**Romans 13-16** - November 14th

Today’s Summary: As Paul finishes his letter to the Church in Rome today, he gives so many great teachings on how not only they should live, but how we should live. That even though we have freedom in Christ and certain things are not a sin to do, we should NOT do them if they ever cause a brother or sister to stumble. So this is where Jesus takes the law or any commands of God from the obligatory to the HEART, to compassion to love – that we actually get to use our freewill to be Jesus – to die to self and love others even when we don’t have to “under the law.” Meditate on what this means for you today in specific areas that you can work on. I am because I want to love Jesus better not only by honoring His commands but going above and beyond what is required and dying to self to love others even more sacrificially.

Submission to Governing Authorities

**13**Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. **2**Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. **3**For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. **4**For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. **5**Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

**6**This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. **7**Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Love Fulfills the Law

**8**Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. **9**The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” **10**Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

The Day Is Near

**11**And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. **12**The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. **13**Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. **14**Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

The Weak and the Strong

**14**Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. **2**One person’s faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. **3**The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. **4**Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

**5**One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. **6**Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. **7**For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. **8**If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. **9**For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

**10**You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. **11**It is written: “‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.’” **12**So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

**13**Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.

**14**I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. **15**If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. **16**Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. **17**For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, **18**because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

**19**Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. **20**Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. **21**It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

22So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

**15**We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. **2**Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. **3**For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.” 4For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

**5**May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, **6**so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**7**Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. **8**For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed **9**and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written:

“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name.” **10**Again, it says, “Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people.” **11**And again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him.” **12**And again, Isaiah says, “The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope.”

13May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul the Minister to the Gentiles

**14**I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another. **15**Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me **16**to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

**17**Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. **18**I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done - **19**by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. **20**It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation. **21**Rather, as it is written: “Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.”**22**This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

Paul’s Plan to Visit Rome

**23**But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you, **24**I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. **25**Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord’s people there. **26**For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord’s people in Jerusalem. **27**They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. **28**So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. **29**I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

**30**I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. **31**Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord’s people there, **32**so that I may come to you with joy, by God’s will, and in your company be refreshed. **33**The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Personal Greetings

**16**I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon, *(The word deacon refers here to a Christian designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in Phil. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8,12)* of the church in Cenchreae. **2**I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me. **3**Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. **4**They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. **5**Greet also the church that meets at their house.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. **6**Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. **7**Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. **8**Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. **9**Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. **10**Greet Apelles, whose fidelity to Christ has stood the test. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. **11**Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. **12**Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord. **13**Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too. **14**Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the other brothers and sisters with them. **15**Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the Lord’s people who are with them. **16**Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings.

**17**I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. **18**For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. **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. **21**Timothy, my co-worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my fellow Jews. **22**I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord. **23**Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings. Erastus, who is the city’s director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings. **24**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen. **25**Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, **26**but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith - **27**to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.