

Outline of the Epistle to the Romans

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Liebe Brüder und Brüderinnen, Wir haben es in unserem Geist, in unserem Herzen, heute Abend ein paar Gedanken über die Epistel zu den Romanen zu teilen. Ich hoffe, jeder von euch hat eine Kopie dieses kleinen Broschüren, das wir vorbereitet haben, um eine Vorstellung der Epistel zu den Romanen zu geben. Für die französischen Sprecherinnen und Sprechern habe ich 30 Kopien der französischen Version mitgebracht. Ich hoffe, Sie haben sie mitbekommen. Ich biete Ihnen eine Entschuldigung. Ich habe zu Beginn mit der französischen Version angefangen, dann diese in Englisch übersetzt. Und Sie haben in den Romanen ein Auge zu viele. In Französisch ist es Romain, in Englisch ist es Romans. So on the front page, you have to eliminate the I of Romans, do you hear me?

[00:01:09] We don't need to turn the brochure this time, but we'll just read some scriptures, starting in Romans 1, Romans 1, verse 1.

The Gospel of God, verse 3, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Verse 16, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentiles, the Greeks.

Verse 17, there is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, [00:02:01] the just shall live by faith, up to this moment.

The epistle to the Romans is the first one in the Bible, in the New Testament of the 21 epistles, and the reason is, it is a fundamental epistle.

As we know, the doctrine of Paul, as he calls it, in 2 Timothy, has four foundation truths, which were revealed directly by the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven to His precious apostle disciple, and in turn, He gave them to us.

The first truth is that the believers together are the body of Christ. Christ is the heavenly, glorified head in heaven, and we are members of His body. The second truth is that the emblem of this unity

of the body of Christ, made of all believers [00:03:04] with Christ together, is by the Lord's Supper.

The third truth is the first resurrection.

There will be a raising up of believers at the first resurrection. The fourth one is the rapture of the Church and the Lord's coming in grace to take us home to be with Him in the Father's home.

Interestingly enough, none of those four truths are found in detail in Romans. Romans is the principle, the foundation, and introduces the Arab doctrine of Paul.

The epistles of Paul complement in a beautiful, divine way the teaching of John.

John tells us more about the children of God making the heavenly family. [00:04:07] Life is in the Son.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, life was shown to us, and now what was true in Jesus is now true in the believers.

Life is in the Son.

As the Son has life, without the Son there is no life. In times of departure from the truth, it is all important to remember that truth is fundamentally to be taken.

The Catholic epistles, particularly those of Peter, Jude, and James, have another aspect. They consider the believers more as pilgrims going on the heavenly destination with Christ in heaven.

The epistle to the Hebrews has a corresponding character. [00:05:03] It tells us that the Lord Jesus is the great high priest interceding for us in the time of need.

Those epistles complete the New Testament epistles and tell us in particular that there will be a departure from the truth, there will be an apostasy of a moral nature, of a religious nature, either Jewish or Christian, and it will end with the final judgment when the Lord Jesus will come in glory.

The epistles to the Romans start with the title, the true subject, the gospel.

The gospel is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of God concerning the Lord Jesus as Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Lord Jesus is found seven times in the Bible as Son of God, eternally as in Psalm [00:06:11] 2 at the time of his birth here on earth, the holy thing which shall be born shall be called Son of God, at the beginning of his ministry along the bank of Jordan at the Lord Jesus' baptism by the John the Baptist, at the end of his ministry on the Mount of Transfiguration, at his death by the witness of the centurion, this man was Son of God, and here by resurrection, and finally for eternity in Hebrews 7.

The gospel, which is the good news of salvation, concerns the Lord Jesus, Son of God. It exemplifies the power of God and righteousness of God.

It is held, it can be taken, received by faith.

[00:07:08] This verse 17 of chapter 1, the just shall live by faith, which is from the prophet Habakkuk, is found three times in scripture. First in Romans 1, second Hebrews 10, and third Galatians 3.

First one for the just, second for live life, and third faith.

The just live faith, Romans, Hebrews, Galatians.

The subject of the gospel is really treated from verse 17 of chapter 1, continues in chapter 3, verse 21.

