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of keeping our minds innocent of evil in a world filled with wickedness. He encourages listeners to avoid watching or reading about evil and instead focus on ways to live a pure and good life. The speaker highlights the various aspects of the gospel beyond forgiveness and victory, such as God's sovereignty and faithfulness. He urges believers to give glory to God when they experience victory over sin and when they are part of a united church. The sermon concludes with a reminder to rely on the grace of Jesus Christ and to stay away from deceivers who are only interested in personal gain.

Transcript

Let's turn today to Romans 15 and verse 30. Paul has just been expressing his longing to come to Rome. We considered that in our last study.

And he says he's made plans now to come there after longing to go there for many years. And he says, therefore, since I'm going to Jerusalem, before I come to Rome, I urge you brethren, verse 30, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. And what does he specifically ask them to pray for? He says, pray that I may be delivered from those who are disobedient, those who are not Christians, in Judea, from the Jewish people, who are always after Paul's blood.

Pray that I'll be delivered from them. And that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints. He says, pray that the Christians there will be willing to accept the money I'm bringing to them.

That they won't be so proud to say, we're not going to take anything from the Gentiles or anything like that. So Paul believed in prayer. And he believed in praying for little things like protection, when people were trying to harm him.

Little things like, Lord, will you make these people accept my ministry? He didn't believe that he was clever enough and smart enough to do all that. And not only his own prayer, he says, pray together with me. I'm also praying that I'll be protected.

I'm also praying that my ministry will be accepted by the Christians. But he says, I want you fellas to pray for me too. You there in the church, stand together, have some prayer meetings for me.

You know, Paul, one would think that a man like Paul doesn't need anybody to pray for him. Sometimes we think that these great servants of God who stand up in the pulpit and preach so powerfully, they don't need anybody to pray for them. Oh, they've got such gifts, they've got such abilities.

Is that true? Well, their abilities are no use if God doesn't anoint them. Even their protection from evil men depends so much on believers praying for them. We need to develop the habit of praying especially for those who are in the forefront of the Lord's battle against Satan.

Paul was one of them. Today there are many people like that who are in the forefront of the battle against Satan. And Satan's trying to attack them and knock them down in so many ways.

Satan's trying to scandalize them and tell false stories about them and do many, many things. Make sure you don't get into that accusation brigade that Satan has, but join the prayer brigade, those who pray for God's servants. And he says, pray for me that I may be delivered from those who are disobedient, that my service may be acceptable, so that finally I can come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.

There again you see his graciousness. He says, I want to find rest when I come into your midst. May the God of peace be with you all.

There we see a wonderful example of a true servant of God who is humble enough to acknowledge that he needs prayer help from his fellow believers. Even those young believers in Rome can fulfill a tremendous ministry for Paul by praying for him. And he says further in verse 33, the God of peace be with you all.

Amen. He speaks about God as the God of peace. When God brings unity between Jews and Gentiles, he would have fulfilled his ministry as the God of peace.

That's his goal. Moving on to chapter 16, we see here Paul giving a number of greetings to various people whom he has worked with, whom he has heard of and whom he knows personally. And he expresses his appreciation for them in differing degrees.

For example, some people, he says, they have worked very hard. Verse 6, greet Mary who has worked very hard. And he remembers a number of names.

Paul was a man who prayed for a number of people individually. And he also prayed for churches. He had a wide list of people he prayed for scattered across different parts of the Mediterranean in different countries.

And he recommends certain people to the church in Rome whom he knows well. He says in verse 16, I commend to you our sister Phoebe. That was a dear Christian sister who was probably going to Rome soon.

And he says, I want you to know who she is. I mean, they wouldn't know who she is. And he calls her a servant of the church, which is a centuria.

And there we see a sister who was a servant of the church. One of the wonderful things we see in Romans 16 is that there are a number of sisters who are active in the Lord's work. Now, a lot of sisters sometimes in India think that they can't do much for the Lord, except be housewives and mothers.

But here we see that there were sisters who were very active doing something for the Lord. And particularly in a country like India, where half the population is women, and where it's very difficult in our society for a man to reach across that barrier to speak to women. Who is going to reach half of this country? Women, particularly.

Women in the church. A man can preach from the pulpit. But when it comes to personal counseling and so many intimate problems that women have, even in the church, who is going to minister to them? Other godly women.

