

ROMANS CH.12

MAJOR THEME: THE GOSPEL: THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED IN TRANSFORMED LIVING

Hymn: # 324 (TB's) It is Well With My Soul #436 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say #491 When We Walk with the Lord

(Modified Outline of John A. Witmer- Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, Dallas Theological Seminary; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; SP Publications; 1983; p.438)

- 1) INTRODUCTION AND THEME (1:1-17)
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 - 6) **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED IN TRANSFORMED LIVING (Ch. 12:1-15:13)** Just when you thought it was "safe to go back in the water" and that Paul would take a breather from the torrential outpouring of doctrine in chapters 1-11, in true Pauline fashion he "keeps the pedal to the medal". However, he now shifts from the doctrinal to the practical application of what he has taught. But he's not going to let up on the volume or depth of teaching even if his focus has shifted. Paul was a full on theologian and a full on disciple maker. So keep your seatbelt buckled for Ch.12.
 - A) **The Basic Consecration (Ch. 12:1-2)**
 - i) If you were forced to sum up the entire Christian life in just two verses, you would be hard pressed to find a more complete Pauline summation than these two. In view of God's mercy, which Paul concluded is God's Sovereign plan for all men, Jew and Gentile alike (11:32) we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.
 - (1) Offering as in 6:12-13

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- (2) Bodies as in 6:12 (all our parts as weapons for God)
- (3) Living Sacrifices
 - (a) In the Bible there are only two “living sacrifices” and they help us understand what Paul means. The first is Isaac (Gen 22); the second is our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaac willingly put himself on the altar and would have died in obedience to God’s will, but the Lord sent a ram to take his place. Isaac “died” just the same- he died to self and willingly yielded himself to the will of God. When he got off that Altar Isaac was a “living sacrifice” to the Glory of God. Of course, our Lord Jesus is the perfect illustration of a “living sacrifice”, because He actually died as a sacrifice to His Father’s will. But He rose again. And today he is in Heaven as a “living sacrifice”...
 - (b) Isaac and Jesus shared this in common experience, they both yielded to God’s will. For you and me to offer our bodies as livening sacrifices, we must do the same. Do you want God’s will? Do you want it more than your will? Do you know what God’s will is?
 - (i) 1 Thes. 4:3 “It is God's will that you should be sanctified”
- (4) Holy- Sanctified; set apart for divine use.
- (5) This is your spiritual act of worship.
 - (a) Lit. λογικὴν (logical/reasonable) λατρείαν (sacrifice; service-worship)
 - (i) In other words it just plain “makes sense” to serve (6:18-22) by offering Him our bodies and surrendering our wills to His will.
 - (b) The only other occurrence of this word is in 1 Pet. 2:2 “Like newborn babies, crave pure (λογικὸν- spiritual, reasonable; sincere) spiritual milk (of the word), so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.”
- (6) The Apostle Peter uses similar imagery when he speaks of us as “living stones” (1Pet. 2:5) that are being built together into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. These spiritual sacrifice include:
 - (a) Christ as Fulfilment of the 5 Levitical Offerings in Leviticus Ch. 1-5
 - (b) Christ as Fulfilment of the 7 Feasts in Leviticus Ch. 23 (Plus Hanukkah and Purim)
 - (i) Passover- Crucifixion
 - (ii) Unleavened Bread- Burial
 - (iii) First Fruits- Resurrection
 - (iv) Pentecost- Holy Spirit and Harvest
 - (v) Trumpets- Rapture of the Church
 - (vi) Atonement- The 2nd Coming
 - (vii) Tabernacles- The Kingdom
 - (viii) Hanukkah- Temple Reconsecrated/ Coming of Light- Dec 25th
 - (ix) Purim- Defeat of wicked Haman and Deliverance of Israel
 - (c) Sinners saved by preaching the Gospel (Rom. 15:16)
 - (d) Our bodies (Rom. 12:1)
 - (e) Praise- the fruit of lips confessing His Name (Heb. 13:15)
 - (f) Doing good and sharing with others (Heb. 13:16)
 - (g) Material or financial supply to apostolic need (Phil. 4:18)
- ii) V.2 J.B. Phillips captures this verse with his paraphrase “...Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould,”
 - (1) “Conformed”- lit. συσχηματίζω (together + schematic) meaning shaped together with the plan and form of the world.

