

RENEWED AND APPROVED IN CHRIST JESUS (ROMANS 12-13)

Last week we looked at the narrative account in **Acts 25-26** of the Apostle Paul testifying before King Agrippa, where he shared the gospel of Christ Jesus with him, yet Agrippa concluded, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." What do you suppose was holding him back? Despite his heritage, despite his shortcomings or sins against God, he had an opportunity, as Jesus had said to Paul, to **"receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in [Him]."** (**Acts 26:18**) Prior to that, Felix, the governor, instead of heeding to the Word of God by the testimony of the Apostle Paul, he chose to wait it out for some money. And then in the company of King Agrippa, the new governor, Festus, took the route of just calling Paul crazy. In each of those accounts, what was keeping King Agrippa and Felix and Festus from really believing on Christ Jesus and receiving Him? The Apostle Paul, I believe, gives us a likely answer, at least in the case with Felix, in his letter to Timothy, in **1 Timothy 6:3-12**, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. [Jesus took that to the end by saying, **"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'** For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness**, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (**Matthew 6:31-34**)

Paul continued saying:] But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man[woman] of God, flee these things and **pursue righteousness**, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. [all of which we get through Christ Jesus!] Fight[agonizomai] the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." Similarly, yet more pointedly, the Apostle John addresses the issue, in his first epistle, saying "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but **he who does the will of God abides forever.**" (**1 John 2:15-17**) There's the sticking point! Jesus Himself warns us that we must count the cost, which is essentially the same as considering life vs. death, blessings vs. curses, God's Way vs. your own way (ooh!). Jesus said, **"whoever does not bear his cross and come after**

Me cannot be My disciple ["is not worthy of Me" (**Matt.10:38**)]. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'? Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. [to become a friend of the world] So likewise, **whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.**" (**Luke 14:27-33**) Similarly, Jesus also said, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (**Matt 16:25**) While we are being called into service into the Lord's army, so to speak, Jesus comforts us with these words, "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. **Come to Me**, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest**. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am **gentle and lowly in heart**, and you will find **rest for your souls.**" (**Matthew 11:27-29**) You see, we are not being saved from our sins just so we can run amock in heaven. We are entering into a covenant relationship with God in Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul explains, "do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you [if you have believed on and received Christ], whom you have from God, and **you are not your own**? For you were bought at a price; therefore **glorify God** in your body and in your spirit, **which are God's.**" (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**) That is then how we can say, 'Jesus cannot be JUST your Savior. He MUST ALSO be your LORD!' That is surrenderedness to the Lord!

Now in the book of Romans, in the first chapter, the Apostle Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by **faith.**" (**Romans 1:16-17**) If one cannot put their trust in the One "who being the brightness of His [God's] glory and the express image of His person, and **upholding all things by the word of His power**, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (**Hebrews 1:3**), then there's a huge problem for that person. The next issue is in our need to submit to God's will and ways. Paul goes on to say in **Romans 1** that those who rebelled against God and His ways, God gives them up to their own lusts, to have a debased (NKJV, ESV), reprobate (KJV), depraved (NIV) mind. Adokimos, means "not approved or tested". Dokimos "was used for the proving (testing) of coins, i.e. confirming they were genuine (not

counterfeit, corrupted).”¹ We’ll see how that applies shortly in **Romans 12 (vs.2)**. In the proceeding chapters of ch. 1, Paul explains how through Christ Jesus we are saved by faith through the righteousness of God. “But now the **righteousness of God** apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, **even the righteousness of God**, through **faith in Jesus Christ**, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is **in Christ Jesus**, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate **His righteousness**, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time **His righteousness**, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has **faith in Jesus**.” (**Romans 3:21-26**) There are three themes in that passage of Scripture. 1. Our faith, 2. in Christ Jesus 3. His Righteousness! It is most certainly in His Righteousness that we are saved by faith in Christ Jesus. Yet we are not just being saved from our sins, although we truly are. **Romans 5:10-11** says, “For if when we were enemies we were **reconciled to God** through the death of His Son, much more, having been **reconciled**, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the **reconciliation**.”

We are not following the letter of the law, in legalism, we are following Christ in Communion/Fellowship with Him! He is who we are pursuing, “**dioko**” for the “**koinonia**”: fellowship, sharing, contribution, participation, because we love Him as He first loved us and as He is our Good Shepherd who leads us (**John 10:11**)! The Apostle John says in **1 John 1:6-7**, “If we say that we have fellowship [koinonia] with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light [as He IS the Light], we have fellowship [koinonia] with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” In that fellowship that we have in Christ we then are bearing the fruit of the Spirit, “love, joy, peace, patience [longsuffering], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (**Galatians 5:22-25**) It is in Christ Jesus that we have (**1 Corinthians 1:30**) Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. And we are not **merely** following Jesus to live. Jesus said, “**I AM the Door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**” (**John 10:9-10**)

1 <https://biblehub.com/greek/1384.htm>

We are then being approved and renewed in Christ Jesus, in abundance, to bear fruit for the glory of God!

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[Romans 12:1-2 (Living Sacrifices to God)] I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and **perfect will of God**.

[As He is perfect in ALL of His Ways (**2 Samuel 22:31**) and His Works (**Deuteronomy 32:4**), of which we are His workmanship (**Ephesians 2:10**)]

[Romans 12:3-8 (Serve God with Spiritual Gifts)]

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as **God has dealt to each one a measure of faith**. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Mercy! We are told in **Hebrews 4:16**, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." We all need God's mercy and grace, every day, but not just for ourselves. Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount said, "**Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**" (**Matthew 5:3-10**) What came first, the chicken or the egg? The chicken of course. Same thing with God's mercy. He has demonstrated His mercy toward us through Christ Jesus, we then respond accordingly showing mercy to others. Then we go to His throne of grace to receive more mercy and grace to help in time of need, for ourselves and for others.

[Romans 12:9-21 (Behave Like a Christian)] Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the

saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. **If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.** Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

[Romans 13:1-7 (Submit to Government)] Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

[Now we have quite a few examples in the Old Testament of men of God who did not rebel against the rulers and there are examples also of those who had to not comply to the rulers as they would have compromised their relationship with God. Daniel being thrown in the lions den, is one, because He worshipped God at a time when only King Darius was to be worshipped. (**Daniel 6**) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is another to where they would not bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold and were then thrown into the furnace of fire. (**Daniel 3**) King David, before he was king, is a perfect example of not speaking evil of rulers, despite them being evil. King Saul had chased David all over Judea to kill him, yet at the death of Saul, David said "Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided; they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with luxury; who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. "How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle!" (**2 Samuel 1:23-25**) For whatever reason though, according to God's wisdom, the rulers that be God has established and IS reigning over them. "He [Christ Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth,

visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And **He is before all things**, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in **all things** He may have the preeminence." (**Colossians 1:15-18**)] Also we are told by the Apostle Paul, "Put on the whole armor of God [which is in Christ Jesus], that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (**Ephesians 6:11-13**) "**Judge not, that you be not judged.**" (**Matthew 7:1-2**)

[**Romans 13:8-10 (Love Your Neighbor)**] Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. [Really, as we are following the teachings/commandments of Christ Jesus they are indeed summed up in what He said were they Great Commandments of God, to love Him with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind and to also love our neighbors as ourselves (**Mark 12:30-31**).] [**Romans 13:11-14 (Put on Christ)**] And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; [As the Apostle Peter said, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (**1 Peter 5:8**)] for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. [Be renewed and approved in Christ Jesus! "Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." (**1 Peter 2:6-10**)