

In this lesson Paul urges the Christians in Rome to devote themselves to God's service and to recognize that with different functions they are all members of one body. Instead of dead animals, they are to offer themselves as living sacrifices. Their way of life is to be quite different from worldly standards. So will they know the will of God. All are to live in humility realizing that they have their various gifts through God's grace.

Please listen now to this passage from the book of Romans

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Matthew 16:13-20

In our gospel Peter realizes that Jesus is the Christ, and Jesus then sees Peter as the rock foundation for his church and gives to him the keys of the kingdom. The passage helps us to recognize that during Jesus lifetime and afterward there was speculation about his role. Some saw the Son of Man as a kind of reembodiment of John the Baptist or another prophet. Simon is renamed Peter (which means rock), for on him and because of this revelation the church will be built, although Jesus messiahship must be kept secret for the present. To Peter are given the keys to open or shut the gates of the kingdom and so to make judgment.

Hear now these words from the gospel of Matthew

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Liturgist: This is the gospel message of our Lord and Savior

All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.