We need women like Phoebe. We need married women like Priscilla, verse 3. We need sisters like Mary, in verse 6. And it's very interesting that in this list mentioned in verse 16, the very first ones mentioned are women. Phoebe, first of all in verse 16.

Priscilla and Aquila, verse 3. It's not even Aquila and Priscilla. Notice that. It's Priscilla and Aquila.

It's Mrs. and Mr. And Mary, in verse 6. And if that doesn't encourage you as a sister, I don't know what will. That should be an encouragement to you. Whether you're a married sister like Priscilla or an unmarried sister like Phoebe and Mary, there is a work that you can do for Jesus that no one else but you can do.

And if you don't do it, it won't get done. Or some other sister will have to do your job as well and do twice as hard a work. So, every sister must recognize that she has a responsibility in the body of Christ.

And so he says concerning Phoebe, she's a servant of the church in Centuria, that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints. I believe that's a good exhortation. Receive someone, give her a warm Christian welcome.

Somebody comes to your church. Don't just ignore them. Receive them warmly in a manner worthy of the saints.

Do you receive strangers into your church in a manner worthy of the saints? And he says that you help her in whatever matter she has a need. You must help her because she herself has been a helper of many people and a helper to me as well. Here was a sister who had ministered to the Apostle Paul, maybe cooked meals for him and washed his clothes or done so many things for him.

And not only for Paul, but for many others. And he says people like that, you must also make sure that she is not in any need. So, here was a sister who was probably in full-time ministry and traveling and serving and blessing people.

And then he says in verse 3, Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ. You remember Paul met them in Corinth. They were tent makers and Paul got in touch with them and they got converted.

And they became mighty servants of God. This husband-wife team is a unique husband-wife team. We don't read of another like that in the New Testament.

But every time you read of Priscila and Aquila and sometimes Aquila and Priscila, but they seem to always work together. A wonderful example for husbands and wives. And it appears to me from various passages, I don't have time to show it to you, that this sister probably knew more of the Scriptures than her husband.

But she never operated on her own. She operated under the headship of her husband. When Apollos was going wrong in his teaching, we read in Acts 18, it was Priscila and Aquila who called him home and guided him aright.

And not only that, it says here in verse 4, these are people who risked their necks for Paul's life. To whom not only I give thanks, but all the churches of the Gentiles. See, they were willing to take a risk for the sake of Paul.

We don't know how, but in some way or the other, they were willing to risk their lives for the sake of Paul. And Paul calls them his fellow workers. Who were his fellow workers? Not only Aquila, but Aquila's wife was a fellow worker of the Apostle Paul.

And he says, greet the church that is in their house. In Rome, there were many house churches. The church in Rome comprised not of one group that met in some big hall, you know, that the Christians were persecuted there, and they couldn't all meet together.

So the church in Rome comprised of a number of house churches. And you see a number of them listed here in chapter 16. And one of them was the house church that met in the house of Aquila and Priscilla.

God sovereignly arranged for Paul to meet with them, having the same trait as them. And that led to their conversion, that led to their being instructed in the scriptures. And finally, they went to Rome and they established a church there.

And Paul says, the whole church, churches of the Gentiles, give thanks for them. He says, greet Eponetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia. That is Asia Minor, that area of Turkey, which is today Turkey.

And that area, Paul says, there's this brother Eponetus, who has now come to Rome. He's a beloved brother of mine. He was the first convert to Christ from Asia, and he's come there.

Paul remembers these people who came to the Lord. You see, Paul's concern, not only for churches, but for individuals. A true father who is concerned for individuals and not just for large groups.

That is the mark of a true servant of God. And every one of us who serves God must follow Paul's example here. Let's turn today to Romans chapter 16 and verse 6. In our last study, we were considering, from the beginning of chapter 16, how Paul mentions a number of names to whom he sends greetings or commends them for being accepted by the church in Rome.

He began with Phoebe and then greeted Prisca and Aquila, who were already in Rome, and Eponetus, who was the first convert to Asia, in verse 5. And now he speaks about Mary, verse 6. He's got something good to say about everyone. He talks about those who work, and he talks about those who work hard. There is a difference.

Paul once said about Timothy, in Philippians 2, verse 21 onwards, he says, I don't have anyone like Timothy. Everybody seeks their own, except Timothy, who really seeks your good. He's genuinely concerned about your welfare, and he seeks the things that are Christ's.

So Paul had a number of co-workers, and they were not all of the same level of devotion to Christ and to the people. Here is Mary, who worked hard for the Roman Christians. He says, Remember me to Mary, who's worked so hard.