[00:08:04] I think it's very important for us, particularly for the young people, to really understand that the apostle interrupts his presentation, his display of the gospel, between chapter 1, verse 18, to chapter 3, verse 20, to establish something very fundamental.

Man is ruined, man is dead in trespasses and sins, in a hopeless position.

He needs help from the outside.

Paul addresses three categories of people. First the heathen, second the philosophers and moralists, third the Jews.

After the heathen, the heathen fell into idolatry.

Idolatry started immediately after the flood.

[00:09:05] People started to worship images, even worship things they were fearing of, and fell away from God into idolatry, and immediately thereafter into gross sin.

The things go together.

The heathen, the pagan world, neglected three things.

First, the testimony of creation.

The eternal power and Godhead and divinity of God should be known by the things made through the creation. This testimony and witness was neglected. Second, they had the knowledge of God and refused it.

Third, they had the conscience, a voice inner inside of the man who tells them he's responsible.

[00:10:03] They ignored the voice of their conscience. So the wrath of God is revealed. It's no more glory of God, righteousness of God, and faith, it's the wrath of God which is revealed against man.

The second category of people was the philosophers, Socrates and the others in the Greek world. And at the turn of the 21st century, I think there are as many in the Western world as before in the Greek world. Those people are more guilty than the others.

They are ready to teach lessons to people. Not only do they do the same thing, but they find the pleasure, their own pleasure in things, people doing evil.

So they are condemned together with the heaven. The Jews were highly irresponsible because they were highly privileged. [00:11:01] They neglected the name of God and fell into the same things.

Finally, the picture is drawn in chapter 3, verse 9 to 20.

Six scriptures are mentioned, five from the Psalms and one from Isaiah, telling us the position is hopeless.

Everybody is guilty. Each mouth will be shut before God.

So now is God's answer.

Verse 21 of chapter 3, now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them [00:12:07] that believe, there is no difference.

The righteousness of God, the good news of salvation is now revealed. It is offered to all, it is unto all, but it is imputed only in righteousness, only to those who believe.

The gospel, the good news of salvation, the righteousness of God is offered unto all. This is the sign of the work of the Lord as the propitiation.

Propitiation is taken from the Hebrew word kopher, kopher in French.

The propitiatory was the cover of the ark.

In English it's mercy seat, in French it's propitiatoire, it was the cover of the ark. [00:13:01] It was made of gold and they had the cherubim of glory shadowing it.

Upon the propitiation, upon the propitiatoire, the blood of the sacrifice for the sin offering was placed, answering to God's rights and wrath which the Lord Jesus had to bear upon on the cross.

It is offered to all, but substitution only imputed to those who believe.

The law and the prophet were up to John the Baptist. Their paths in terms of dispensation, their testimony remains the testimony to the worth of the work of the Lord Jesus at the cross. It is unto all that believe.

[00:14:01] The apostle proceeds at the end of chapter 3 to the end of chapter 4 into a few more thoughts as to the gospel.

First, it's not only for the Jews, but just as much as for the Greeks, for the nations, for everyone.

John 3.16 tells us that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life and the apostle Paul confirms.

In chapter 4, the faith is placed in relation with works, circumcision, promises, resurrection and raising up of the Lord Jesus. First works.

The apostle takes two examples. One is Abraham and the second is David, two outstanding believers of the old dispensation. [00:15:06] In fact, if you remember in Matthew 1.1, Jesus Christ is son of Abraham and son of David.

Abraham received the promise, Genesis 15.

He accepted it by faith.

He said God was true and accepted it. He believed him and it was imputed to him in righteousness.

Was it by works? No. But the works confirmed faith and the epistle of James shows the importance of works as to not oppose to faith, but as the justification, the proof faith exists.

The truth is recognized by its fruits.

[00:16:03] If there are no fruits, one may doubt whether life is there. So works is not in place of faith. Works prove the faith.

Faith introduces, makes it available to us to enter into the works the Lord Jesus has prepared for us ahead of time.

Circumcision was given to Abraham 14 years after the promise of Genesis 15.

So there was no contradiction between the work of faith and circumcision.

Circumcision was the setting apart of mankind, of a family, for God away from the world.

To that extent, Abraham is the father of all believers.

[00:17:02] Circumcision was not given before the promise. It was given afterwards, 14 years afterwards. So Abraham, when he received the sign of circumcision, became the father of circumcision.

