

Romans - God's Heart Explained

Week #16: My Transformed Relationship With The Church.

January 19, 2020

Paul's letter to the Christians living in Rome is perhaps the most influential book of the Bible outside the four Gospels. Its influence lies in the way God's heart is explained, and how His heart powerfully interrupts our empty existence. The American Pastor, Charles Swindoll describes Romans as God's grace invading the sin-fueled storms of our humanity - a grace that puts an end to our emptiness by offering forgiveness, new life through Jesus Christ and hope both for this present life we live and what lies beyond.¹ More than any other book, Romans explains our depravity, God's holiness, Christ's redemption and what new life in Jesus really means. You cannot follow Jesus well without comprehending what Paul writes to the Christians in Rome.

Our Sunday teaching on Romans this fall will speak to some of these deep truths that we must grow familiar with: human depravity; justification through faith; sanctification in Christ; glorification in God. But the mind is never the target ... it's our heart that matters. So, while engaging our minds with the goal of renewing them, we will consistently target our heart - because God wants our affections not merely our assent.

Study Questions: The Church - not an organization, but a living organism.

Read Romans 12:3-8.

1. Pastor Ken began by asking "how does the world sees the Church?"
 - what has been your experience of how people who do not yet follow Christ interpret what the Church is and why it exists?
 - the Church is, according to the Bible, an organism, not an organization, and a body, not a business. What are the differences between these two, and why are they important?
2. Jesus has chosen the Church to express Himself to the world.
 - why is His decision to do this so transformational for his followers? (Read Rom. 12:4-8)
3. Verse 6 tells us that it is God who has given us special abilities to do things well. (Read also 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4:11-16).
 - what special ability has God given you? How do you know, and how are you using it?
 - where are others depending on you to do your part, and what happens when you do?
4. Why do we refuse to use our gifts - what are the common rationalizations & excuses?
 - Why is one of Satan's greatest lies when he tells us that our participation in Christ's Church is not necessary, not a big deal and completely our decision?
 - How does refusing to our gift prove that we are conforming to the world and the culture that we live in, rather than being transformed by renewing how we think?
5. If God gifts you, instructs how to use His gift and places you with people who need you to use it, do you actually have any right to refuse Him? If not, why do so many of us do anyway?
 - where are you needed in New Life today? What is missing because you are not serving?
 - where are you serving or would like to serve? What difference is it making?
 - How does serving, even when you don't feel like it, mature you and transform you (and the Church) more accurately into a reflection of Jesus?

¹ Swindoll, Charles. Insight for Living Bible Study Guide: Romans 1-5. 1977, Insight for Living, Fullerton CA. Back cover.