

**GREENCASTLE  
CHRISTIAN LIVING  
ROMANS 12, 15:3  
OCTOBER 11, 2012  
Rev. Roy Herman**

**GOOD MORNING, MY FRIENDS! IT IS A PRIVILEGE AND BLESSING TO BE WITH YOU ONCE AGAIN. I WILL MISS ALL OF YOU, WHILE GONE FOR THE WINTER!**

**THIS MORNING, WE ARE GOING TO FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON SELECTED PASSAGES FROM THE BOOK OF ROMANS FROM CHAPTERS 12 & 15 IN WHICH PAUL CENTERS ON CHRISTIAN DUTY AND SERVICE AND HOW WE, AS CHILDREN OF GOD, ARE TO LIVE OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE. YOU SEE, REGARDLESS OF OUR AGE AND THE CIRCUMSTANCE OF OUR LIFE, WE CAN MAKE AN IMPACT ON OTHERS WHEN WE SET ASIDE THE SECULAR VIEW OF THE WORLD AROUND US AND ADOPT THE VISION OF JESUS, WHICH WE CALL THE CHRISTIAN "WORLD VIEW".**

**LET ME GIVE YOU A QUICK APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE. IN A FEW WEEKS, WE WILL BE GOING TO THE POLL! ARE WE GOING TO VOTE FOR THOSE WHO WILL BENEFIT US IN OUR POCKETS OR FOR THOSE WHO UPHOLD GOD'S HOLINESS AND COMMANDS?**

**FRIENDS, I GRANT YOU THAT IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY TO BE THE LIGHT IN THIS DARK WORLD. ACCORDING TO 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3, "FOR THOUGH WE WALK IN THE FLESH, WE DO NOT WAR ACCORDING TO THE FLESH." IT IS A SPIRITUAL BATTLE AND WE MUST BE PREPARED TO WALK WORTHY AT ALL TIMES. YES, WE ARE OFTEN MALIGNED, PERSECUTED AND FIGURATIVELY SPIT UPON FOR DOING WHAT IS RIGHT.**

**JESUS TOLD HIS DISCIPLES IN JOHN 15 AND VERSES 18-19, THAT, "IF THE WORLD HATES YOU, YOU KNOW THAT IT HAS HATED ME BEFORE IT HATED YOU.**

**IF YOU WERE OF THE WORLD, THE WORLD WOULD LOVE ITS OWN; BUT BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT OF THE WORLD, BUT I CHOSE YOU OUT OF THE WORLD, BECAUSE OF THIS THE WORLD HATES YOU."**

**WHAT, THEN, MUST WE DO?**

**TURNING NOW TO THE BOOK OF ROMANS, IN CHAPTERS 12 AND 13, WHICH IS COMMONLY ENTITLED, "CHRISTIAN SERVICE", PAUL TELLS US THAT AS CHILDREN OF GOD WE ARE IN THIS WORLD TODAY, AND SINCE WE ARE IN THIS WORLD, WE HAVE A DUTY TO GOD THROUGH OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.**

**HE SAYS IN 12:1, "THEREFORE I URGE YOU, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, TO PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING AND HOLY SACRIFICE, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, 'WHICH IS YOUR SPIRITUAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP!'"**

**HERE WE HAVE THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD; WE ARE TO PRESENT OURSELVES AS LIVING SACRIFICES. THAT IS OUR SPIRITUAL SERVICE.**

**PAUL MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT IF YOU HAVE BEEN REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, GOD HAS A CLAIM ON YOUR LIFE. I'M AFRAID WE ARE NOT GETTING THIS MESSAGE TO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY AND, AS A RESULT, WE HAVE SOME OF THE MOST MISERABLE SO-CALLED "CHRISTIAN" YOUNG PEOPLE AND MANY OLDER PEOPLE, AS WELL. THE PROOF IS THAT THEY ARE LIVING SELFISH LIVES. THEY ARE TALKING IN TERMS OF THEMSELVES, AND GOD IS NOT IN IT.**