In other words, he is the head of a family of those who accept God's work, God's word.

The circumcision is the proof, the seal of the faith.

That's why he's called not only the father of circumcision, but he's called the father of faith.

Then the promises.

Promises were made to Abraham into an unconditional fashion. There was no conditions placed by God upon the fulfillment of promises. A distinct difference were the promises given through the law to Moses, which were dependent, [00:18:06] subjective to the fulfillment of a commandment.

Abraham's promises were unconditional. In Abraham, we find the election, the call, and the vessel of promises.

Those promises given to Abraham were confirmed to Isaac and his seed, and Galatians 3 tells us the seed is Jesus Christ.

So our promises will come true through Christ.

So works, circumcisions, promises.

The last one was circumcision, it was a resurrection, raising up. When Abraham offered up his son, he knew God would be able to give him back through death.

[00:19:01] In other words, he had given his son to God and received it as a gift through the resurrection.

So faith is in relation with the resurrection.

In chapter 3, verse 25, it is in relation with the blood of Christ. In chapter 4, verse 25, it is in relation with the resurrection of Christ. What is the conclusion of chapter 4? He was delivered, Lord Jesus, for our offenses and raised again for our justification.

Chapter 5, verse 11, gives us the consequences and conclusions of that first part of the doctrinal part of the epistle to the Romans, which started, as we say, from chapter 1, verse 16 or 17, to the end of the first paragraph of chapter 5, verse 11.

[00:20:05] The consequences are sevenfold. First, peace of God, peace with God, through Jesus Christ.

I'll just outline those consequences. Peace with God.

The hope of the glory of God, the joy in sufferings, tribulation produces patience, patience gives experience, experience gives hope, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, the reconciliation to God and the salvation, and finally, the glory [00:21:04] of God in Christ as the hope. Reconciliation is found here, I think. There are a few scriptures in the New Testament about reconciliation. You reconcile enemies.

God is not man's enemy.

God loves people and loves mankind, but man constitutes themselves as enemy to God in their own minds because they are sinful and full of sins.

So reconciliation is the starting up again of relationship on the ground of the redemption produced by the Lord Jesus Christ's work, starting up of relation between God and believers.

Reconciliation is through Jesus Christ.

This first part of the doctrinal portion of the epistle treated essentially about sins, [00:22:06] offenses, sins plural.

To sins there are answers, forgiveness and justification, justification in relation with guilt, forgiveness

in relation to the sins.

In fact, this portion of the epistle answers to a question God asked the woman, Adam's wife, in the garden, what hast thou done?

Repeated to Cain when he murdered his brother, what hast thou done?

There was another sudden question asked by God in the garden to Adam after the fall.

Where art thou?

The answer to that second question is found in the further portion of the epistle from [00:23:07] chapter 5 verse 12 to the end of chapter 8.

In that portion we find the question treated about sin, the nature, the tree produces bad fruits, the bad servant produces bad works.

To this answers deliverance.

So to sins plural there is forgiveness and justification, for sin singular there is deliverance.

If you remember for one second what was the position of the repentant manufacturer at the cross, he went through in a brief hour from the first portion of the epistle to chapter [00:24:06] 5 verse 11.

He had no time to understand and realize the importance of the second portion of this epistle because he was the Lord Jesus that very same day. But most of us have another history.

We have to understand, we have to learn to live with ourselves. And this we are going to explain, to be explained about this in the second portion of this epistle from chapter 5 verse 12 to the end of chapter 8.

You need to turn, it's so important, to appendix A, which is in a graphic form the summary of the truth presented in the second paragraph of chapter 5.

[00:25:05] Chapter 5 starts verse 12.

Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men that they all have sinned. Nevertheless, verse 14, death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. It's most interesting to realize here that Paul tells that Adam and the coming down of Adam on earth as God's creature was the image, was a prophecy of the coming of the second man, last Adam, Christ himself.

[00:26:03] Now there is a similitude, likeness between Adam, first man, and Christ, second man. But except for this, everything else is more opposite to one another than similar to one another.

Adam and Christ are considered at the end of chapter 5 verse 13 to 21 as the heads of two races, two families of men, of mankind.

Adam's family is an earthly family.

