

Lesson 26 – The Book of Romans

As mentioned before, the first 11 chapters in the Book of Romans deal with doctrine, and beginning with **Chapter 12**, we are now looking at the life of the believer, and how he/she should be acting in view of the clear condition they now find themselves.

As also mentioned before, it is imperative to remember that we must keep the horse before the cart in our understanding, in that we are not doing something in order to receive something from God, but rather are doing as a result of already having received something.

This is important in order for the believer to remain in a positive attitude concerning his position with the Lord versus the condition he is presently experiencing.

Our position is secure based upon our belief in Him, but our circumstances are constantly changing.

We are being asked in **chapter 12** to remove ourselves from the thinking of the world. We are being asked to remember where our citizenship is really located. We are being encouraged to deny conformity to the things of this world and this is based upon the fact that we are only pilgrims and sojourners while here on this earth. Our kingdom is not of this world.

Paul says; “do not be conformed to this world” In other words, do not be “pressed into the mold” that the world offers us. Do not go along to get along. We have different rules, different ideas, different desires than what the world has to offer.

Why would this be the case? Because there are principalities and rulers and wickedness that have outlined the behavior of the world. There is actually someone who governs what happens throughout the world. He is known as the “god of this age” and everything that he stands for is contrary to who we are.

Let me give you an example from scripture of this.

Look at **Daniel chapter 10** – let me set the scene. Daniel is fasting and praying for approximately 3 weeks. At the end of this time, a man appeared to Daniel and his friends (even though the friends could not see this man, they fled and hid themselves) and this man then revealed a vision to Daniel, but look with me at **verse 12** “: *from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. And I have come because of your words (verse 13) but the prince of the kingdom of Persia, withstood me for 21 days. Michael (the mighty angel of God I might add), one of the chief princes came to help me. For I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.*”

Translation – Daniel had a vision, he fasted and prayed but the answer to his prayer was delayed (by wicked forces) that took the great warring angel Michael to withstand

the king of Persia, so that the Lord could come to Daniel to tell him what was to happen in the future.

Spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies – and it took Michael to defeat this spirit being – *the King of Persia* – to prepare the answer given by the Lord to Daniel. Later Daniel chapter 12 Daniel had to deal with *the prince of the power of Greece*. Another representative of the devil, as God was revealing to Daniel what was to happen in the future. (Tribulation, the 3 ½ years etc.)

Another example **2nd Kings 6 8-17** you have the king of Syria (evil man) warring against Israel. When you read of the account (which I suggest you do) you will see the frustration of this king as everything he planned to do against Israel was thwarted by someone (the king thought he had a spy in his camp)

How come Israel knows everything we are planning? “Well, oh king, there is a prophet in Israel who tells the king of Israel everything you are planning, even those you speak in your bedchamber.” They know in advance your plans.

Well guess what? This fool thought he could sneak up on Elisha so he sets about to capture him. The king surrounds the home of Elisha with all of his chariots and soldiers and is going to attack and destroy this man.

Elisha arises early the next day to face his servant who claims “alas, what shall we do, we are surrounded by these bad guys. Surely, they will destroy us.

Elisha says; “fear not my friend, *for those who are for us, are greater than those who oppose us.* Elisha then prays that the Lord will open the eyes of his servant, the Lord answers this prayer and the servant looks again and behold – “*the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around about Elisha*”

They were there all along, the servant just couldn't see them.

Beloved, they encompass you and I also – 24-7

I encourage us to memorize **Ephesians 6:12**–“*for we wrestle **not** against flesh and blood (you thought that the enemy was your boss or your neighbor or spouse at times) Nope, the war is not against people – it is against those who are behind the people. These are *principalities, powers, against the rulers of darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

Verse 13 (remember what the word is there for) therefore, *take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day (and beloved, that is today), and having all stand.*

Verse 14 “*stand therefore, having girded your waist with **truth***”

I stop us here for a moment to look at the seriousness of this verse. What is truth to you? How do you determine if something is true? We are being told that truth is a relative thing. It is constantly changing. Not so beloved, something is either true, or it

isn't true. No middle ground. You may not know a thing is true, until you discover it for yourself, but it was always true. You just now discovered it to be so.

Folks will try to convince you that things were just thrown randomly into the atmosphere and came out as we see them today. Others will tell you that things are the result of a deliberate and purposeful Creation. You need to determine which of these things are true, but both can't be.