And then he talks about Andronicus and Junius, my kinsmen, relatives of Paul, who were in prison with him somewhere, and who are outstanding among the apostles, which probably means they are highly respected by the apostles, and who were also in Christ before me. These were relatives of Paul, Andronicus and Junius, who were converted long before Paul himself was, highly respected believers, who were obviously faithful to the Lord, and had spent time in prison along with Paul. Paul recognizes them as people who were in Christ before him, and he says, Greet them.

He says in verse 8, Greet Ampliatus, who is my beloved in the Lord. He says, Greet Urbanus, another fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved brother. Greet Apellas, a man whom Jesus himself approves.

Think of the encouragement Apellas must have got when Paul writes like that about him. Greet those who are the household of Aristobulus. Now, this is probably another house church in Rome, that was meeting in the house of Aristobulus.

It's probably referring not just to the family of Aristobulus, but all those who are in that house, and perhaps all those who are meeting together in the house of Aristobulus, which is another house church in Rome. And then he says, Greet Herodian, my kinsman, another relative of Paul, who was converted. Greet him.

These were all in Rome. And then he speaks about another, a third house church in Rome, in the house of Narcissus. Greet those of the Narcissus house, who are in the Lord.

That could include slaves, that could include his family, it could include a number of people who are meeting in the house of Narcissus. It's amazing the work that God did in Rome in establishing so many house churches, in different homes across the city. It started with just a few people, but gradually people started meeting in homes, in the midst of all that persecution, and there were house churches all across that city.

Then he says in verse 12, Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, sisters, obviously, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis, the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord. Again, some sisters who were working very hard for the Lord, and who were zealous workers and witnesses, obviously, to a number of other women in Rome, and no doubt, people through whom many other ladies were brought to Christ, in that city of Rome.

Then he talks about Rufus. Verse 13, Greet Rufus for me, one whom the Lord has picked out, he says, a choice man in the Lord, and greet his mother, who has been such a mother to me also. Paul had lost his whole family when he came to Christ.

They had all turned him out because he had given up his Jewish faith. But like the Lord promised that if you lose a mother, you'll have a hundred in exchange in the church, and here was one of those whom Paul had, who was like a mother to him. Then he says in verse 14, Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Petrobud, Hermes, and the brethren with them.

Here's another house church. The brethren with them, verse 14, means another group of believers that was meeting along with these brothers who were probably leading that fellowship. And then in verse 15 he says, Give my love to Philologus and Julia, and Nereus and his sister, again some sisters and brothers, and probably husbands and wives, and Olympus, and another house church.

All the saints who are with them. So we see a number of house churches in Rome, all meeting together in different homes because they did not have the opportunity like we have today to meet in large buildings and things like that. But they met in little house churches.

It was one church in Rome meeting in a number of churches in the groups of these different people. And even though Paul had never been to Rome, he had such a living interest in what was going on in Rome that he found out about all these people. And remember, in those days, communication was not very quick.

But when a man had a burden, he could find out from people who had traveled to Rome, and he found out about all these churches. And I believe the reason why he remembered these names when he wrote the letter was what? He was praying for them. We remember those whom we pray for.

In a particular city, when you send a letter, you greet especially those whom you are burdened to pray for. He was burdened to pray for these different churches that were meeting in different homes, that God would preserve them and keep them true to Him. Different brothers and different sisters.

Paul remembered them in prayer, and that's how he greeted them. So we see something about Paul's private prayer life in these 15 verses. How he remembered these people.

Verse 16. Greet one another with a holy kiss. They embraced each other those days, the brothers among the brothers, sisters among sisters.

And he says, All the churches of Christ greet you. Now he's finished all his greetings to the people in Rome, and he concludes with a few final warnings. He's never tired of warning the church of dangers that the church faces.

And this letter to the Romans was obviously meant for all these house churches. And he says, I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned and turn away from them. This has been a problem right from the 1st century on through to the 20th century and the 21st.

Those who cause divisions and those who cause hindrances, who cause problems, those who upset people's faith, those who teach things about Jesus contrary to what you learned, turn away from them. Now remember, this is written at a time when people didn't have a written Bible. And you can imagine, in a day when we have the scriptures, how difficult it is to distinguish true doctrine from the false.

