

97-04-13a

As we continue our worship this morning, if you'll turn with me to Romans chapter 1, we find our Scripture reading this morning in this place. We, of course, are studying the book of Romans on Sunday mornings, but both last week and this week, we find ourselves returning to the beginning of the book to keep sight of where we are in the letter and what the points are that Paul is making for us as we find ourselves in the end of chapter 12. Paul began this letter in this way.

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God, which he promised before through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. Through him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ. To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request if by some means now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. For I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established.

That is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you but was hindered until now, that I might also have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both the wise and unwise.

So as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for deliverance 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. It's very important, as we have pointed out all through our study, to keep our context in mind as we focus on any particular portion of the Word of God. In this case, we're in Romans chapter 12.

We have survived through the study of several chapters, many of which are very dense with truth and with close argument on the part of the Apostle Paul. And we have found ourselves in chapter 12, the recipients of encouragement and urging from Paul to live in a certain way. And this is one of those sections of Scripture that people who like to preach like to preach on because it's practical, it's clear, it's not hard to figure out.

You don't have to slog through, as you do in some cases, perhaps in Romans chapter 9 or Romans chapter 7. There's not a lot of deep things to figure out. It's very straightforward. It says, this is how we should live.

The section that we're in right now, starting in verse 9 of chapter 12, let love be without hypocrisy, abhor what is evil, cling to what is good. Now, as they like to say in seminary, that will preach. I mean, you can wax eloquent on that kind of thing.

I can build a whole lesson just on abhor what is evil. I could build a whole other lesson on cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love.

Don't lag in diligence. Rejoice in hope and so forth. Distribute to the needs of the saints.

Boy, you can get an entire sermon out of that. You know, the giving has been down a little here lately. You know, you need to distribute to the needs of the saints.

And we tend to hear a lot of emphasis on the practical portions of a letter such as this. The reason we've returned to the beginning of the letter is to remind ourselves of why Paul wrote this and how he has fulfilled that purpose thus far in the letter. So we've just seen in our scripture reading that Paul says that he is called to be an apostle.

He has, in verse 5 of chapter 1, received through Christ grace and apostleship with a view toward the obedience associated with faith. And that's really what this chapter 12 section is talking about, isn't it? That the argument of the book, Righteousness by Faith, that we've reviewed so many times in stark contrast to Righteousness by Works, which was the going thing, Paul has stressed and spent 11 chapters talking about the importance of righteousness by faith. Now, however, he's starting to talk about lifestyle.

He's talking about the way we live, what people see, the actions that we perform, the kind of person that we are when we are around one another. What is this? It's the obedience that springs from faith, that's associated with faith, that is the healthy result of a healthy faith. And so it's very important for us to keep this in context, to not just jump here and say, here's the way you ought to live.

We run the risk of doing the very thing that Paul is arguing against in the book. We don't just grab chapter 12 and hit each other over the head with it and say, you know, you ought to be more loving, you ought to be more generous, you ought to be more sympathetic, and you ought to be more involved. You need to be having a greater impact.

But this is what we get a lot, especially if we find ourselves motivated to seek the truth and to be transformed, to be renewed in the inner man, to respond to the things that Paul said at the very outset of this chapter. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. If we seek this, which is what we're doing this morning, what we do when we listen to the teaching of the Word of God,

we're passive in a sense.

We're focused on trying to take in and digest the truth of the Word of God and have it become a part of the way we think. Well, people look at that and say, you're cold, you're uninvolved, you're heartless, you don't have a burden, you don't have love. Isn't the message of the New Testament love? You're not loving, you're just sitting there looking out for number one.

You think, well, I've got mine and I have peace in my soul and that was really my whole objective. And Paul says, no, here's what the outcome of faith should be. He told Timothy this, the goal of our instruction is love.

And love is going to manifest itself in these ways that he's talking about. But where does that love come from? It doesn't come from browbeating. It doesn't come from someone holding up a measuring stick and saying, you don't measure tall enough in involvement.

You don't measure tall enough in evangelism. You don't measure tall enough in your efforts to live the Christian life. But this is the message that we get everywhere.

