

New Morning Magical

Do this at home and avoid the desert

We are continuing today in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans, and we're in chapter 12, beginning with verse 1:

- 1 I am entreating you, then, brethren, by the pities of God, to present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well pleasing to God, your logical divine service,
2 and not to be configured to this eon, but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, for you to be testing what is the will of God, good and well pleasing and perfect.

Notice that both of the instructions in these verses are ours to perform. Faith – that is, trusting the Father – is always active and never passive.

- Only you and I can present our bodies as sacrifices, *“living, holy, well pleasing to God, [by our] logical divine service.”*
- Only you and I can refuse to be *“configured to this eon,”* or as Barbara says, *“Conned into the form of this eon.”*
- Only you and I are in a position *“to be transformed by the renewing of [our] minds.”*
- And finally, only you and I are in a position to determine the Father's will by testing it, discovering what is *“good and well pleasing and perfect,”* because we have been, or are being, transformed by our renewed minds.

The question arises here, how does the renewing of your mind take place? To borrow from Oswald Chambers (www.utmost.org), you simply give up all rights to yourself. You belong to the Father and you live to Christ, not to yourself. The closer to the Father you get, and the more that you walk by the leading of the Holy Spirit in you, the renewing of your mind takes place and the transformation that Paul was writing about works its way through every aspect of your character.

Now drop down to verse 4, where Paul begins to explain the *“body of Christ.”* Paul's revelation here is again unique; no other apostle saw this or wrote about it,

- 4 For even as, in one body [***Paul is speaking of our physical bodies here***], we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function,
5 thus we, who are many, are one body in Christ, yet individually members of one another. [***In other words, you help make up the body of Christ here on Earth, but you are one member of His body among many.***]

6 Now, having graces excelling, in accord with the grace which is given to us, whether prophecy, exercise it in accord with the analogy of the faith [*i.e., correlating with the faith*];

7 or dispensing, in the dispensation; or the teacher, in teaching;

8 or the entreater, in entreaty; the sharer, with generosity; the presider, with diligence; the merciful one, with glee.

9 Let love be unfeigned [*i.e., be loving for real, don't fake it*]. Abhorring that which is wicked, clinging to good. [*This last part is pretty clear, isn't it?*]

Let's review verses 4-9 to put it all together:

- Think of your role as a member of Christ's body on Earth, figuratively speaking, of course.
- Exercise whatever "grace" or gift that the Father has put in you, exercise it with genuine conviction:
- dispensing, or "work done for the welfare of others"
- teaching
- entreating, or "consoling"
- sharing, or "giving a part of what you have"
- presiding
- or being merciful, i.e., "moderating the severity of justice"
- Let your love for others be genuine.
- Abhor or detest anything wicked.
- "Cling to," or hold fast to everything that is good

Then Paul continues this list in verses 10-21:

10 Let us have fond affection for one another with brotherly [or sisterly] fondness, in honor deeming one another first,

In my mother's language, Paul is saying, "*Ladies first.*" My dad would say, "*Wait for others to speak first.*" Both of them would say, "*Wait for the host to pick up their fork before you begin eating.*" Paul could just as easily have said, "*Be courteous, polite, and respectful.*" I know that Paul is addressing more than just table manners here, but the attitude is similar.

11 in diligence not slothful, fervent in spirit, slaving for the Lord,

12 rejoicing in expectation, enduring affliction, persevering in prayer,

13 contributing to the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality.

14 Bless those who are persecuting you: bless, and do not curse,

15 so as to be rejoicing with those rejoicing, lamenting with those lamenting.

Paul is quite firm in verse 14: *“Bless those who are persecuting you: bless, and do not curse.”* That could seem a tall order at times, doesn’t it? We are more likely to think of ways to get even with persecutors, or at least make them aware of the hurt they cause. Paul, however, goes the opposite way, and he says it twice, so he’s clearly serious. I wonder what King David would have thought of blessing, rather than cursing his persecutors, which he did frequently and with great flare. Ahh, but David lived under law and judgment, not grace. Paul continues this theme into the following verses:

16 being mutually disposed to one another, not being disposed to that which is high, but being led away to the humble. **Do not come to pass for prudent with yourselves.**
17 **To no one render evil for evil,** making ideal provision in the sight of all men,
18 if possible that which comes out from yourselves. Being **at peace with all mankind,**
19 you are **not avenging yourselves,** beloved, but **be giving place to His indignation,** for it is written, Mine is vengeance! I will repay! the Lord is saying.

OK, so NOW we get the point of all this instruction: Let the Father deal with people in His own special way.

