

St. Paul's Letter to the Romans

Collect for – Epiphany VI

O GOD, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life; Grant us, we beseech thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure; that, when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth ever, one God, world without end.

Amen

Questions on Romans 12

Remember that last week we finished last week with a passage that may or may not have been written by Paul. Or it may be that it was Paul but enhanced to make a more politically correct so that the Christians would be seen as acceptable to the Roman Authority. Now we shift to a section that is surely Pauline. All of the thoughts of this passage are found in other writings of Paul.

I would remind you for I Corinthians 13

1Cor.13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Romans 13:8-10

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

I. The sole debt of a Christian is to Love as Christ loved us – no part of the Christian life stands apart from this requirement

II. Love fulfills the Law

Romans 13:11-14

Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

I. The General Exhortation - Do not be conformed to the world

A. Recognize the Time (*Kairos*) Greek word meaning the right or opportune moment vs. (*Chronos*) – Measurement of time - regular time we get chronograph from this word

1. Specifically Paul is again referring to the overlap time – Death and sin still exist the Kingdom is and yet is not yet
2. There is a expectation of the statement the Kingdom of God will fully prevail

B. Proper Apparel for this Time

1. Cast off the works of darkness
2. Put on the armor of light

C. Day/ Night Imagery Continues

1. From the external (Clothing) to the internal (actions)
2. Our conduct is to be acceptable in the day

D. Referring to Romans 6:3-4 Paul tells us to put on Christ

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Fully accept the nature of Baptism what has been done for you in this Sacrament and how you have been changed by the nature of this event.

Romans 14: 1-12

As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand. One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So each of us shall give account of himself to God.

I. Tolerance for one another

What is the difference to Paul in tolerance and having a lasifare attitude?

A. Twin arguments

1. Do not belittle
2. Do not pass judgment

II. The Weak in Faith

A. Weak in faith presupposes different levels of conviction

B. Weak in faith does not mean unbelief, rather not allowing faith to permeate all parts of one's life

Can we think of examples? Lack of Charity, and of the “isms”, pride

II. The issues of Eating and Drinking

A. The focus is on meat – remember the sacrificing of animals in Corinth

1. Those that do not eat meat are not to be belittled those who do (For keeping some Pre-Christian Thoughts – Jewish dietary requirements)
2. Those who don't should not judge those who do (For exercising their freedom as Christian to eat all foods)

B. Mutual tolerance is expected for building up the entire Community of Faith

III. Only the Lord will Judge

A. Paul refers again to the idea of slavery in Christ

B. A fellow domestic servant would never judge the actions of fellow servant – that is for the master

IV. The setting aside of Day for Honor

A. Again we are considering the keeping of the Jewish Holidays (This is not an argument about the date of Easter or Christmas Day – Why?)

B. The external celebrations or lack of them is not important

C. The internal disposition is critical – whatever is done should be done for the Lord

Keeping a holiday or ignoring the “Old Way” both are valid if done for the Lord and with tolerance for those who do or do not.

V. Living and Dying in the Lord

A. We no longer belong to ourselves, but to God through Jesus

B. All other allegiances ended with Baptism

C. What is true for us is true of all believers – Brotherhood of Man

VI. Paul ends this thought with a distinctive Christological note:

A. The Prophecy of Isaiah

Isaiah 45:23 - *By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.'*

B. The Christological Hymn in Philippians

Philippians 2:5-11- 5] *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

C. Note in these passage the twin issues – the sovereignty of God and the relationship in Christ we are to have with each other.

Romans 14: 13-23

Then let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for any one who thinks it unclean. If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. So do not let your good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy

Spirit; he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for any one to make others fall by what he eats; it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble. The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God; happy is he who has no reason to judge himself for what he approves. But he who has doubts is condemned, if he eats, because he does not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

I. The Review and summary of the exhortation

A. The faithful are not to judge one another

B. We are to avoid being a stumbling block to others

C. The strong in faith have responsibility to lead by example

1. There is nothing that is unclean, but making an idol out of eating or not eating

2. The pursuit of peace is to build up each other personally by relationship

II. The Kingdom of God

A. The usual meaning: the Kingdom to come the result of the end time and judgment, the reward of the faithful

B. In this case Paul is referring to the nature of living the Christian Life within a community – whereby the community represents to the world what the Kingdom will be and those living in the community experience a foretaste of the eternal Kingdom

II. The Summary of this section is that Paul teaches that the truly moral action is that which proceeds from the internal (Motivation- freedom of will and Divine Guidance) to the external (action) that engages the entire person. That all persons in the Christian Community should act in such a way to make real in this time the evidence of the Kingdom of God as a witness to each other and the world.