

Tuesday Evening Bible Study  
Series #7: Paul's Letter to the Romans  
Session #8: Chapters 13-16  
Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Outline

*I. The Inclusive Saving Power of the Gospel (1:18 – 11:36)*

*II. The Summons to Live according to the Gospel (12:1-15:13)*

*A. Christian life as “rational worship” (12:1-2)*

*B. The basic demands of Christian living (12:3 – 13:14)*

*i) A due assessment of one's personal gift (12:3-8)*

*ii) Love in action within the community (12:9-16)*

*iii) Love in action outside the community (12:17-21)*

**iv) Being subject to civil authorities (13:1-7)**

- “Governing bodies” are civil (earthly) authorities, not heavenly beings.
- Seems like an odd insertion, but it is really the natural progression from living within the Christian community to how to live outside it.
- Rulers punish only bad behavior, not good. (???)

**v) The primary goal is love (13:8-10)**

- Repeats the great Commandments
- These verses bookend the exhortation on love that begins at 12:9 – “Let love be genuine.”

**vi) An urgent appeal (13:11-14)**

- ‘wake’ – a term used for summoning to a moral action at a specific moment in time (now) not a specific date.
- The metaphors of turning from darkness to light represent a moral change, turning from evil to good.
- Clothing was a common metaphor for vices or virtues.

**C. Tolerance in contentious areas of community life (14:1 – 15:13)**

**i) Do not judge one another (14:1-12)**

- Paul is not condemning vegetarianism, he is condemning judging people for the choices they make.
- Instead, he invites Christians to do whatever we choose to the honor of God, not for our personal glory.
- ‘live to/die to’ = for the sake of

**ii) Do not make another person stumble (14:13-23)**

- Paul warns Christians not to get bent out of shape because of the choices somebody else makes or the convictions they have.
- Don't make people feel bad for the choices they make. Do not condemn.

**iii) Please others, not yourselves (15:1-6)**

- Build others up, not the self.
- Paul is actually asking the strong to support the weak, not simply tolerate. Bear each other's burdens.

**iv) The Gospel is for Jews and Gentiles alike (15:7-13)**

- Jesus came as a Jew to affirm the truth of God through the Patriarchs, and then to take it to the next level.

### **III. Conclusion of the Letter (15:14 – 16:27)**

#### **A. Paul begins to wrap it up (15:14-21)**

- Paul was not a priest but he says claims to have been given a task from a higher authority (God in Jesus Christ) to do a priestly thing, presenting Gentiles as acceptable offerings to God.

#### **B. Paul's intention to visit Rome (15:22-33)**

- The letter was likely written at the end of Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey.
- Paul's first concluding grace at v. 33.

#### **C. Commendations and greetings (16:1-16)**

- He sends greetings to individuals and leaders of various house churches.
- Phoebe – clearly the early church had women as deacons, but not necessarily in the formalized clerical form that developed in the later church. She was wealthy benefactor. Patronage was common in the Hellenistic world.
- Prisca & Aquila – a husband/wife apostolic team. Note, Paul names the woman first. Perhaps she was the person with the wealth, or she was the leader of the local Christian community.
- Andronicus & Junia – probably another husband/wife apostolic team who presumably led a house church.
- Paul sends greetings to 24 individuals.
- "Greet each other with a holy kiss" – one can presume that this was a customary ritual among Christian communities.

#### **D. Final instructions and greetings (16:17-24)**

- Warning about troublemakers
- Second set of greetings from his companions & compatriots, and the scribe, Tertius, who breaks anonymity to send his own greeting.
- Second grace.

#### **E. Final doxology (16:25-27)**

- This may not be authentic Pauline writing. Some manuscripts include this text in different places (end of Chapter 14, or 15, or both), and some manuscripts omit it altogether. It was not Paul's practice to include a long doxology like this, and while thematically it seems to fit Romans, it is more reminiscent of post-Pauline developments found in Colossians, Ephesians, and his Pastoral Letters.

### Resources

B. Byrne, *Romans in Sacra Pagina Series*, D. J. Harrington, editor (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007)

*The HarperCollins Study Bible*