That's why there are so many discipleship programs. That's why there's so much emphasis on personal accountability and small group dynamics. Why does everyone like this? Why does everyone like to go down to the stadium and rub elbows with thousands of other men, for example? What's going on with that? Why is that so popular in Christianity? Because it's peer pressure.

It is a motivation to get people more involved. I've sort of referred indirectly to the promise keepers off and on. And let me preface what I'm about to say about them by saying this.

We, in our history, the sort of strand of Christianity that we represent and that we have followed in terms of pursuing a teaching emphasis of the word of God, have sometimes been very quick to find a flaw in something and then dismiss the entire thing without further analysis. It's sort of, in some ways, it's even been unconscious. But we say, well, you know, those brand X people over there, here's the problem with what they're doing.

And then we immediately assign no further weight to anything that they think or anything that they do. We say, well, we have found the flaw, so we've dismissed them just out of hand. And one of the things that we should realize even from what Paul has been teaching here in Romans about Israel, for example, Israel made a huge mistake.

Israel had a lot of dead branches that got snapped out of the tree of God's plan for the production of spiritual fruit. But God has not abandoned Israel and God has not forsaken Israel. And Israel will be delivered and Israel will ultimately fulfill their purpose in God's plan.

But the fact that they had a problem is evident, but it doesn't put them out of the picture. And we should be careful. And I hope you realize that if I point something out about a specific group, it is

not my intention to character assassinate that group completely.

It is a healthy thing to speak the truth in love and to point out where something isn't representing the word of God. But that is not to say that because promise keepers or any other group has a flaw, that the whole thing ought to be stopped. They should shut it down.

They should never have any further action whatsoever. There are ways in which things can be done better in the light of the word of God. And that's my point.

There are a lot of denominational churches that are healthier than many Bible churches. There are a lot of para-church and extra-church organizations that have got a closer grip on the truth of the word of God than the church itself. And so this is not to tar them with a broad brush and dismiss them out of hand.

But I will say this, the word of God clearly teaches that our motivation for living the Christian life should be, and you should know the answer to this even before I say it, what is the motivation in the Christian life? If you think about your three Christian virtues in 1 Corinthians 13 that remain, hope is the motivation. It is the expectation of God's consummation of human history, the evaluation that will take place, the opportunities that we're going to have in the next age. Faith is the means by which we live the Christian life.

Hope is our motivation and love should be the result. And those three virtues remain, but the greatest of them is love. Why? Because when you have love, genuine love, that means that the hope and faith are healthy and active because genuine love cannot exist apart from faith and hope.

But hope is the motivation. So what about organizations that seek to motivate and seek to create change by peer pressure, by what other people think? That is a giant step backwards. It may sound like one small leap for a man, but it is a giant leap backwards for mankind.

Why? Because that's not divine power. That's not reflective of the glory of God. That's reflective of the persuasiveness of man.

Small group encounters, personal accountability. Let me disciple you. I'm going to hold you to account.

The next time you see me, you're going to be embarrassed or ashamed if you haven't towed the line in this area. That any unbeliever can do that. The Rotarians or some other civic minded organization can do that.

And that's what Israel did. That's what the Judaizers did. That's what Paul is arguing against in Romans.

So when we find ourselves here in chapter 12, it's critically important for us to remember that

when Paul starts talking about the practical outworking of these things, and he starts talking about being generous and being thoughtful of others and so forth, he's not calling us to that directly. He's calling us to that through faith, as the result of faith, through hope and as the result of hope. And that's why he says, I beseech you by the mercies of God.

I'm not just telling you, you need to change and do different. That has no power. A lot of these things we already know, but it's the means that is critically important.

So last week we looked at the contrast between Romans chapter two and Romans chapter 12. We saw Paul talking to believers in Romans chapter two and saying, you old man who think that you are a light to the blind and a teacher of the babes. You're resting on the law.

You make your boast in God. You think that you've got the righteousness issue all sewed up. You know His will.

You approve the things that are excellent. You are instructed out of the law. You're confident that you're a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes.

Remember that whole characterization in Romans chapter two? This is exactly what we want to avoid. And yet this is exactly what is considered to be a great Christian today. You mingle in a group of believers and so forth and someone will say, I want you to meet so and so.

