



SERIES 4: A LIVING IDENTITY [MAR.-APR.]

CHAPTERS: 12-15

Main Thrust: Now that we are aware of God's work throughout history, both in the lives of Jews and Gentiles, we must recognize we have been made righteous through the work of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. In our righteousness through Jesus, therefore, we are compelled to serve Jesus, each other and the world with the same zeal and passion Jesus served us.

(MARCH 13) Lesson 1: Living Humbly (Romans 12:1-21)

There is so much taking place in these 21 verses! And there will be much to discuss. Paul begins by making a transition of sorts, one that we will have discussed prior (March 6). Romans 12:1-2 take us to a place where we see a shift in Paul's focus for the Roman Church.

It's almost as if Paul says, "Now that you've been told exhaustively about what it means to be a Christian, now let's talk about what that looks like." And then one after another, Paul gives statements of how Christians should live.

(MARCH 20) Lesson 2: Living Submissively (Romans 13:1-14)

The mark of a Christian is in submission. Paul emphasizes this in these verses in two specific ways. One we submit to governing authorities. This truth is difficult in any circumstance, but we will begin by looking at the context of the ones reading it. Their authorities lorded over them. Their authorities threw them into prison for preaching the name of Jesus Christ.

The second form of submission goes beyond just government, but to our fellow humankind. Paul directs us to the law for this as he points out that the latter six commands are about loving our neighbors, and in order to love our neighbors we must submit ourselves to them... make ourselves lower.

Paul then ends this section with an argument as to why this should be done and important to us. First, we do this because we know who our true authority is. We also know Jesus is returning, and time is short. So the sacrifices made here pale in comparison to what is to come.

(MARCH 27) Lesson 3: Living With Care (Romans 14:1-23)

As we've been discussing since the beginning of this letter, there is division between Jew and Gentile. Paul practically speaks to two specific areas of disagreement; food and special days. More literally, Paul is speaking to Jewish Dietary Laws and The Sabbath. His goal is not to say one way is better than another, but that both ways are sought to honor the Lord and should not be means for division but means for celebration because they lead to the Lord!

Furthermore, Paul addresses judgment within the Roman Church. He encourages the believer not to look down on someone because they practice their faith differently as long as they are pursuing these practices as means of honoring the Lord.

(APRIL 3) Lesson 4: Living Unified (Romans 15:1-9)

This is a call to unity from Paul. It's a desire to see the Romans let go of their selfish forms of worship and encourage one another to pursue Christ. There's a reference to Philippians 2:1-5 in these verses as we are called to have the same attitude toward one another that Jesus had. In having this same attitude, we are then challenged and given the resources to endure until the end.

Paul's charge here is laid upon the mature in faith, because they should know the importance of unity within the body of Christ.

(APRIL 10) Lesson 5: Living Globally (Romans 15:14-33)

We get a great glimpse here into the man, Paul. Up to this point we've seen Paul's heart for the Romans. We've seen his heart for unity. We've seen his passion for Jesus. We've seen him long for his fellow Jews to know Jesus. Now we see his heart for ministry. We can hear him declare why he desires to do these things. But along with this glimpse into ministry, he calls for the Romans to join him in his mission to preach the gospel to all who will hear.