

FINAL THOUGHTS

Thursday, June 22

Reading: Romans 16:17-27

Romans 16:19 *Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

As he closes this letter, the Apostle Paul warns about those who want to stir up trouble. He is not talking about those who dispute the gray areas of life, but those who teach things that are directly opposed to God's Word. Paul tells believers to avoid these people. While a true teacher seeks to build up believers and instruct them in the truth, these false teachers' goal was not to serve Christ but their own selfish interests. For those who turn away from false teachers and cling to the truth, Paul gives the promise that Satan will be defeated. The language echoes the words of Genesis 3:15 where God states that the Seed of the woman (Christ) would bruise or crush the head of the serpent (Satan). While these servants of Satan (the false teachers) try to bring division and strife, God is the God of peace who brings harmony and victory to His saints.

After some final greetings, Paul closes in prayer. As he had begun this letter with an explanation of the gospel, he now closes with the mystery of the gospel. Though it had been hidden in Old Testament times (1 Peter 1:10-12), the mystery had now been revealed through the coming of Jesus Christ. Now all people can come to faith in Christ which brings glory to God the Father. This should be the prayer of every believer – that people would come to know and obey Christ to the glory of God.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. "Be Wise about What is Good and Innocent about What is Evil." We become wise in what is good by a careful study of God's Word and applying it to our lives. To be innocent about evil does not mean we are naïve about the way Satan operates (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11-12; 1 Peter 5:8), but that we are literally "unmixed" with evil – harmless and pure (see Philippians 2:15). Do you know enough of God's Word to recognize what is false from what is true?
2. "Now to Him Who is Able to Establish You." The whole letter of Romans is Paul's description of the gospel. He has described what it is and how we are to apply it to our lives. Now he says that God will establish us through the gospel. God uses the good news of Jesus to make believers strong in their faith. How have you seen God strengthening you through His Word?

1 Peter 5:10-11 And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.