

## **Romans, Part 38**

After being caught up to the third heaven and hearing and seeing things that were not lawful for a man to utter, the Apostle Paul invested his life in spreading the Gospel of Christ among Gentile believers. Throughout his ministry he faced many infirmities, reproaches, needs, persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake. As he preached the Good News of Christ, the signs of an apostle and the power of the Holy Spirit were accomplished in his ministry among the Gentiles with great perseverance, signs, wonders, and mighty deeds, ( 1 Corinthians 12:1-13). These things were done so that their faith and obedience to the Gospel of Christ would not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. The things that had happened among the believers in Rome had exposed them to the power of the Holy Spirit and the work of Christ that changes lives.

**Romans 15:17 NLT** So it is right for me to be enthusiastic about all Christ Jesus has done through me in my service to God.

**As he looked around the church Paul rejoiced in the victories that had been won through his ministry.**

The great signs and wonders that happened in their lives and in the church clearly demonstrated God's power to release captives and bring them into Christ's victory. We should keep record of the victories that have been won and tell others what God has done. When we do this, we should give God all the glory for every salvation, miracle, healing, and deliverance.

**Twenty-one times in the last chapter of Romans, Paul tells them to greet and salute those he knew.**

Many of the believers in Rome had been won as a result of his ministry and were some of the first converts in Asia. Some were relatives or dear friends and some suffered with him in prison. He had worked with some of them and had started a church in their home. Some were tested and approved in Christ before the Apostles. They had labored much in the Lord and had helped him through his sufferings, persecutions and distresses.

**Paul rejoiced in the Lord for their spiritual growth and maturity.**

Their maturity was evident by the things they were doing in Christ. Their spiritual fruit, faithfulness and obedience was known in the whole Christian Church. Paul could see the impact of Christ Jesus in their victories, sufferings and spiritual maturity. The goal of every believer should be to become an obvious living testimony of Christ and His power.

**John 15:5 NKJV** I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

**What is Jesus saying?**

**He did not say:** *"Without Me you cannot do very much."* **He said:** "YOU CAN DO NOTHING WITHOUT ME." This is why Paul was so excited about these believers. He could see the power of Christ's resurrection working in them

that he had experienced in his own life. The fruit of the Holy Spirit, signs, wonders and miracles were evident in their lives.

### **In John 17, Jesus prayed for all who would believe in Him.**

**John 17:21 NIV** That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

### **This was the purpose behind Paul's preaching and ministry among the Gentiles.**

Our unity, love, and power in the Holy Spirit manifests that we are part of the body of Christ. **Jesus said**, *“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”* (John 13:35). We can see the evidence of this connection in the signs, wonders, and miracles of the Holy Spirit among them. They were of one purpose or mind, and the Holy Spirit was working among them.

### **God wants to unify us into one body and one ministry that will accomplish His goal or purpose.**

The same mind and Spirit that was in Christ Jesus was working throughout the church. God has a purpose for you being who and where you are in the body of Christ. He wants to conform you into the character and nature of Christ so that you bear His power and nature to the world. This is not something new for those God has called and chosen.

**Jeremiah 1:5 NKJV** Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.

**Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV** For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

### **Do you recognize God's plan for your life?**

God has put His name on you and has claimed you as His own. He has plans for your life and wants to use everyone that has taken the name of Jesus in His church.

**Colossians 3:17 NIV** And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

**Colossians 3:17 NLT** And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

### **This is the whole idea behind obedience to the faith.**

We all must learn to take advantage of every opportunity. When our faith is rooted and grounded in the Gospel of Christ and our lives are empowered with the Holy Spirit, our obedience will be evidenced with His power and presence. This is true not only in supernatural events but also in the way we behave in difficult times and everyday life.

### **Paul was saying these people were acting on what they knew and had received in Christ.**

As they walked in obedience to the faith and were not just hearers of the Gospel of Truth, the Holy Spirit enabled them to do what they were not humanly capable of doing. God working in them was typical of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. This same thing was evident in the 12 and the 70 that Jesus sent out to minister in His name.

**Mark 16:20 NKJV** And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

**The Lord promised to prosper His Word and confirm it with signs following, and we should expect no less in our lives.**

The Holy Spirit has been sent alongside to help us.

**As Paul brings Romans to a conclusion, he begged them to strive with Him in prayer.**

**Romans 15:30 NKJV** Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,

**Look at that phrase “strive together with me in prayer.”**

It means to “*help me by striving.*” Striving is from the same root word (synagōnisamai — συναγωνίζομαι) for “agonize or vigorous” in the Greek. This type of prayer is similar to the fervent intercessory prayer of agreement of James 5:16.