Can you imagine how much more difficult it was in a time when people didn't have a Bible, when the New Testament was not fully written? There were just a few writings of the New Testament and very, very few people had copies of those parchments. All handwritten, very expensive to do and have, to make copies. And there were very few people who had them.

And in such a time, Paul was very concerned that these people should not be deceived. He says, anybody who teaches you contrary to the teaching is usually doing that with some ulterior motive. He says in verse

18, Such men are not slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ.

They are not working for our Lord. They are only working for gain for themselves. And that is one good way by which we can discern a false teacher.

You know, it's been a great help to me to understand this, as to how the early apostles protected people from false doctrine in a time when the Bible was not easily available. And that is a good guideline for us today. Is a man interested in gaining something for himself? The Living Bible paraphrases it like this, Such teachers are not working for our Lord Jesus, verse 18, but only want gain for themselves.

What are they out for? Some gain, usually financial gain, monetary gain. There is a little writing that has come down to us from the second century. It's not part of the Bible.

But it's one of those early little writings called the Teaching of the Apostles. And one of the things it says there, in that writing, is, if anyone comes to you claiming to be an apostle or a prophet, and he asks you for money, you can write him off as a false apostle and a false prophet. That was a simple test.

And it was a very good test, because they didn't have the Bible to check people's doctrines with. But this was the one doctrine by which you could identify a false teacher and a false prophet. And what a need there is for this identifying mark in our day.

Does somebody ask you for money? For himself? Or his ministry? Well, he's a false prophet. Paul asked money for others. Never once did the apostles ask money for themselves.

They always asked for the poor saints in Jerusalem or somebody else. And it's proper to ask people to give money to other people. But it's totally wrong.

You never read of Jesus asking people to support him, or Paul asking people to support him. And he says, that is the mark of someone who is leading you astray from the truth. They are seeking their own gain.

They are slaves of their own appetites. Beware of such people. There is a need for such a warning even in our day.

Let's turn today to Romans chapter 16 and verse 18. In verse 17, we saw in our last study that Paul was warning the brothers in Rome against those who cause divisions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you have learned to turn away from them. What should be our attitude to those who cause divisions in the church? Very clear.

If you believe that the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit, turn away from them. If you use your human understanding, you'd say, well, let's show them some love. Well, you can disobey the Scriptures if you want.

But I'd rather obey the Scriptures when it says, turn away from them. Stay away from them who cause divisions. The sad thing is that many Christians try to be more spiritual than Christ himself.

More spiritual than the Holy Spirit and more spiritual than God. And that's why they cause a lot of problems. A lot of your love is human love.

The best thing you can do for someone who causes divisions to help him to understand his condition is to stay away from him altogether. Don't encourage him. If you want, correct him.

Rebuke him. But stay away from him. That's what the Bible says.

Turn away. And I want to turn away from those who cause divisions. And I don't care what he thinks or what anybody else thinks.

I'm more interested to know whether I'm obeying God. Because people who are slaves of their own appetites, people who are trying to make gain in the name of Christ, there were a lot of people who were claiming to serve God in the temple in Jesus' time. And they were only making money in the temple, out of the poor people.

What did Jesus do? Go fellowship with them? No. He not only turned away from them, He turned them out of the temple. And there we see the attitude Jesus had in the temple towards those who were making money for themselves in the name of God.

And if you want to be Christ-like, you must have the same attitude today to those who are serving their own appetites, verse 18, who are seeking their own gain. He says, Such people, with smooth and flattering speech, they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. There are a lot of people in Christendom today who are unsuspecting, simple believers.

And just like in the first century, such believers are deceived by the smooth, flattering talk. Flattery has always been a weapon that Satan has used to lead people astray. A true servant of God never flatters.

Jesus never flattered anybody. Paul never flattered anybody. When you read his commendations of these people that we just considered in chapter 16, he wasn't flattering.

There's a difference between genuine appreciation and Paul had plenty of that. Jesus had plenty of that. Once when he saw faith in a Roman centurion, he said, I've never seen faith like this anywhere in Israel.

What a commendation that was. He told Nathanael, there's a man in whom there is no hypocrisy at all. Imagine receiving a commendation like that from Christ.

Jesus appreciated, but he never flattered. Paul appreciated, he never flattered. A true servant of God appreciates goodness wherever he sees it in believers, but he never flatters.

Beware of flattery. Flattery is a net by which the devil traps people. We read of that in Proverbs.