Further you are being told that there are many gods, and to some that is truth, but we know there is only One God.

Mathematics is attractive to many because it is measurable and always the same. On the other hand, while I was in college some of the more attractive courses were the ones who were not so absolute. Like Philosophy and Psychology. Deductive reasoning, they called it. Sure glad that these never got ahold of me.

Nothing is scarier to some when you just "know" something to be true. I don't take credit for knowing something to be true, it had to be revealed to me that such was the case. Once I know it, I don't move from that position.

How often have you heard someone say: "How can you be so sure?" My answer is: don't know, I just know it is true.

Others will say, well that is true for you, but not for everyone. My answer, don't know about everyone, but it is true to me.

To me, it is very interesting that the first weapon we have in our arsenal is – truth

Are you settled in what you believe? Is it an undeniable truth to you? If not, go no further until you settle that within yourself.

The next step in our warfare is the "*breastplate of righteousness*" In battle armor, the warrior would stop between battles and check if there is a hole in his breastplate. If there was, he would immediately repair it.

The breastplate defends your vitals. Remember beloved, it is His righteousness, of which you are a partaker. You conclude your righteousness depends upon His righteousness within you. You are righteous, because of His righteousness, not because of your activity.

Your next weapon is *your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*. You and I use our feet to get us from place to place. I sense there is more to this verse than I understand. Are we peacemakers? Do we go from place-to-place infusing peace to the situation? Or, as I find myself from time to time, looking for some sort of disagreement. I know this is the situation with many of my brethren over their understanding of some doctrine.

Again I am learning that most folks do not need more information. So, I am less prone to give them more, unless they ask. When is the last time someone has seriously asked you – “what do you think about that Tom? Hmmm.

Maybe peace is more important than “my position” on the matter? But maybe not also. We are called to be “salt” and “light”. Salt stops the spread of rot. Light shines on the issues of darkness. Are we hesitant to speak the truth because it may hurt someone’s feelings? And, if we say nothing, are we condoning their speech or behavior?

We are called to bring correction to those in fault. Examine if you will, truth, as noted in **Ephesians 6: verse 1**: *Brethren, if you see a man overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, less thou also be tempted.*”

I find in myself often times that I miss the “spirit of meekness” in bringing correction. My bad.

If I can share my flesh for a moment, years ago, my teacher, my mentor, my pastor – Keith Lamb brought correction to me about my language. In short, my mouth was a “potty Mouth” as I said most always what was on my mind in whatever language seemed important at the time. Keith merely said: “brother, you have a great command of the English language. You are very articulate in your expression, but you do not need to use vulgarity to express yourself. You are better than that.

I will never forget his saying this to me. Correction in the spirit of meekness and it has helped my in my walk over the years. Thank you, brother Keith, for your “guts” to correct me.

Ok, let’s move on.

Verse 16 – **Above all** – well that is a relief, I can move on for sure now. *Taking the shield of faith with which, you will be able to quench all of the fiery darts of the wicked one.* Our shield is our faith. This needs to be fixed in between all battles. Every man is given a measure of faith, and it must be acted upon. Faith and belief are the same Greek words. Know what you know. Believe in what you know to be true.

Notice that you lift your shield of faith in the midst of “Firey darts” of the wicked one. They are coming beloved and we need to be aware of them. There will always be someone who questions what you believe. We just need to see the source behind the attack.

Look at the response from Jesus to Peters in **Matthew 16; 21** and following; *“from that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed, and be raised from the dead. Verse 22 “then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him saying, far be it from you Lord, this shall not happen to you”*

Did Peter love Jesus? Of course, he did. Did he want the best for Jesus? Yes, but Peter was being used by the “god of this age” when he said what he said.

How did Jesus respond? **Verse 23** Jesus turned and said to Peter- *“get thee behind Me **Satan!** You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.*

Jesus was talking to the spirit behind what Peter was saying. We need to learn the same lesson ourselves. Look behind what is being said, rather than looking at who said it. Pull back the curtain and see the prince of darkness at work.

As Norman Grubb would say; Be a see-through er, not a see-atter.. Look through the person speaking to the source behind the spoken word.

I will finish this thought next time. Until then “keep looking up” our redemption draws nigh.”

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