

“HAVING A RIGHT ATTITUDE TO YOURSELF AND ONE ANOTHER.”

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This month, we are looking at some fundamental teachings from the Book of Romans Chapter 12.

Paul, who was a trained lawyer with a fine legal brain, sets out a systematic explanation for the Jews and Gentiles of the day about a new teaching on the great Salvation of God which has come not through observance of the Mosaic Laws nor through the sacrifice of dead animals but through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and a faith which is to be placed entirely in Him as the one and only Son of the Living God

This is new and challenging teaching for the Jewish communities of the day and as we look at Paul’s missionary journeys where he took this teaching into different synagogues in many lands, it had such a controversial effect such that he was mobbed, chastised, beaten and driven out of some communities but in others he was well received because he brought hope to the Gentiles and enlightenment to those Jews who were searching for a greater understanding of God

The Book of Romans is a complex but extremely powerful Book of the Bible from which we can draw most of our doctrine of belief.

Martin Lloyd Jones took 13 years to expound this book to his congregation and he didn’t finish it!

We are looking at three key issues in Chapter 12

- **Have the right attitude to God**
- **Have the right attitude to yourself and fellow Christians**
- **Have the right attitude to the world**

Tino covered the first element last week when he challenged us to be renewed in our thinking and attitude about cultivating a deeper walk with God

Some of the things he said were

“The thief has stolen our passion for God...”

“The devil knows all about God but doesn’t have a relationship with Him – you do

“Stay connected to the source, everything flows out of a relationship with God”

“Abide in God...don’t just visit”

So you get the picture – God calls us to a closer intimate walk with Him

Read Romans Chapter 12 v 1 - 16

2.0 LESSONS FROM THIS PASSAGE

When we become Christians, our thinking and behaviour changes

The Epistles follow a similar pattern –

- Greetings and introduction sometimes endorsed with the writers credentials
- Doctrine and teaching – fresh insight
- Challenge of how to change and adapt
- Final closing remarks and salutations and a blessing

So if you look at the end of all the Epistles, this is our homework

Paul right at the start of Chapter 12 says.... *“I get down on my knees and I beg you to be different...”*

Lesson 1 – verses 1 –3 Become a living sacrifice

Don't bring the sacrifice, be the sacrifice

“Christianity which does not begin with the individual does not begin; Christianity that ends with the individual ends”

The concept in the opening remarks in Chapter 12 is very direct – community is not merely individuals

We cannot afford to be high and lofty in our thinking.

Smugness, arrogance and high mindedness do not belong in God's church. People will see us as hypocrites and we will never win anyone over to a Christ who was gentle and unassuming yet powerful and majestic

If we have the wrong attitude about others, we have the perfect opportunity later to get things back on an even keel when we break bread together.

If we are trying to seek this local community for Christ then Pauls teaching tells us that we need to change our mindset; our attitudes; and our actions

Lesson 2 – verses 4 -8 Examine your own motives as gifting flows

Kierkegaard said, *“It's so hard to believe, because it's so hard to obey”*

It's hard to play our part in God's service sometimes because we mix up worldly emotions and aspirations with service to God

Ambition and **servanthood** are opposites and we have to ensure which wins the battle for our attention and loyalty

If Jesus the Prince of Glory could take a towel and get on His knees and wash the disciples feet, nothing should be outside of our service for Him

Tino outlined last week the need for each one of us to play our own unique part in the Body of Christ

What I really want to zero in on is our heart motive when we see others doing a task or function which we either envy or of which we are jealous.

Luther said of this passage, *"All this Paul writes in the interest of unity for nothing is likely to come of so much division as when people do not stay within the boundary of their calling but neglect their own ministry and stray and break into others"*.

Lesson 3 – v 9 – 16 Don't be a hurting or a lazy people

- STORY OF THE MOTH WHICH RUINED MY TROUSERS
- STORY OF THE SKIN HEALING BUT LEAVING A SCAR

3.0 CONCLUSION

The early church didn't always get it right and neither do we

God knew that we would struggle at times with our human emotions and the great dilemma which rages in every breast

Paul said it very eloquently in the earlier part of Romans Ch 7 v 18 onwards

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Come let us share communion together and deal with any issue where our attitude to ourselves and one another is not right.