**PAUL SAYS, THIS IS THE FIRST STEP, THAT YOU CANNOT EVEN LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE UNTIL YOU PRESENT YOUR TOTAL PERSON AND PERSONALITY AS A LIVING SACRIFICE UNTO GOD.**

**WE SPEAK OF "UNIO MYSTIQA", THE MYSTERY OF THE UNION — THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. JESUS ELOQUENTLY EXPRESSED THIS IDEA WHEN HE STATED IN JOHN 15:5, "I AM THE VINE, YOU ARE THE BRANCHES; HE WHO ABIDES IN ME AND I IN HIM, HE BEARS MUCH FRUIT, FOR APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING." NOTICE "HE WHO ABIDES IN ME AND I IN HIM!" IT'S A TWO WAY STREET - IT'S A RELATIONSHIP. ALSO NOTICE THE TERM "YOU CAN DO NOTHING."**

**I WOULD SUGGEST TO YOU THAT JESUS IS TELLING US THAT UNLESS WE HAVE THIS RELATIONSHIP, THERE IS NOTHING THAT WE CAN DO THAT BRINGS GLORY TO GOD - IT CAN ONLY BRING GLORY TO OURSELVES OR TO THE WORLD.**

**IN REFERRING TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS, PAUL ALSO TELLS IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS THAT ALL BELIEVERS HAVE RECEIVED, THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL— AND THAT IS THE ABILITY TO LOVE. IN HIS EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH, PAUL EXHORTS, "BUT NOW FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, ABIDE THESE THREE; BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE."**

**I AM REMINDED OF THE SONG CALLED, "WALK IN THE SPIRIT", WHICH PROCLAIMS, "AND THEY WILL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS BY OUR LOVE BY OUR LOVE, THEY WILL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS BY OUR LOVE."**

**TO MY GREAT DISMAY, I HAVE EXPERIENCED MANY, WHO CALL THEMSELVES CHRISTIANS, CONTINUALLY VIOLATING THIS GREATEST COMMANDMENT — TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. FOLKS, REMEMBER, WE ARE TO BE THE LIGHT IN THIS DARK WORLD AND AS IT IS WRITTEN IN 1 JOHN 2:20A, "THE ONE WHO LOVES HIS BROTHER ABIDES IN THE LIGHT."**

**NEXT PAUL SPEAKS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER BELIEVERS. HE CONTINUES IN VERSES 9-13: "LET LOVE BE WITHOUT HYPOCRISY ABHOR WHAT IS EVIL; CLING TO WHAT IS GOOD. BE DEVOTED TO ONE ANOTHER IN BROTHERLY LOVE; GIVE PREFERENCE TO ONE ANOTHER IN HONOR; NOT LAGGING BEHIND IN DILIGENCE, FERVENT IN SPIRIT, SERVING THE LORD; REJOICING IN HOPE, PERSEVERING IN TRIBULATION, DEVOTED TO PRAYER, CONTRIBUTING TO THE NEEDS OF THE SAINTS, PRACTICING HOSPITALITY."**

**AND THEN WE HAVE A RELATIONSHIP TO UNBELIEVERS - THOSE OUTSIDE OF CHRIST.**

**ACCORDING TO ROMANS 12 & VERSE 17, WE ARE TO: "NEVER PAY BACK EVIL FOR EVIL TO ANYONE RESPECT WHAT IS RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN." WE ARE NOT TO BE AN AVENGER. THE MINUTE THAT YOU AND I ATTEMPT TO GET EVEN WITH ONE WHO HAS WRONGED US; WE ARE NO LONGER WALKING IN THE SPIRIT. PAUL CONTINUES IN VERSE 19; "NEVER TAKE YOUR OWN REVENGE, BELOVED, BUT LEAVE ROOM FOR THE WRATH OF GOD, FOR IT IS WRITTEN, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," SAYS THE LORD." NOW DO NOT DEPART FROM THE PATHWAY OF FAITH — DON'T SEEK REVENGE."**