And they bring you up and you introduce and you shake hands and they say, this person has been such an influence on me. He has done this and done that. And my mentor and this, that and the other, perhaps.

Well, you know, there are wonderful believers and we appreciate when God has blessed us through other believers, but it's a tricky thing because you run the risk of saying this person has changed me. This person has been an influence. That's not supposed to happen.

That's not where the power is. It's not in the beneficence and the example and the modeling and the discipling and the mentoring of another believer. It is the power of the word of God and the spirit of God inside us, fueling our faith and our hope and our love.

So it helps us to go back and keep in mind the flow of this letter, the flow of this communication that the Apostle Paul is giving. And he started out in the very beginning of the letter, telling us what he was going to do. He's going to communicate the gospel to the believers who are at Rome.

And we know what that gospel is. It's more than get saved from the lake of fire. It's be delivered in this age, be delivered from wrong thinking, be delivered from sin, be delivered from false religion, be delivered from false philosophy.

Have genuine power to overcome by faith whatever obstacles come up in the path, be they circumstances or people, false ways of thinking. How can we fulfill our calling? And he introduces all of those elements right here in the beginning of the letter, doesn't he? Look back at chapter one. He says, through Christ, we have received grace and apostleship.

So he's talking about himself as an apostle. God has given me grace. God has given me this commission.

Unto, the Greek preposition, *eis*, E-I-S, which is one of the most misunderstood words in the Greek language. If you look it up in a basic grammar, it says that it means into or unto. But the best translation of this preposition, especially when you're talking about non-concrete things, is with a view toward, with a view toward.

Many times this preposition will be associated with an infinitive absolute or a nominative absolute or some other grammatical construction. And what it means by an absolute is here's a piece of the sentence that's kind of floating out there with no direct link to the rest of the sentence. And grammarians and Greek scholars will puzzle and spill dead seas of ink trying to figure out what these absolutes are talking about.

But if you look at the preposition, that's the link and that's the tie. And many times you'll find *eis* in there. And it says with a view toward.

This is what we should have in mind when we're looking at this particular issue, this particular subject. So what does Paul say here? The whole purpose of the grace that God has given me, my calling and my gifting and my training as an apostle is with a view toward the obedience associated with faith. The obedience that should spring out of faith.

The Jews, the Judaizers, the Jewish Christians who are trying to drag people back into obedience to the law, they're big on obedience. They love this. Oh yeah, obedience.

We want you to obey and here's your rules to obey. Paul says, no, this is obedience that springs from faith. It has to be sourced in faith.

It has to be motivated out of faith and hope. That's the key. So when we think about ourselves, what do we have to watch out for? It's the very thing Paul is warning us against here.

Have any of us ever felt pressure from fellow believers, whether it's spoken or unspoken? Sometimes it's, you know, the big thing today is modeling. I'm going to model the Christian life and this will be a beneficial impact on others. I'm going to mentor.

I'm going to disciple. I'm going to look at this person, note where I think they're not really living the full Christian life and by one means or another, I'm going to try to get them to live the way they should. We certainly don't want to be guilty of this and many of us have been on the receiving end of it.

Well, right away we start to feel uncomfortable. Sometimes they succeed in creating in us a sense of guilt and guilt is such a wonderful motivator. People will do all kinds of things out of guilt.

This has been the source of many a movie plot and many a book plot that someone feels guilty and is trying to overcome that. Many people have become very altruistic and very selfless and have gone to the remote corners of the earth and built hospitals and things out of guilt. And so people latch onto this.

The ads you see on TV where the little sorrowful looking child off in some far off country is staring up into the camera and won't you give, won't you help? 37 cents a day, a child can have a meal and so forth. What are they playing on? A sense of guilt. Here I am in prosperity and here this poor starving person is.

And without getting into a discussion of the merits of those programs, that's what they're pulling on. They're reaching for that guilt string and pulling that. I have so much, they have so little.

I feel guilty, I'll give. It's a powerful motivator. That and the biological drives are the two things that advertisers and people who are trying to get into your pocket for whatever reason, grab ahold of.

Well, obviously it's pretty difficult to get into the biological drives area to motivate spiritual advance and so people will go for guilt. And Paul says, no, the source of obedience ought to be faith. So back to our situation.

