

Romans – Chapter 12

Summary of Chapter 11

- Had God forsaken Israel?
 - No! God never forsakes His people. But they had forsaken Him.
- Olive tree illustration:
 - Israel was like an olive tree that had stopped producing fruit.
 - So God pruned the fruitless branches (unfaithful Israel) and grafted on a branch of a wild olive tree (the Gentiles).
 - But God was always willing to graft Israel back on (if they became faithful), and likewise to prune the new Gentile branches (if they became unfaithful).
- All Israel will be saved, but this refers to true Israel.
- God’s plan and desire is to have mercy upon all.
- Even though we can understand many things regarding the gospel and God’s plans, His thoughts and ways are still inscrutable.

Chapter 12: A New, Transformed Life

Highlight: **Do and Do not**

Living Sacrifice (1)

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Paul uses the word ‘latreian’ (which is a word related to the OT priesthood meaning ‘worship’ or ‘temple service’). The concept Paul is trying to communicate is that we are priests, but the sacrifice we offer up is not a dead animal but our living bodies.

Paul begins this by saying, “I appeal to you therefore”. Why does this appeal follow on (“therefore”) from Romans 1-11?

Transformed with a new mind (2)

² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

All Christians need to be renewed in their minds. What kinds of things in chapters 1-11 would have given the Romans a renewed mind?

Unity, Not Uniformity (3-8)

³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Paul speaks of different functions in the body (that is, the church).

What are the challenges of having different functions within the one body? Why does it make unity difficult?

Genuine Love (9-21)

In Good and Evil (9)

⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

Why is it essential to have love that is ‘genuine’ or ‘sincere’ or ‘without hypocrisy’? Why aren’t Christians allowed to fake love?

With Other Believers (10-13)

¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

Why does God *command* things that appear to be *feelings*? (For instance, *affection, zeal, fervour, rejoicing, hope, seeking to show hospitality*)

With Persecution (14)

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

How can we genuinely bless our persecutors even when we don’t want to?

With the Lowly (15-16)

¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

How might we be guilty of being ‘haughty’ or ‘proud’ or ‘arrogant’ or ‘snobbish’ or ‘self-important’ in the church today?

With Enemies (17-21)

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Is it possible to overcome evil with good?

Can you think of any Bible examples who have overcome evil with good?

Questions

How would we summarise this chapter?

What can I apply from what I have learnt? How does this chapter change my choices and behaviour?

What is something I can pray for based on this text?