Christ's family is a heavenly family. The behavior, the deeds of the head of the family have consequences on the position and responsibility of the members of his own family. Adam on one side, Christ on the other.

[00:27:05] Every one of the verses 15 to 21, there are seven verses, show then the contrast between Adam's family and Christ.

To make it more clear, I have put in bold letters the key words on the two tables. Verse 16, condemnation on one side, justification.

Verse 17, death reigns on Christ's side.

It's not the life which reigns, it's the believers, us, reigning in life, through life, the power of eternal life.

Verse 18, now verse 18 is the more important verse as to the consequences, the bearing of the act of Adam's initial sin and Christ's obedience to death.

[00:28:03] By one man's disobedience on Adam's side, many were made sinners. On Christ's side, obedience of one, many shall be made righteous. Then the measure of sin and grace, sin may abound, grace over superabounds.

Sin has reigned unto death, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Here, it's interesting to realize that justification is justification of life. In other words, life eternal is connected with justification by faith.

And I've added two more, the end verse of Romans 6 and the beginning of Romans 7 and 8.

Wages of sin were death, gift of God is eternal life.

[00:29:05] Salvation is not only of our soul, it is of our life here below.

In Romans 6, verse 22, eternal life is considered as obtained at the end of the Christian race.

And the next verse, eternal life is the free God, free gift of God.

But the salvation is not only of our soul, of our race, but also of our body. Our body will be glorified, will be changed into the likeness of the body of Christ's glory. Paul says, who shall deliver me from this body of death? The answer is found in chapter 8, verse 11, God shall quicken your mortal bodies. [00:30:03] Now this is the beginning of the second doctrinal part of the epistle, which shows then the difference between Adam's race and Christ's family. In Romans 6, we have not only the death to sin, the deliverance from sin, but the deliverance from the flesh. What is flesh? The flesh is this evil principle which belongs to us, which dwells within our body.

In an unbeliever, in someone who doesn't believe God, is nothing else but flesh. Evil is not in the nature, in the body itself, it's in flesh. Flesh now has been crucified with Christ at the cross. [00:31:02]

But so far, we need to be exercised to justify this, that the flesh is put to death.

And I have mentioned in the brochure three verses which show us the example of Paul.

The first one is found in Colossians 3.

Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth. Romans 6, verse 11, a chapter we have under our consideration now. Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. In practice, Paul did this for himself.

[00:32:04] And in 2 Corinthians 4, he says, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. Without spending too much time on this very important subject, we'll just place this in relation to the history of Israel in times past. You remember when the Israelites went out of Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea. Then they continued in the wilderness for 40 years. They went through Jordan.

The Jordan was the path between the wilderness on one side and the holy place of blessing on the other side.

Jordan is the emblem of ourselves being dead with Christ to be risen with Him.

[00:33:08] In fact, the epistle to the Romans is essentially taking us up to Jordan inclusive.

It does not show us crossing Jordan to enter by faith in the Holy Land. Ephesians is the epistle which corresponds to Joshua and the taking up of the land. Colossians is between Romans and Ephesians. Colossians is strictly upon Jordan. We are dead with Christ to be risen with Him. Dead with Christ, it's negative. It's not the purpose. The purpose of God is that the life of Christ be exemplified, be shown in our mortal body. So if we are dead with Christ, we are also risen with Christ. If you are dead, mortify. [00:34:03] If you are resurrected, if you are raised up with Christ, then look for things up above. So you are dead.

That's the basic moral principle. Reckon yourself is the call to take this position by faith and in practice bearing about everywhere, always and everywhere, that dying, the death of Christ, that His life be manifest in our mortal body. So this is chapter 6. The example is not circumcision as in chapter 4, but baptism. Baptism is precisely the emblem of our being put in the Lord's death to be going beyond the waters of baptism and be raised again with Christ. Chapter 7 adds one more thing. [00:35:01] We are dead to sin, chapter 5, verse 12 to the end of the chapter. We are dead to the flesh, but we are dead to the law. And Galatians will tell us also we are dead to the world. Dead to the flesh, now dead to the law. This chapter 7 has been a struggle for many of us, I think. And I would beg the young people within ourselves tonight not to be discouraged if there is a struggle to go through this difficult chapter 7. The position of the believer with regard to Christ and the law. There are three people presented here. Law, Christ and the believer.