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- (2) "World"- lit. the age. It means a time span characterised by a specific type and quality of existence. In other words it's the "cultural moment" characterised today by SSM; LGBIT agendas; globalization; cashless society; debt ridden living for pleasure; and the list can go on and on. We learn a couple of more things about "this age"/ "the world" from James and John:
- (a) James 4:4 "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world (*that is, this Christ rejecting "cultural moment" of the age and its Godless priorities and agenda*) is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God"
 - (b) 1 John 2:15-17 "Do not love the world (*that is, this Christ rejecting "cultural moment" of the age and its Godless priorities and agenda*) or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."
- (3) "Transformed" – lit. μεταμορφόω- meaning to change into another form (not conformed). We get the English word metamorphosis from this.
- (a) A butterfly is a transformed caterpillar that underwent metamorphosis. It hid itself inside a cocoon (Christ) as a caterpillar and emerged as a butterfly. It was transformed into a completely different form of existence; from a leaf eating, crawling, and wormlike creature into a nectar drinking, flying kaleidoscope of colour. This is exactly the level of transformation the Scriptures have in mind for us.
- (4) "Renewing of your mind"- lit. ἀνακαίνωσις. The only other occurrence of this word is in Titus 3:5 "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit"
- (a) The primary instrument of the Holy Spirit's renewing us is the Scriptures; as we just saw the "pure (λογικὸν- spiritual, reasonable; sincere) spiritual milk (of the word)".
- (5) The result of this "mind renewal" is that we will then be able to test and approve what God's will is; a will that is marked by that which is always good, pleasing and perfect.
- (a) Have you had enough experience in life to realize that your will is, more often than not, bad, unpleasant and far from perfect?
 - (b) One of the reasons I've heard people give for not believing in Jesus is because they "don't want to be brain washed". While I appreciate their right desire to avoid drinking the "Kool-Ade" of a cult, it is nevertheless a "brain washing" that is required. To not allow yourself to become "brainwashed" through the renewal of your mind is to remain "brain polluted" leading to the polar opposite of God's Righteousness Revealed through Transformed Living.
 - (c) Wanting God's will, knowing God's will and doing God's will is the Righteousness of God Revealed in Transformed Living....it is both the starting place and the goal of doctrinal application in living as a Christian.
 - (d) When D.L. Moody was just starting in the ministry he heard Henry Varley, a British revivalist say, "The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to Him." Moody that night said, "By God's grace I'll be that man!"
 - (i) Will you be that man or woman?

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B) Service Through Gifts of the Spirit (Ch. 12:3-8)

- i) Paul now addresses every single believer to consider his gifts and his attitude towards their use in the Body of Christ which is His Church.
- ii) He mentions seven gifts (a non-exhaustive list) by name
 - (1) Prophesying
 - (a) "One's prophesying is to be done in proportion to his faith; a better translation would be "in agreement to THE (not his) faith. That is, prophesying – communicating God's message, to strengthen, encourage, and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3) is to be in right relationship to the body of truth already given..." (John A. Witmer; Dallas Theological Seminary; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; SP Publications; 1983; p.488)
 - (2) Serving
 - (3) Teaching
 - (4) Encouraging
 - (5) Contributing
 - (6) Leadership
 - (7) Showing Mercy
- iii) V. 3 Paul says don't be lit. "high minded" but rather be "sober minded" in regards to the exercise of your gifts.
 - (1) Gifts, by definition, are nothing to be "high minded" about; that is to boast about or be "full of yourself" over. Why?
 - (a) You did nothing to earn it; it was GIVEN to you as gift.
 - (b) Gifts come with a responsibility to serve others with them.
 - (i) 1 Cor. 12:7—"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."
 - (c) Your gift is just one of many gifts in the Body.
 - (2) Equally, gifts are not to be downplayed or ignored.
 - (a) Hiding gifts under a bushel is just as bad setting them up on a pedestal.
 - (3) Do you know what your gift or gifts God has given you? Are you soberminded about those gifts? Are you serving other with those gifts?
 - (a) If not, can I encourage you to prayerfully consider this list as well as the gifts listed 1 Cor. 12 and Ephesians 4:7-16? Ask God to show you. Ask a spirit filled brother or sister what they think your gifts might be. Then for God's sake, literally, begin to serve the Body with your gift.
 - (4) When people ask me what MY gifts are, I usually answer YOU ARE! However, teaching and prophesying are my gifts to you.

C) Relating Within The Body of Christ (Ch. 12:9-16)

- i) Having discussed the attitude towards and the use of gifts, Paul now gives specific instructions on how believers are to relate to one another. It's as if he now opens a giant umbrella of Love over the Body of Christ. Looking up we see the gifts of the Spirit like the ribs providing shape and rigidity to the umbrella. Looking down we see the spirit of gifts; namely everything is to be done under the spirit of Love.
 - (1) Love - ἀγάπη is a noun here which Paul says MUST be "sincere"; lit- ἀνυπόκριτος meaning without hypocrisy; it was used of someone wearing a mask like a stage actor in disguise; not fake love; not sappy love; not selfish love.
 - (a) I believe this hypocritical; mask wearing; "shine you on" kind of love amongst believers is one of the most devastating and sinful things and has no place whatsoever within the Body.