So, flattering speech is something we got to beware of. The way to distinguish a false teacher is by his desire for his own gain, number one, as we considered last time, and secondly, by his flattery of you, by his smooth words. There'll be no hardness in his message.

There will not be the strictness of God in his message. It'll be smooth words, flattering words, and seeking his own gain. He's interested in your money, not in your soul.

And you can be pretty sure that people who are interested in your money, people who flatter you, and people who preach smooth words to you, when you see all three of them together, there you got a deceiver. Stay away from them. Avoid them.

Because they deceive people. But he says in contrast, the report of your obedience, verse 19, has reached everywhere. What a wonderful testimony these Roman Christians had.

That their obedience to the faith, not just their belief in Jesus, but their obedience. It's one thing for it to be reported that so many people accepted the Lord. It's quite another thing if there's a report of obedience to God that spreads everywhere that these Roman Christians are obedient Christians.

The report of your obedience has reached everywhere. And he says, I'm just rejoicing over you to hear all that. And he says, I want to give you one more exhortation.

I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. Now that's a very, very important exhortation. What does it mean to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil? It means that we must exercise our minds to discover ways of being good and doing good.

When you hear of someone who has done some good somewhere, study that and see if you can do something like that yourself. That's how you become wise in what is good. When you read something in the scriptures, use your mind to think about some good that you can do to other people.

There is an exhortation like that in Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 24. It says, let us use our mind to consider how to stimulate people to love and to good works. That's something we need to think of a lot.

And then, what about evil? He says, as far as evil is concerned, you don't have to study that at all. You just be totally innocent and ignorant almost concerning evil. That means we don't have to find out what all evil people are doing.

Now, some Christians like to read reports of what evil other people did. You know what's the result? It pollutes your mind. You read about in the newspapers of someone who raped someone and you want to read all those details.

How does that help you? And you afterwards have problems with your thoughts because you read all those filthy details in the newspaper. You were not innocent concerning evil. Why do you need to know all those details? Why do you need to know what somebody did to somebody else? This is how many Christians live defeated lives.

This is the reason. Because they don't steer clear of reports of evil. It's like if you were reading a magazine and then you turn to one page and there is some immodestly picture of an immodestly dressed woman there.

What do you think the Holy Spirit will say to you at that moment? I know what He'll tell you. He'll tell you to turn the page. Whether you listen to Him or not is another thing.

We're to be innocent concerning what's evil. We don't need to discover all the evil that's going on. Look at the amount of evil that comes across the television screen in our day.

In the advertisements and in so many other things you can be watching a cricket match and in the middle of that comes this advertisement. How do you seek to keep your mind innocent of what is evil? Do you want to be an effective instrument in God's hands? A useful member of the body of Christ? Listen to this exhortation. Be wise in what is good.

Think about ways in which your life can be pure. In which you can be good to other people. And a whole lot of evil.

Just leave it. Leave it. You don't need to know about it.

Avoid it. Don't need to read about it. Don't need to see it.

Don't need to know anything about it. We know there's evil in the world. There's plenty of evil.

There's all types of evil. How do we get edified and built up by knowing all those details? When people come to you if you're a servant of the Lord and this has happened to me. People come to me and say, Brother, I want to just share some of my sins with you.

And I say, No, thank you. I don't want to hear your sins. No.

Why should I pollute my mind listening to you? Go and confess it to God and He forgives you. Don't have any desire to listen to the stories of other people. And He says, If you live like this, here is a wonderful promise.

This is where the Gospel message really ends. Romans 16, 20. This is the ultimate purpose of the Gospel.

The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet. Sin began way there in Genesis chapter 3 and God promised there that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head. And here's a wonderful promise that the final crushing is going to be under the feet of believers.

There's a sense in which Jesus defeated Satan on the cross. True. All Satan's power was stripped from him on the cross.

That's part of the Gospel. The Son of God was manifested, we read in 1 John 3, verses 5 and 8, to take away our sins and to destroy the works of the devil. Those are the two purposes with which He was manifested.

To take away our sins and to destroy the works of the devil. And on the cross, He not only took away our sins, but He took away Satan's power. And that victory of Calvary has got to be established by the church wherever a church is planted.

Are you part of a church? Are you leading a church? Do you know what God's purpose is for your church? That the victory of Calvary might be established in your locality. You don't have to win the victory, that's already won on the cross. But you've got to establish that victory in Jesus' name over the influence of Satan in your area.