**We must learn how to “strive together in prayer.”**

We do this by actually bearing one another’s burdens to God in fervent prayer. This is characteristic of the unity and fellowship of believers. Everyone does not know how to pray this way, but Paul knew these Roman Christians were able to agonize in prayer. The quality of faith and the power of the Spirit that was in them was easily witnessed by the fruit of the Spirit that was evident in their lives. The life of Christ was shining through them and the Holy Spirit was working within them.

**Some spiritual giants among them were greeted by name, but we are told very little about them.**

We should also take note of those around us who are doing something for God, and let them know that they are appreciated for what they do. Pray for them and encourage them to keep on doing something for God. Likewise, we should remember those who have prayed for us and the good things they have done.

**Romans 16:19 NIV** Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

**The Book of Romans is concluded with a special benediction over their**

**lives.**

**In the conclusion to the Romans, he gave a warning and a sure word of victory.**

**Romans 16:19** ... I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

Jesus gave a similar warning when He said: *“Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves,”* (Matthew 10:16). This admonition is an encouragement to be alert because *“Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”* (2 Corinthians 11:14). In reality, Satan uses every kind of subtle device and deceptive method to make evil appealing so that we lower our defenses and become an easy prey. For that reason, we must constantly be alert and be led by the Holy Spirit in everything that we say or do. What does that mean to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil? Some people know everything about what is evil. We should not attempt to know everything about what is evil.

**At the same time, we must be wise about what is good.**

Goodness refers to being right with God and really knowing and understanding God. We cannot know what is good until we know and understand God.

**Jeremiah 4:22 NKJV** For My people are foolish, They have not known Me. They are silly children, And they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge.

We cannot know GOOD until we know GOD. When Jesus was speaking about “goodness,” He said “No one is GOOD but God.” (Mark 10:18) God is absolutely perfect and holy in all of His ways. He is slow to anger and abounds in mercy, Psalms 103:8. God is love, (1 John 4:8). He is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy, (Psalms 145:9). The goodness of God endures continually, (Psalms 52:1). His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering are rich and the goodness of God leads us to repentance, (Romans 2:4).

**To be wise about what is good, is a reference to our spiritual development.**

We are not being told to make a list of good things. This is an encouragement to spiritual development and growth in the knowledge of God. Have you won some victories and conquered some evils in your life?

**Ephesians 2:10 NIV** For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Romans 8:29 NIV** For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many

brothers.

**Philippians 3:13-14 NCV** Brothers and sisters, I know that I have not yet reached that goal, but there is one thing I always do. Forgetting the past and straining toward what is ahead, I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize for which God called me through Christ to the life above.

**In the conclusion to the Epistle to the Romans, we are given a sure word of victory.**

**Romans 16:20 NIV** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

**Here are two powerful words for each of us.**

First, Satan shall soon be under our feet. This is a word of victory for every believer. In the Garden of Eden, the Lord God Almighty said that Satan would be bruised under the heel of Christ. When Adam and Eve sinned, they fell into condemnation and the curse. They were defeated and were hiding from God.

**The Lamb of God has intervened and has defeated Satan.**

**Isaiah 53:4-5 NIV** Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. Jesus Christ the Messiah was bruised so that we could be saved, healed, and delivered. He was broken for our iniquity and bruised for our sin.

**Isaiah 53:10 NKJV** Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.

**God was willing to cause trauma to Christ so we may be freed.**

Jesus Christ has taken and carried our bruise, grief and sin so that we may have victory. When the Lord died on the cross, God stripped Satan of his authority, principality, and power. Although Satan still claims the world as his, the God of peace will crush him under your feet. We don't know everything that is involved in this, but God has planned your victory. In Christ Jesus, God has provided victory. Satan has been disarmed and defeated and has been publicly put to an open shame.

**Ephesians 3:10-11 NIV** His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In Christ, we can stand against the wiles of the devil, (Ephesians 6:11) and every fiery and flaming dart of the evil one can be quenched, (Ephesians

6:16). Think about what we are being told. Jesus defeated and bruised Satan under His heel and now the Holy Spirit is saying, Satan is going to be under your feet. If we live in Christ Jesus, that victory is ours.

**Romans 16:20 NKJV** And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

**The last word we are given is "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with you. Amen"**

The word "grace" means "favor, delight, pleasure, merciful kindness." What effect does the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ have on our lives? When you are living in the grace, favor and pleasure of the Lord Jesus Christ, you are filled with rejoicing. The power and administration of Satan is broken. You are blessed and have a hope and future and God is able to establish and strengthen you. He has invested heavily in your future through the finished work of Jesus Christ. God wants to bless you and turn your sorrow into dancing and bring you joy and gladness. Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, God will bring you into victory. Give Him your praise.