The believer is compared to a woman who cannot be married to two husbands. It's adultery. So you cannot continue the relationship between the law and Christ. [00:36:05] Who in the three should die? Because Christ has died for us. We die and then the law cannot claim anything against us. You cannot claim anything against a dead man. So this is not the law which dies. The law is perfect. It's

me who dies. I understand that there is no more relation with the law and the law cannot claim anything on me anymore because Christ has taken this on our behalf. The war and the malediction was taken by Christ upon Him on the cross. Galatians 3 tells us. Now, this chapter 7 to better understand what he has in mind the Apostle Paul identifies himself with the believer. This believer has eternal life. [00:37:02] Definitely. But either he has not the seal of the Spirit or at least he doesn't have the enjoyment and the knowledge of being sealed of the Holy Spirit. So he struggles. It's desperate. He finds to tell in chapter 7 now in me that in my flesh there is no good thing. That's a difficult statement to accept.

Yet it's important.

What happens? Verse 7, chapter 7, verse 24 O righteous man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The believer will struggle as long as he does not realize [00:38:03] or is not ready to accept that deliverance has to come from someone else not within ourselves. As long as you look for yourself to find strength within yourself it's finished. You have no chance. As soon as we understand that the Lord Jesus has made the work necessary that everything is finished. His work is complete. So by faith, we have faith, we accept this. The difference between chapter 7, verse 24 and 25 is absolutely remarkable. Nothing else needs to be done. You need a helicopter with a cable to pick you up from the marsh. And the more you move in the marsh, the worse it becomes. The more you enter, you need the help of another. And the Lord Jesus is ready to help you. Now, once we have understood [00:39:01] and that we accept to be dead to sin, dead to the flesh, dead to the world, dead to the law then the consequences of chapter 8 are beautiful and marvelous. First thing, no more condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. Incidentally, I would like to stress the fact that the word law is used in two different meanings.

It is the law of Moses, the Ten Commandments. It is also another meaning, the law of the spirit or the law of the faith, I think.

The law is a moral principle according to which the same principle produces the same results. In scientific language, you speak, engineers or otherwise, [00:40:01] you speak about the law of gravitation and what the bodies falling down to the earth respect certain immutable laws. So the law of the spirit is not the law of Moses, it is opposed to it. In chapter 8, it is probably the most comprehensive survey and display of the operations and person of the Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit to be found in scripture. We find first the spirit of Christ as being life.

Making testimony, witnessing within ourselves that we are sons of God and children of God. We are sons as regards to the position, responsibilities and privileges and we are children of God, by faith we say Abba, Father. The same expression the Lord Jesus used in the Garden of Gethsemane. [00:41:06] Abba, Father, this is by faith, this is by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the first fruit. The Holy Spirit groans with groanings which cannot be uttered. There are three things mentioned here, three items about groaning. The creation groans, the believer groans and the spirit intercedes with groanings which cannot be uttered. We believers groan within ourselves, within a groaning creation expecting, waiting for the hope and for the deliverance. And meanwhile the spirit of Christ intercedes with us. For us in heaven.

We are not supposed, we are never in the scripture [00:42:04] do we find that we pray to the Holy Spirit, do we pray in spirit, through the Holy Spirit, by the Holy Spirit's power. But the Holy Spirit

intercedes with us. And the Lord Jesus also intercedes with us. So the believer groans within a groaning creature, a groaning creation, the Holy Spirit groans and intercedes and the Lord Jesus intercedes. Nothing can separate us from the God and from the love of Christ and the love of God, which is forever. We have mentioned that in the epistle to the Romans do not speak in detail about the assembly as body of Christ. And does not call in detail on the eternal counsels of God but rather treats the responsibility of man and the believer. There is one exception. [00:43:03] In chapter 8, verse 29. 28 and 29.

Let's read this. 29. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn from any brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What then shall she say to these things? We find then the foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, and even glorified.

We are waiting for the glory to come, but in God's counsels we are considered already as already glorified. [00:44:05] There are five rings of God's eternal counsels concerning us but to the glory of His Son that He might have the preeminence that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. Chapters 9, 10, and 11 go together. There was one vital question which needed to be settled. What about the Gospel, the good news of salvation, in relation to the previous relations of God with the Jewish people, the earthly people of Israel? Was there conflict? Would one supersede the other? What then?