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- (b) In fact, by definition, it is dangerously close to “suppressing the truth/reality” noted back in Ch.1 that warrants God’s wrath.
 - (c) As soon as we start putting on masks of hypocrisy, true life and koinonia-fellowship goes out the window and all we’re left with is “playing church”.
 - (d) Prov. 27:5 “Better is open rebuke than hidden love”. Better an honest “what you see is what you get”, than the “false self” hiding behind the fake, sappy, selfish mask of insincere love.
- ii) So what does sincere Love without hypocrisy look like within the Body of Christ? Well, here’s where you need to buckle up for Paul’s about to floor it! In the next 7 verses Paul uses more than a dozen Present Active Participles; that is verbs; action words ending in “–ing”. In other words these are happening, doing and vibrant actions. On top of that he includes several other present Active or Imperative verbs to describe and command putting this Love into action. Here we go:
- (1) Hating; utterly detesting evil
 - (2) Clinging- lit. “gluing yourself” to what is good
 - (3) Being devoted in a family type affection and brotherly love
 - (4) Esteeming- lit. προηγούμενοι- meaning to lead the way for others by passing on the right example, so others can follow the one “going first”... one another in honour;
 - (a) This is very different than “honouring one another above yourselves” with a “doormat mentality” or with a false humility that “shines people on”.
 - (5) Being diligent; that is quick to obey; not lagging or procrastinating
 - (6) Being zealous- lit. ζέοντες- meaning at boiling point in spirit; not luke-warm.
 - (7) Serving; as a bond servant
 - (8) Rejoicing in hope
 - (9) Being patient in affliction
 - (10) Being faithful in prayer
 - (11) Sharing; meaning contributing to needs
 - (12) Practicing hospitality- lit. φιλοξενίαν- meaning love of strangers; “to pursue as a skilled hunter the strangers in your midst”
 - (13) Blessing those who persecute you; the context here those within the Body of Christ who’s immaturity or sin make you want to “run away or flee because of their harassment, troubling, or maltreatment of you” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon)
 - (14) Do not curse
 - (15) Rejoice with the rejoicing
 - (16) Weep with the weeping
 - (17) Minding the same thing towards one another
 - (18) Minding not the haughty things
 - (19) Go along with the lowly; NIV is a good translation “be willing to associate with people of low position”
 - (20) Don’t be wise in yourself; don’t be conceited.
- iii) I think it is safe to say that Body Life according to the Spirit of Love is far from passive and hypocritical; it is a “happening” environment of truth based relationships.

D) Relating Outside The Body of Christ (Ch. 12:17-21)

- i) Paul now gives 6 clear directives for how to relate to those outside the Body Christ:
 - (1) Do not repay anyone evil for evil.
 - (a) Repaying evil for evil is an OT concept. But Jesus turned that around in the Sermon on the Mount:

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- (i) Matt. 5:43-45 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven."
- (2) Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.
 - (a) Paul himself demonstrated this when carrying a large sum of Gentile collected money back to Jerusalem for the famine relief of Jewish believers.
 - (i) 2 Co. 8:20-21 "We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men."
- (3) If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
 - (a) Harmony may not always be possible with everyone, but just make sure you're the one responsible for the lack of peace.
- (4) Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.
 - (a) David exemplified this on two separate occasions when he refused to take Saul's life when he had the chance. (1 Sam 24, 26:9-10)
- (5) On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."
 - (a) "The coals on the head may refer to a ritual in Egypt in which a person showed repentance by carrying a pan on his head. Helping rather than cursing an enemy may cause him to be ashamed and penitent" (John A. Witmer; Dallas Theological Seminary; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; SP Publications; 1983; p.490)
- (6) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
 - (a) Here we come full circle back to v. 2 of this chapter where the same principle is applied. As we are not to let the world squeeze us into its mould; neither are we to let evil condition us to become evil, but rather we are to overcome it lit. *vikáω*- meaning "to carry off the victory, come off victorious" (Thayer's Greek Lexicon);
 - (i) This is the same word we get Nike from and so we could steal their moto in relationship to overcoming evil with good and say "Just do it".

God Reveals His Righteousness through our transformed living.

He is faithful to supply. Let us be faithful to apply.