In this next verse, Paul is quoting Yeshua:

20 But "If your enemy should be hungering, give him the morsel; if he should be thirsting, give him to drink, for in doing this you will be heaping embers of fire on his head."
21 **Be not conquered by evil; but conquer evil with good.**

Verse 21 is huge: *“Be not conquered by evil; but conquer evil with good.”* The minute you and I get into anything remotely like revenge, we’ve lost any advantage we had. Stay humble, even silent perhaps, like the Lord before the Roman governor.

Now in Chapter 13, Paul begins by addressing the proper attitude toward governmental authorities:

1 Let every soul be subject to the superior authorities, for there is no authority except under God. Now those which are, have been set under God,

Any governmental authority is placed in his or her position by the Father. Vote for whomever you choose, but the Father makes the ultimate choice.

2 so that he who is resisting an authority has withstood God's mandate. Now those who

have withstood, will be getting judgment for themselves,

3 for magistrates are not a fear to the good act, but to the evil. Now you do not want to be fearing the authority. Do good, and you will be having applause from it.

4 For it is God's servant for your good. Now if you should be doing evil, fear, for not feignedly is it wearing the sword. For it is God's servant, an avenger for indignation to him who is committing evil.

5 Wherefore it is necessary to be subject, not only because of indignation, but also because of conscience.

Let others flaunt the laws in your city or state, but you obey those same laws, not just to avoid the Father's anger, but because of your own conscience; your own innate sense of right and wrong.

Paul closes out Chapter 13 with these final notes of caution:

10 Love is not working evil to an associate. The complement, then, of law, is love. ***[In other words, love – agape love – completes the law; love makes the law whole.]***

11 This, also, do, being aware of the era, that it is already the hour for us to be roused out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believe.

12 The night progresses, yet the day is near. We, then, should be putting off the acts of darkness, yet should be putting on the implements of light.

13 As in the day, respectably, should we be walking, not in revelries and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy,

14 but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be making no provision for the lusts of the flesh.

“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ” is an interesting phrase, isn't it? When you look at the second half of verse 14, however, you realize that what Paul is saying is that just as Yeshua made no provisions for His flesh, and pretty much killed off any lusts He may have had during that 40-day test in the desert after He was baptized, you do the same.

Paul begins Chapter 14 with some words about chilling out over what you eat versus what someone else eats, and other small matters. In verse 7, however, he changes direction:

7 For not one of us is living to himself, and not one is dying to himself.

8 For both, if we should be living, to the Lord are we living, and if we should be dying, to the Lord are we dying. Then, both if we should be living and if we should be dying, we are the Lord's.

9 For for this Christ died and lives, that He should be Lord of the dead as well as of the

living.

10 Now why are you judging your brother? Or why are you also scorning your brother?

For all of us shall be presented at the dais of God,

11 for it is written: Living am I, the Lord is saying, For to Me shall bow every knee, And every tongue shall be acclaiming God!

12 Consequently, then, each of us shall be giving account concerning himself to God.

The “dais of God” is different from the “dais of Christ.” If you follow the comma at the end of verse 10, it appears that the “dais of God” occurs after every knee has bowed to the Lord and every tongue acclaimed God. In Paul’s timing that we read in 1 Corinthians 15, the dais of God, and the accounting in verse 12 occurs just before “the consummation”; just before God is all in all.

You should understand by now that the accounting Paul introduces here, apparently at the dais of God, only affects the people left at the consummation. If you and I make it into celestial bodies and live in that realm at the Lord’s return, we face the dais of Christ, while those left who were not “*Christ’s at His coming*” as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, will face a different kind of accounting at the dais of God. All the more incentive, it seems to me, to believe in Yeshua and trust the Father now, while we live under grace and expect the celestial destiny in the day of the Lord.

13 By no means, then, should we still be judging one another, but rather decide this, not to place a stumbling block for a brother, or a snare.

Don’t judge one another, and don’t make anyone stumble or be entrapped somehow by your own behavior.

Finally, the first half of verse 22 and the last half of verse 23 to finish out chapter 14:

22 The faith which you have, have for yourself in God’s sight.

Your faith is between you and the Father; no one else has anything to say about it.

23 Now everything which is not out of faith is sin.

If you or I are engaged in anything that is outside of or opposed to trust in the Father, it’s sin. We can’t put a pretty face on it and call it something else. Paul’s statement here is absolute; there is no gray area or wiggle room. If we are not believing Him, not trusting Him, we are

sinning. There is no condemnation, you'll recall, to those in Christ Jesus, thankfully; however, we ought not to be found not trusting the Father. He may not behave the way you would prefer; He may direct in ways you'd rather not go, but He is faithful; He is trustworthy; so, trust Him; trust Him in everything always.

Let's leave it here for today, so until next time,

May Yahweh bless you and keep you;
May Yahweh light up His face toward you
and be gracious to you;
May Yahweh lift His face to you
and appoint peace for you.

AMEN