If we find ourselves feeling the need to participate or feeling the need to join or feeling the need to come and to do, and when we look at why do I feel this compulsion and we look at it and we say, well, it's because of these people. What are these people going to think? What are they going to say? How are they going to view me if I don't do this? That's a big red flag because that's not the obedience of faith. That's the obedience of guilt.

That's the obedience of righteousness by works. That's the very thing Romans was written to stamp out, to extinguish in our souls is feeling like we need to live for the benefit of others, that we need to live to please others, to meet their standard. That's not the obedience of faith.

So people will come over here, Romans 12, and say, don't lag in diligence. We've got a program coming down at the church and remember what Paul said, don't lag in diligence. So we'll expect to see you down here.

And we say, you know, I don't see that this is an opportunity that God has put in my path. I don't see that He's given me the means, the motive and the opportunity, but if I don't show up, what are they going to think? What's going to be said? What's going to be thought about me? And I'm not making the sign of the cross there. I'm asking Patty to close the window that I opened earlier.

May have thought I was pronouncing a random blessing there or something, but I think we've

cooled the room down enough. But we have to watch because everything depends on what we think and not on what we do. The Word of God is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

And we can be doing a good and wonderful thing, but if we're doing it because we feel a sense of obligation based on what people say or what people think, we're missing an opportunity to do what we do for the right reasons. And that's what Paul's apostleship is all about. That's what his gospel is all about.

Righteousness, being worthy, being approved by God, not needing to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth, all comes down to obedience that springs from faith. And of course, you immediately think of the verse, whatever is not of faith is sin. This whole issue of meat offered to idols.

Should we eat it? Should we not? When should we? When should we not? Paul says, look, if you're not doing what you do, whether it's eating or not eating from faith, you're messing up, you're sinning. So that's the point. What has been the flow of the book? Look at all of these people who are disregarding God.

You, oh man, calling yourself a believer, thinking you're a light to the blind and so forth. If you're disregarding God, if you're disregarding God's Word that says righteousness comes by what you think and what you trust in, what you're motivated by, if you're missing that, you're going to come under judgment even as a believer. And you're busy pointing your finger at all these people who are doing things wrong.

Look at yourself who are thinking wrong things. That's Romans chapter two. Romans chapter three, we're called to think differently.

We're called to reflect the glory of God, not to fall short of it. Look at Abraham in chapter four, and he goes all the way through the book and he's been arguing against this whole idea of being motivated and being righteous in the eyes of other people. So now when we get to this section of application, and he talks about what we do, he's nailed down the faith issue.

He's nailed down the orientation toward God's evaluation and the expectation that's going to come from that, the vessels of honor fitted for glory and so forth. Now, when he says, I am urging you by the mercies of God, by what God has done, by what God expects to do these things, that's the context that's so important to keep this in. So when he says, be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love in honor giving preference to one another, what is the idea there? Let the other person have the bigger slice of the pie.

Let that person have the benefit. Let them get first dibs. Let them have whatever it is that's desirable.

Put them ahead of ourselves. Well, we can see that this, A, goes against our nature, and B,

requires a change in thinking on our part. Because if we put others ahead of ourselves, if we spot them, whatever it is, whatever the issue is, we say, fine, you win.

You can have it. Go ahead. You need something, step in line in front of me.

How can we do that? There's only two ways we can do it. We can either do it in arrogance. We can do it saying, look at me.

I'm wearing sackcloth and ashes. I'm wearing a hair shirt. This is what the Pharisees used to do when they would sort of denigrate themselves in public and wear sackcloth and ashes and pray on the street corner, make sure everybody saw how holy they were because they were dressing down that day.

And what are we looking at? Well, people are going to think well of me because I'm so humble. I'm a pretty good guy because I'm so humble. I mean, the whole thing is antithetical.

But if we're going to do this in a genuine way, if we're going to fulfill this urging, it requires faith. What kind of faith? We have to genuinely believe that God is watching out for us, don't we? If we say, this person's got to be a good guy, he's got an issue and it's wrecking the peace, there's defugally, this is causing strife, you win. You take it.