The Apostle proceeds in three chapters to show the relationship between the Gospel and the provisions of all the ways of God for Israel.

[00:45:08] In chapter 9, the Apostle mentions first that God is sovereign. He has no account to render to anyone. After all, He is the Creator of all. So who can ask Him questions? God has supported with long forbearance, long patience, vessels of wrath ready for destruction. And yet He has prepared also vessels of mercy ready for the glory. In chapter 10, the Apostle continues.

We'll just read a few verses. Romans 10, verse 9.

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, [00:46:04] thou shalt be saved. For with the heart men believe that unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. And further in chapter 10, verse 14 and the other, you find something which is the reverse order. If you place to the normal order of God working towards man and to the preaching of the Gospel, you find a preacher being sent by God.

The preacher preaches the good news of salvation. The hearers are supposed to hear. They are supposed to believe. And if they believe, they will be capable of worshipping and calling to God. So there is a complete circle. God sends His messengers, His apostles.

[00:47:02] Those being sent preach.

The preaching is believed. Believer is heard. The hearing produces believing by faith.

And believing produces worshipping by faith. And worship to God. And the circle completes. In

chapter 11, Paul justifies the fact that in fact Israel was not rejected for good, for all. There was a blending in part.

To make it a little more clear, the apostle takes the emblem, the figure of an olive tree. Israel is likened either to an olive tree, to a fig tree, or to a vineyard. A vineyard. To a vineyard. Here it's an olive tree. The olive tree is the emblem of God's government on earth. [00:48:06] Remember, it's not a question of salvation of the soul and accomplishment of God's counsels for heaven. It's the development of God's government on earth. Abraham is the foundation of all promises. So Abraham represents the roots of the tree and the trunk. The trunk of the olive tree has branches. The first category of branches was Israel. Israel was unfaithful. So God cut the branches and sent them aside. What happened? At the time of the prophet Uzziah, he sent this terrible message, Lo ami, not my people.

Lo recama, no mercy.

So this word has been on the people of Israel up to now.

[00:49:10] It's blending in part of Israel. When they hear, they cannot understand, except that the Jewish person today would believe in Christ Jesus as his savior and would belong to the church. We're talking now here about the dispensations on earth. So Israel was set aside, cut off. New branches were grafted on. They were the nations. But sad enough, the nations did not do any better in terms of testimony in the world than the Jews. And ultimately, the second branch will be cut off again. And Israel will take its part. So finally, everybody is convinced of misericordia, afet fer misericordia tous. [00:50:04] I don't remember the word in English. Yeah, verse 29.

The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Yeah, verse 32.

Romans 11, verse 32.

God has concluded them all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all. So Paul concludes those three chapters relationship between faith and believers and Israel by a doxology on the wisdom of God, or the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. Starting chapter 12 to the end of the epistle, there are now practical exhortations. [00:51:01] Chapter 12 and 13 go together. Chapter 12, the first paragraph. If you look for one moment, page... Page 6.

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The believer is called to offer up his body as a sacrifice to God. How can we do this? By putting in practice the last exhortation of the last verse of chapter 13. Not taking care of the flesh to satisfy the lusts thereof. So those two chapters go together, 12 and 13. First, you offer up your body as a sacrifice to God, [00:52:03] acceptable, and you know the perfect, acceptable will of God. The next paragraph tells us about gifts.

There are three scriptures, essentially, speaking about gifts to the assembly. Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4.

The lists are different. Here, they are more practical, more detailed than in the other scriptures. If you

turn for one second to Appendix B, I found, I think it's right, that there is a very interesting relationship between the list of gifts given in the first paragraph and the successive exhortations given to the Romans.

[00:53:03] If you look in detail at the end of this chapter, you will find that there are 21 separate exhortations from verse 9 to verse 20.

They go in triptych, three by three. There are seven groups of three exhortations. Each group of three has a relationship with one special item of the gifts of the Spirit, like prophecy, love without dissimulation, brotherly love, honor to one another. In fact, the practical exhortations show us what should be the state of our mind, the state of our heart, either to give the gifts or to receive them.

