



We left off last time at Chapter 12. (Read chapter 12)

Vs. 1-2 – In these verses Paul make it clear that in light of the gift of salvation, believers must respond with whole hearted commitment. We must become servants of to Him. We present ourselves as living sacrifices to God. These verses are the foundation of what we say every time we celebrate Holy Communion., words known as “the prayer of self-oblation” “ And here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto Thee”.

Vs. 2 – Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. The Christian transformation, takes place “ by the renewing of our minds”.

If vs. 1 & 2 are about our attitude towards God, Vs. 3-16 are all about our attitude towards other Christians, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Vs. 3 – deals with the issue of the believer’s humility. “do not think more highly of yourself than you ought to.” This should be done according to the measure of faith given to us. To each person, God has given a measure of faith, so this advice is intended for all, to the greatest of saints who has the largest measure of faith, to the person who has the least measure of faith.

Vs. 4 – Paul deals with the topic of spiritual gifts. Each of us is gifted and are called to use our gift to God’s glory within the church. There is to be unity of all the members within the church. We are one body with many members. We do not all have the same function.

Vs. 5 – We are one body “in Christ”, with diverse gifts to be used, we belong to each other.

Vs. 6 – This diversity of gifts must be used within the church, not wasted. Every person is important. Everyone’s gifts are valued. If we have the gift of prophesy – we must use it.

Vs. 7 – If we have the gift of service, if we have the gift of teaching, - use them.

Vs. 8 – If we have the gift of exhortation, then exhort! If we have the gift of having financial means, we must give in liberality, he who gives aid, do it with zeal, he who does acts of mercy, do it with cheerfulness.

Vs. 9 & 10 – Love the members of the family in the Church. “let love be genuine”. Amen to that! Hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good. In Vs. 9 & 10 Paul moves from possession of a persons spiritual gifts that he or she has, to the values all Christians should have. Hate evil, love good.

Vs. 10 – Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Paul is almost saying have a desire to compete with one another for doing good, outdoing each other in your love for each other.

Vs. 11 – Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. What great advise to Christians. Never flag in zeal, or in enthusiasm. Let the H.S. indwell within you, which will give you the result of joy! The H. S. is the fuel for our spiritual engines. That engine is meant to result in our commitment to serve Christ within the church.

Vs. 12 – Rejoice in your hope. The Christian life if a joy filled life. Rejoice! The Christian life is a life of hope! This is so because we all know how the story ends, it ends in God’s glory for eternity. We can never therefore be discouraged. Our eyes are fixed on Him at all times. So we can be patient in our times of tribulation, we need to be constant in our prayers.

Vs. 13 – Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.

Vs. 14 - Most likely, Paul here moves to those outside the community of faith and to how we should treat them. Other scholars say no, Paul is still speaking about those who attack us within the body of Christ. It is hard to say. If he is talking about attacks within the church, it is a sad commentary about the church. Regardless of whether it is outside the

church or within the church, Paul says: "bless those who persecute you, do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep". Have empathy, be in tune with what your fellow church members are going through. Care about and be present to the situation your brothers and sisters in Christ are going through and minister to them.

Vs. 15 & 16 - Live in harmony with each other, don't be haughty, which implies not judging your brother and sister in Christ. Some people will struggle through life, they will not be living the fullness of God's intended life, but Paul says do not forsake them, associate with the lowly and those struggling. Never be conceited about yourself. You may have your life more together, but if so, it is God's grace, not your achievement. Everyone dislikes conceited people who think they are better than others.

Vs. 17 – 21 – These verses are definitely about living life with non Christians. "repay no one evil for evil." Paul may be thinking about Jesus admonition that the old Jewish custom of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", is over. Christian life has no place for "getting even" with those who treat us poorly. Paul says do not think of revenge, think nobly in the sight of all.

Vs. 18 – "If possible live peaceably with all." "As far as it depends upon you", is an interesting phrase. Paul is saying in effect – it is not a pretty world we live in. People who do not know Christ, live by different value systems from Christians. We may find ourselves entangled with "the world, the flesh and the devil". Sometimes we have to take those forces on. But as much as possible, live peaceably with people who are contrary.

Vs. 19 – Paul says to us – "never avenge yourselves", leave that to the wrath of God. "vengeance is mine", saith the Lord. So it is so very important that we let go of our rage and anger at those who have hurt us deeply and causes us pain. God will repay them.

Vs. 20 – The way to live is to meet your enemies with the values of Jesus. If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink. For by so doing you will be heaping burning coals on his head.

Vs. 21 – Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Chapter 12 of Romans is one of the greatest chapters in all of Holy Scripture for guiding our lives in a way that cannot help but lead us to joy and a fulfilled life. Thanks be to God!