You can have it. Go ahead. Well, from a human point of view, now we've got the short end of the stick.

We're not going to get what we need or what we want or what we deserve or what we by rights ought to have. Maybe we're in the right. And we say, take it.

Go ahead. What does that require from us? We have to believe in the innermost recesses of our being that God is watching out for us, that God will vindicate, that God will justify, that God will make things right. We saw this in the life of David.

David was anointed king over Israel. Saul was trying to hunt him down and kill him. David didn't try to prevail on his own.

He didn't kill Saul the two or three times that he had the chance. He said, the Lord will judge between me and thee. And he spotted Saul the throne.

He said, you're on the throne. God has given you that throne. You can keep that throne until God deposes you.

I'm not going to take it from you. I'm not going to assert. I have the anointing.

Samuel came and poured the oil on my head and said, I'm gonna be the next king. It's mine by right. You don't have the right to track me down.

You don't have the right to make me a fugitive. You don't have the right to make me live this way in caves and on the run and being hunted and pursued and betrayed by people at Keilah and so forth. You don't have the right to do that.

But David didn't take his own part in that conflict. David trusted God. And David said, when God is ready, when the time is right, God will fix this problem.

And God did at the battle of Mount Gilboa. But it was years before that vindication and that writing of the scales took place. And all of the intervening time, David had to live by faith.

And David had to trust that these things were in God's hands and it's a hard thing. It's hard to ignore the conventional wisdom and to ignore the appearance of things that if I give this away, I'm going to suffer. I'm going to be shorted.

And I'm talking specifically about things that relate to us personally. And yet here's Paul saying, be affectionate toward one another with brotherly love in honor, giving preference to one another. Now, this would be easy if all of us were loving and equally disposed.

If people were generous toward us and were constantly putting us first, it would be easy for us to put them first as a reciprocal kind of thing. But Paul doesn't put that kind of condition on it, does he? He says, even if these people are selfish, even if they are less mature and less far along, even if they've got a lot of problems, even if they're sinning against you, you still be kindly affectionate toward them in brotherly love. You still put them ahead of yourself.

They are doing things the wrong way. They're hogging the issue, whatever it might be. Let them have it.

The only way we can do that with a clear conscience and with peace in our soul is to have a very strong confidence in God. And so this is a test of where we stand, isn't it? Where do we stand in this issue of the obedience that springs from faith, the obedience that's associated with faith. If we're having trouble obeying in this area, the problem is not we need to try harder to obey.

We need to work more on our faith. We need to concentrate more on God and his compassions. That's what Paul cites as the reference for this urging, isn't it? By the mercies of God, I urge you, sacrifice yourself.

That's a tall order. That's a tough call. But it is as easy as the strength of our faith.

If we really believe that God is and that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. If we really believe that God holds all the cards, that authorities only exist by God's permission, that people are in our periphery by God's pre-designed plan, that this issue has come up and been permitted by God. If we trust him and if we put these things in his hands and let go of them and don't try to defend ourselves and don't try to aggrandize ourselves and don't try to build our own

fence and hold our own perimeter, but put that in God's hands, well, that's a measure of our faith.

And that's why this is the obedience of faith. This is why righteousness comes by faith because we're trusting in the works of God. We're trusting in the provision of God, the knowledge of God, the love of God, the compassions of God, the fatherly oversight of God in our lives.

And this is where our life starts to change. This is where the transformation of our mind results in the transformation of our actions. And when we can genuinely prefer one another, give preference to one another, when we can genuinely rejoice in hope, as he says in 12.12, where we can be patient in trial.

This tribulation, this philipsis business in Romans 12.12, it doesn't say patient when there's a minor irritation. This is patient when things are abrasive. This is patient when things are wrong, when things are bad, when things are unjust, when things are getting under the skin, when things are getting desperate, things are serious.

This isn't your mild little, well, be patient when a little ripple comes up in the pond. This is the kind of peace that the disciples should have had during the storm on the Sea of Galilee when Christ was peacefully sleeping in the rear of the boat and he says what? Oh, ye of little faith. If you had faith, you wouldn't be worried.

If you had faith, you wouldn't be in distress. You wouldn't be in a panic. You wouldn't be shaking me awake and saying, Lord, Lord, we perish.