Satan influences your area with darkness. And you've got to establish a light there that drives the darkness out. You may be just 5 people or 10 people, but it's like a little bulb burning in a dark area that brings light and those who want the light will come to you.

God of peace. That's very important. He speaks about the God of peace in chapter 15.33 and here in chapter 16.20. I'll tell you something.

If you're not at peace in your heart as far as your sins are concerned, if you're not at peace with other believers and other human beings, you'll never be able to crush Satan. It's the God of peace who crushes Satan under our feet. This is the ultimate purpose of the Gospel.

Justification, victory over sin, sanctification, God's sovereignty, God's faithfulness, the unity of believers, the oneness of believers, accepting one another, chapter 14.15. Everything. What is the culmination? That ultimately Satan is crushed under such a church and defeated and the Lord's purposes are fulfilled when

Satan and his hosts are put to flight. Long that your church will be a church like that that crushes Satan under your feet.

May peace reign in your church so that the God of peace can fulfill the ultimate purpose of the Gospel by crushing Satan under your feet as a believer and as a local church. Let's turn today to Romans chapter 16 and verse 20 for our concluding study in this letter to the Romans. We saw in our last study this verse the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet as the ultimate purpose of the Gospel.

Everything that Paul was trying to explain beginning in chapter 1 ends here. This is the final purpose that the church is triumphant over Satan. Jesus said, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

That is God's purpose. And everything that he has said earlier about personal victory over sin, freedom from legalism, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the unity of believers, accepting one another is ultimately so that God can have a body on earth that crushes Satan under its feet. The Bible says in Ephesians in chapter 1 that Christ is the head of the church.

And then it says in Ephesians 1, 22 and 23 but we the church are his body. And it says there that all things have been put under Jesus' feet. Now when you read that and meditate on it, think about it again, Ephesians 1, 22 and 23.

Christ is the head over the church and all things have been put in subjection under his feet. Now where are the feet? Are they in the head or in the body? In the body. So the point there is that everything has been put under the feet of the church.

That's what we need to see and that's what we read here in Romans 16, 20. That Satan too has to be under our feet. When Satan confronts you, you've got to tell him, your place is under my feet, Satan.

For years you sat on my head running my life. You're not going to do that anymore. You're going to be under my feet.

Now I'll tell you, the devil doesn't like to hear that. And he doesn't like anyone reminding him of that. And if you want to get the devil infuriated, just tell him every day that your place is under my feet, Satan.

Resist him in Jesus' name. It will strengthen your own faith. Satan's got no right to touch us.

He's been defeated on the cross. There's no reason why any of you listening to this today needs to be defeated by Satan in any area of your life. Satan needs to have no foothold in your personal life, in your financial life, in your home life, in your church life, anywhere.

There's only one place that Almighty God has ordained for the devil. And that's under the feet of the church and under the feet of the believer. And God is going to do it.

It's not your business. You resist the devil in Jesus' name. Who's going to crush Satan under your feet? Read Romans 16, verse 20.

It's going to be your feet, but God's going to do it. Say, Lord, I do it. I submit to the headship of Christ.

Crush Satan under my feet. And the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Let's never come short of this, the ultimate purpose of the Gospel.

Don't give Satan any foothold in your life. Don't let him leave anything in your life which has not been settled, cleansed. If there's sin in your life, confess it, cleanse it.

If there's an area where you need to ask forgiveness or return some money, give it back so that there's no area in your life where Satan can have a claim. And may the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord be with you. And then, in conclusion, there he writes a number of greetings from his co-workers.

Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you. So do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my relatives. Paul seems to have a number of relatives who were converted.

And the one who was writing this letter, like Paul's scribe, Paul very rarely wrote letters himself. Others wrote it for him. I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

Gaius, who is a host to me and to the whole church, greets you. There was a brother who had a large home, probably a rich brother, who was a host to the whole church where Paul was writing this from. Erastus, the city treasurer, greets you.

There was a brother who had a very high place in society, financial advisor to the governor of the city. He was a believer in the Lord. And Quartus, the brother.

It's a wonderful thing that in the church these people were ordinary brothers. City treasurer was just found his place in the midst of all the other brothers. That's how the church is to be.

Verse 24. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

And in conclusion, like a doxology, he says, Now unto him, unto God, who is able to establish you according to my gospel. Paul loved to call the gospel, my gospel. It was his gospel because he had experienced it.

And it can be your gospel, my dear friend, if you experience it. And you can share your gospel with others. This gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past.

