"GIVE AND TAKE CHRISTIANITY"

(Paul's Relationship to Fellow-Believers)

Romans 15:22-33

1-17-2021

INTRODUCTION:

***Christian living is a matter of <u>giving</u> and <u>receiving</u>.**
(God intended us to be <u>dedicated</u> to each other and <u>dependent</u> on each other.)

I. Paul <u>LOVED</u> Fellow-Believers (v. 22-29)
(He was <u>dedicated</u> to other Christians - He <u>gave</u>)

A. His love is proven by his "<u>Great Desire</u>" to be with them (v. 22-24)

B. His love is proven by his <u>Humble Service</u> for them (v. 25-28)

II. Paul <u>NEEDED</u> Fellow-Believers (v. 30-32)
(He was <u>dependent</u> upon other Christians - He <u>took</u>)

A. He needed their <u>prayers</u> (v. 30-31)

B. He needed their <u>refreshment</u> (v. 32)

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INTRODUCTION:

Paul begins and concludes this Epistle by describing his great desire to meet and minister to the Roman Christians (SEE 1:9-13)

Though Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35), both giving and receiving (taking) are realities of life.

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I. Paul <u>LOVED</u> Fellow-Believers (v. 22-29)
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A. His love is proven by his
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V. 22

"For which cause" - Because of the fact that god wanted Paul to reach those who never heard about Christ (v. 20-21), the Lord sovereignly allowed Paul to be "much hindered" from going to Rome.

V. 23

"Now having no more place in these parts" = No more locations in these regions.

In other words, Paul is saying, "There are no more areas of opportunity to preach Christ to those who never yet heard."

In the regions where Paul went, he could honestly say that everyone had had a chance to at least hear about Christ. Hence, he testified: "I am free from the blood of all men." (Acts 20:26)

God intends for everyone to hear the Gospel (Mk. 16:15 - "Every creature"; Mt. 28:19 - "all nations"; Rev. 22:17 - "whosoever will").

Sad to say, the greatest commission ever given to Christians has become the greatest <u>omission</u> by Christians.

"A great desire" = Paul loved fellow-believers. He earnestly longed to meet them and fellowship with them.

The Roman Christians were led to Christ by someone other than Paul. The Apostle never met them before, yet still longed to be with them.

V. 24

"Somewhat filled with your company" = After enjoying your company.

"Christians ought to rejoice in meeting one another. . . The more christian fellowship we can realize and cultivate, the greater the power and blessing that will accrue to the Church as a whole" (and to our local churches in particular). (Thomas, p. 409)

B. His love is proven by his
<u>Humble Service</u> for them (v. 25-28)

V. 25

"Minister" = diakonon - to serve in mundane manners

Paul's service was to be a carrier to bring their financial gift to Jerusalem.

V. 26

"It hath pleased them" = they thought it was a <u>good</u> idea to help the poor saints in Jerusalem.

"The poor saints" - God's people must take care of their own spiritual family.

Someone who loves others will generally be a ring leader in taking up special, anonymous love offerings to meet the needs of others.

For example, Paul not merely delivered what the Corinthians gave, but he encouraged them to give (II Cor. 8:6-9:5).

V. 27

Gentile Christians owe a debt to Israel (the Jew). Why? Because we are sharing in the spiritual blessings that came via Israel.

--Jesus said: "Salvation is of the Jews" (Jn. 4:22)

--Paul said that the oracles (Words) of God came through the Jew (Rom. 3:2)

**--SEE: Rom. 9:4-5
"Anti-Semitism has no place in the life of a dedicated Christian" (Wiersbe, p. 564).

The principle of repaying spiritual blessings with material blessings is a truth taught throughout Scripture.

EX: O.T. Levites

N.T. Pastor

(Gal. 6:6 - "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

--I Cor. 9:11 - "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?")

"Don't muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn."

"Carnal things" = tangible; material possessions

V. 28

"Have sealed to them" = have made sure that they received the offering.

"This fruit" = this financial offering

V. 29

Paul was confident that Christ's full power and blessing would still be upon him when he arrived at Rome.

Although he was in chains when he finally arrived (Acts 28:20), he did have God's full blessing to minister (Acts 28:30-31).

II. Paul NEEDED Fellow-Believers (v. 30-32)
(He was dependent upon other Christians - He took)

A. He needed their prayers (v. 30-31)

1. The urgency of prayer - "I beseech you" = I urge you; I earnestly encourage you to pray for me.

2. The motivation for prayer - "For" = because of (the why of prayer)

"For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake" - if for no other reason you pray for someone, pray for the sake of Jesus and His great cause.

"For the love of the Spirit" - The love that the Holy Spirit puts in your hearts for others should prompt you to pray for them!

3. The difficulty of prayer
(the how of prayer)

Prayer is a conflict, a battle we must win, or we lose!

"Strive together" -

"Strive" = a word used of ancient athletic contests, describes the fervor, intensity and struggle of prayer (SEE: Col. 2:1, 4:12). To fight or contend. To wrestle in prayer.

Prayer is the hardest work anyone can do!

Why? We are wrestling against a spirit world that hates prayer (Eph. 6:12, 18-19).

The novel This Present Darkness illustrates the importance of prayer in the spiritual warfare that is occurring in our world. In the book, a young pastor begins praying (almost continuously) for his church and the town. He doesn't realize it at first, but there is a fierce battle going on between the forces of Satan (demons) and the forces of Christ (angels) for control of the town and destruction of the one fundamental church there. As more of the pastor's church people wake up spiritually and begin to pray, more and more power is made available to the angels as they fight the demons' control over lost souls and the demons' efforts to keep evil reigning in the town. When Christians don't pray, demons have more freedom and power. But they are weakened and limited by the prayers of the saints, just as the angels are strengthened.

"Together" - Prayer is to be a joint effort. Paul did not merely say, "Pray for me" (Ex. Acts 8:24), but "Pray with me."

On the other hand, some pray for themselves, but don't expect other fellow Christians to hold them up in prayer. We need each other. The Christian life is a "give and take" matter.

Many want others to pray for them, but they do not even pray for themselves.

4. The Content of prayer (v. 31)
(The what of prayer)

--He needed their prayers
for a protected ministry (v. 31a)

--He needed their prayers
for an effective ministry (v. 31b)

B. He needed their refreshment (v. 32)

The result of their prayers would be effective ministry and subsequent joy!

"By the will of God" - when it comes to travel plans, we are subject to the will of God (James 4:15 - "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.")

". . . with you be refreshed" - Paul, like you and me, needed to be refreshed physically and spiritually by the company of other believers.

1. Physical Refreshment -

Cp. v. 24 - "I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you"

"Brought on" - to send forth; to help on one's journey with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc. (Reinecker, p. 383).

Paul anticipated the Roman Christians to help (assist) him on his way to Spain (cp. v. 28 - "...I will come by (by means of) you into Spain").

Although Paul on many occasions refused financial aid and worked a secular job for his income to avoid anyone questioning his motives (EX: Ephesus - Acts 20:33-35; and Corinth - Acts 18:3; I Cor. 11:7-11), he did on occasion accept financial help from those who were mature enough to not hold him suspect of pedalling the Gospel for monetary gain (II Cor. 2:9; Phil. 4:14-18).

2. Spiritual refreshment

SEE: Rom. 1:11-12

When you are with believers who love the Lord, they have a rejuvenating, revitalizing, inspiring, stimulating effect on your life. God intended it to be this way (Acts 2:46; Heb. 10:24-25).

Many of God's children are like a "breath of fresh air."

They have a way of reviving your spirit; rekindling your fire; fortifying your strength; reinforcing your faith; and renewing your zeal.