You would have confidence that if the Lord says we're going to the other side, we're going to get to the other side. It's a faith issue. And so often we have these things presented to us as what we ought to do and the means is never there.

Well, this is the means. If we want to fulfill this urging, if we want to genuinely rejoice, genuinely be patient, genuinely continue steadfastly in prayer, genuinely be able to distribute to the needs of the saints, to minister to those needs, and this is not just financially, but being sensitive to someone else's need, someone else, an opportunity to be of benefit, to exercise whatever our spiritual gift may be, whatever our strength is that God has granted to us, our particular area of faith. Being given to hospitality.

It's easy to be hospitable to hospitable people, isn't it? How easy is it to be hospitable to someone who takes it for granted and barely says thank you to someone who seems interested only in themselves? How easy is it to be gracious and be loving and be generous and minister to someone who completely doesn't seem to appreciate it or even be aware that you're doing it? Well, where does the power to do that come from? Because that, you know, that's not a part of our nature. We don't do that by nature. We get offended if someone doesn't appreciate what we do.

It hurts our feelings and we think, well, if you're not going to appreciate it, I'm going to stop doing it. It's human thinking. There's no faith involved there.

Faith says, where do I stand in God's plan? God sees, God knows. If I am doing this correctly, I'm doing it to serve God anyway. And if this is what pleases God, if God came down, if Jesus Christ walked into the room and said, would you mind ministering to this person? Would you mind filling the need that this person has? Could I ask you to do this thing? If God had asked us to do this thing, we would fall down on our face and say, Lord, consider it done.

Well, that's exactly what he has done. He's asked us to be sensitive to others, regardless of what kind of person they're like. And I like the way that we have been taught in the past.

It's a very true principle, the difference between subjectivity and objectivity. What is it? Genuine love depends on the quality and the character of the lover, not the lovee. Objective love, love that is genuine, is based on who and what we are, not on who and what the object is.

Is our love dependent on the object? If the object is unlovely, then we don't love them anymore. That's why these terrible things, and I've actually seen at firsthand, cases where people got married because they considered each other to be good looking, and then one of them suffered some sort of a problem where the looks go away. Maybe there's breast cancer, maybe there's a disfiguring accident, maybe someone loses a limb, and the spouse can't cope with that, and they leave, they depart.

I'm sorry, but I just can't deal with this change in your physical appearance. I just can't cope with it, and they leave. This happens, you know, the old midlife crisis cliché.

My wife doesn't have her youthful bloom anymore, now my mind and my eyes are roving, and here's my secretary that's half her age, and off we go. What does that reflect? My love depends on the object. If the object's not lovely, my love's gone.

The love of God is based on the quality of the lover. The love of God, thank God, depends on his character and not on us, and that's the love that we are supposed to have in our hearts towards others. That's the basis for this section of Romans chapter 12.

We ought to be doing these things because of who and what we are, not because of any response on the part of the object, not because of any quality on the part of the object, not because of any merit or any worth. They may be messing up. They may be acting foolishly.

They may be selfish. They may be vindictive. They may be stabbing us in the back.

What does Jesus say? Do good to those who hate you. Pray for those who spitefully use you. Love your enemies.

Well, that's a great thing to say, but how do we do it, and do it in a genuine and healthy sense? It

has to come from faith, and what is that specifically? We have to believe that God sees and that God knows, that God holds all the cards, God cares, and God will address this situation. I don't have to defend myself. I don't have to look out for myself.

I don't have to say, well, I've got to get my sense of self-preservation to kick in here. It all depends on faith. That's why Paul put this information in chapter 12 after 10 and a half chapters, 11 chapters of viewpoint, of what God sees, what God knows, what God is looking for in the soul.

Now he can tell us, present yourself, sacrifice yourself, look out for others, put others ahead of yourself. Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Have genuine humility, and leave these things in God's hands.

That's what the worthy walk is all about. That's what the life of faith is all about. We're going to pause here and take our break, and when we come back, we'll finish Romans chapter 12, and be looking forward to Romans chapter 13, verse one, which is a fascinating passage, especially at tax time.

But let's pause here and take our break.