This is another thing that Paul loved to talk about. That this wonderful news of the gospel, for so many years, people knew nothing about it. In the entire Old Testament times, prophets did not know this.

Great men like Moses and Elisha, and Elijah, and John the Baptist, and Daniel. Some of the greatest men in the Old Testament knew nothing about this gospel. It was absolutely hidden from them.

And he says, if you know it today, you are party to a secret that God had kept for ages. It's exciting to know one of God's secrets. That is, that you can have your sins forgiven.

All that is mentioned in this book of Romans. What is that? The mystery of the gospel? The secret of this wonderful gospel? That you can stand before God just as if you had never sinned in your whole life. That's justification.

You can stand before God accepted as fully as Jesus Christ Himself is accepted. This is what it means to be justified. To be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

This is what it means when it says, God sees me in Christ. He sees me as Christ almost. Clothed with His righteousness.

It's unbelievable, but true. That I can be free from the power of sin that has ruled my life for so many years. What a tremendous message this is.

That I can live led by the Holy Spirit. As many as are led by the Spirit of God. They are the sons of God.

We read in Romans 8. That I can live recognizing that God sovereignly chose me. Romans chapter 9. Sovereign from all eternity. He picked me out.

That I can be clothed with Christ's righteousness. That I can live assured of God's faithfulness. Romans 11.

That won't let me go. That I can, as a result of all this, present my body and have my body and my mind under God's control. And be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

This is all hidden in the Old Testament. That I can love my enemies. They never knew how to do that in the Old Testament.

That I can bless those who curse me. This is all a mystery. Hidden in the Old Testament.

They never knew how to do it. We can do it. We don't have to be afraid of secular authorities anymore.

Or their rules and regulations. We submit to them. We respect them.

Romans 13. And the most wonderful truth of all that we can be united with people who are totally different from us. Romans 14 and 15.

Jews and Gentiles. People who have differing views on various things. If we are in Christ, we can become one.

This was hidden in Old Testament times. It's a mystery. Being kept secret for so long.

And finally, what we saw in Romans 16.20. That Satan can be crushed under our feet. That was not possible in the Old Testament. You never read of one single Old Testament man fighting with the devil.

They only fought with the Philistines and the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Syrians and the Egyptians. They never fought the devil. But here is this wonderful mystery that you don't have to fight Hittites or Philistines or any type of human being anymore.

You don't have to fight your relatives or your neighbors or anybody. You can concentrate all your energy on the devil and that solves all your problems. And the devil can be under your feet.

This is a mystery. Hidden in Old Testament times. But now, it's manifested.

And the question you need to ask yourself is whether you are living in the good of experiencing all these wonderful things that's spoken of in this wonderful letter. According to the commandment of the Eternal God has been now made known to all the nations leading to the obedience of faith. You remember when we studied Romans chapter 1 we mentioned that this phrase the obedience of faith comes there right at the beginning in Romans 1.5. And here at the end, Romans 16.26 the obedience of faith.

We can say that the whole letter to Romans is bracketed with this phrase. The obedience of faith. In the Old Testament it was obedience.

It was legalistic obedience. But now, it's the obedience of faith. Faith means I trust God in His wisdom that what He's commanded is good for me.

I obey joyfully. And faith also means dependence upon God that God gives me help and strength and grace to obey His commandments. So obedience is not an Old Testament thing.

It's part of this New Testament gospel. But it's the obedience of faith and of joy. And having concluded this wonderful gospel in this way, Paul says finally to the only wise God through Jesus Christ be the glory forever.

And that is something we must never forget. That when we experience all these wonderful things, when we get understanding on this mystery, and I believe it is a mystery, the gospel, many people have understood only a part of it, forgiveness of sins. But if you have followed through in the study in the gospel according to Paul in Romans, you've seen many, many, many other aspects of the gospel beyond forgiveness, justification, victory, cleansing God's sovereignty, God's faithfulness, unity with others and all that, and Satan being crushed under our feet.

And when you know this, give the glory to God. When you experience it in your life, give the glory to God. When you experience victory over sin, say what it says in the last verse of Romans, to the only wise God through Jesus Christ be the glory forever.

When you find yourself part of a wonderful church that God is building in your locality, that's united with one another, and where Satan is crushed, be sure to give the glory to God. So let's conclude on that note, to the only wise God through Jesus Christ be all the glory forever. Amen.

So be it. Amen.

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