We should be in a proper moral state [00:54:02] to be able to work for the benefit of the Body of Christ and for our own soul. The conclusion, good should overcome evil, good should be more powerful than evil. So that takes us to the end of chapter 12. Chapter 13 tells us something else. We need to be subjected to the authorities, to the powers. There are two reasons. First, you are a citizen. You are a citizen of the UK or France, Germany or the like. And to such, we have to be cautious about the wrath. But also, you depend upon God. And because of your conscience, then you must obey the authorities because behind the authorities, there is God who has placed them upon the nations. If there is conflict between authorities on one side [00:55:04] and obedience to God, God prevails. The disciples gave an interesting example in Acts chapter 4. Now, the night is fast end.

We expect the beginning of the eternal day. Meanwhile, we should wait for the Lord Jesus and be prepared for His return. In chapters 14 and 15, we have the relationship between God and man. And the relationship between Christians. There are two important things which I need to stress. Individual judgments between Christians should be prohibited. We should eliminate those. They are not for the benefit of anyone. And the reason being given is twofold. [00:56:04] One is that there is the judgment seat. In the French version, it is the judgment seat of God which is called the judgment seat of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5. There is one day where everything will come to light in the Lord's presence. And this has two consequences.

In 2 Corinthians 5, call men to believe in Christ.

The love of the Lord should constrain our hearts.

And here, prevent individual judgments. The second reason is that we should exemplify the moral characters of the Kingdom of God. Chapter 14, verse 17. The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. [00:57:01] You understand that the Kingdom of God here is not the dispensational kingdom. It is the moral qualities, moral characters of the Kingdom of God. In fact, the characters of God himself. Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The subject is treated to the end of verse 7 of chapter 15.

The result of preventing individual judgments, of burying one another in love, is to receive one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God. From chapter 15, verse 8 to the end of chapter 15, the Apostle returns to speak a little bit about himself and his ministry. The epistle was probably written during the second missionary journey of Paul in year 58.

As you know, he was a prisoner taken in Jerusalem [00:58:07] at the end of his third missionary

journey, then transferred to Caesarea for two years and went to Rome for another two years where he wrote his last four epistles, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon.

Then he wrote the second epistle to Timothy a little later, just one year before knowing Martyrdom.

Paul had in mind to go even to Spain.

The Gospel had proceeded from Jerusalem, Samaria, minor Asia, went through Europe. In Rome, no one has found any mention of either Paul or Peter having worked for this large assembly to be formed in Rome. [00:59:04] It was someone else and the Spirit of God did not tell us. But Paul had upon his heart to see the precious Roman souls and he wanted to be delivered from the ungodly in Judea.

He wanted to go to Spain. In fact, he wanted to continue his work from the Greek world to the Roman, to the Latin world. Did he do this? Personally, I don't think so. At least the Word of God doesn't tell us anything. But there was one thing which remained with Paul. The love of his Saviour. Chapter 16 contains an unusually large number of greetings. 29 brothers and sisters are receiving greetings from the Apostles.

[01:00:06] We find some people like Priscilla and Achillas who are found six times in the Acts and the Epistles. We find many others. You are all precious to the soul of Paul. To finish the Epistle, the Apostle tells us that we should be cautious to mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned and avoid them. You will be surprised. I don't know too much about the conditions of the assemblies here in this country. But at least in France, I think Romans 16, verse 17 is written absolutely exactly for us. And we have just simply to apply this. What is the moral principle which underlines this? [01:01:03] We should be wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil. Wise for good, simple for evil. It is exactly the opposite of what people do in the world. To try to prevent to fall into sins, they want to be wise unto evil to think they will avoid it and they neglect the good. For the Christians, it is exactly the opposite. Please, the Lord may allow us to be always occupied with good and practically evil will not find its portion within our hearts. The Apostle has now finished to the display of the Gospel.

He could not finish the Epistle without at least one final mention of this which he has upon his heart.

[01:02:02] The mystery.

The mystery by excellence. The mystery concerning Christ and his beloved Church. The revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began. Which has now been made manifest by the Scriptures of the Prophets, the Prophets of the New Testament according to the commandment of the Everlasting God. So the Apostle concludes with the doxology. To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen. May the Lord bless his word for our hearts. Amen.