**IN EFFECT, GOD SAYS, "I WILL NOT PERMIT ANY INJUSTICE TO COME TO YOU THAT I WILL NOT STRAIGHTEN OUT SOMEDAY. THE MINUTE YOU AND I FIGHT BACK WE ARE SAYING TO HIM, "GOD, I CAN'T TRUST YOU IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE. I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE IT INTO MY OWN HANDS."**

**LET'S TURN VENGEANCE OVER TO GOD, MY FRIENDS! BELIEVE ME, WHEN GOD STARTS DEALING WITH THEM HE'S GOING TO DO A GOOD JOB OF IT.**

**AND WE ALSO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP TO OUR NEIGHBORS. AND THIS IS WHERE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS COME IN TO PLAY. ROMANS 13 TELLS US THAT WE ARE TO "OWE NOTHING TO ANYONE EXCEPT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER; FOR HE WHO LOVES HIS NEIGHBOR HAS FULFILLED THE LAW. YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. LOVE DOES NO WRONG TO A NEIGHBOR; THEREFORE, LOVE IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW."**

**NOW WE COME TO CHAPTER 14, IN WHICH PAUL REVEALS TO US "HOW WE ARE CONDUCT OURSELVES AS CHRISTIANS."**

**THIS IS WHAT SEPARATES THE CHILDREN OF GOD FROM THOSE WHO ARE "IN THIS WORLD". THE TERM SEPARATE CAN ALSO BE RENDERED AS "SANCTIFIED" OR "SET APART."**

**SEPARATION IS SOMETHING THAT IS CERTAINLY MISUNDERSTOOD AMONG SOME BELIEVERS TODAY. I WOULD SUSPECT THAT WE ALL KNOW OF CHRISTIANS WHO LIVE ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD IN SOME WAYS AND IN THE "IN THE WORLD", IN OTHER WAYS. I PRAY THAT NONE OF YOUR ARE WALKING THAT THIN LINE!**

**IN THESE PASSAGES, PAUL PUTS DOWN THREE GREAT PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT:**

**THE FIRST IS CONVICTION. HE SAYS THAT WHATEVER YOU DO, YOU ARE TO DO IT WITH CONVICTION. NOTICE THAT PAUL TELLS US IN 14:5: "ONE PERSON REGARDS ONE DAY ABOVE ANOTHER, ANOTHER REGARDS EVERY DAY ALIKE EACH PERSON MUST BE FULLY CONVINCED IN HIS OWN MIND."**

**WELL, WHAT DAY OR DAYS ARE WE TO OBSERVE? SATURDAY, AS DO THE MESSIANIC JEWS, OR SATURDAY NIGHT AS DO MANY MEGA-CHURCHES, OR SUNDAY, AS WE SET APART AS BEING "THE LORD'S DAY" OR PERHAPS ALL OF THESE DAYS OR NONE OF THEM?**

**WE ARE NOT TO JUDGE OTHERS FOR THEIR CONVICTION — WE ARE TO BE FULLY PERSUADED IN OUR OWN MIND. WE ARE TO HAVE A CONVICTION ABOUT WHAT WE DO, NOT WHAT OTHERS, DO!**

**CONSCIENCE IS THE SECOND GREAT PRINCIPLE OF CONDUCT: CHAPTER 14, VERSE 22 SAYS, "THE FAITH WHICH YOU HAVE, HAVE AS YOUR OWN CONVICTION BEFORE GOD. HAPPY IS HE WHO DOES NOT CONDEMN HIMSELF IN WHAT HE APPROVES."**

**MANY TIMES, I HAVE BEEN ASKED A QUESTION LIKE THIS: "DO YOU THINK, PASTOR ROY, THAT IT'S WRONG FOR ME TO DO THIS OR THAT?" FIRST, WE LOOK TO SEE IF IT ADDRESSED IN THE WORD. IF IT IS, THE ANSWER IS EASY - YES OR NO!**

**IF IT IS NOT ADDRESSED IN THE BIBLE, THEN I SUGGEST TO THE QUESTIONER THAT THEY MUST SEARCH THEIR OWN HEART — AND DO WHAT IS RIGHT AND BEST FOR THEM. JUST RECENTLY, SOMEONE ASKED ME ABOUT WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT CREMATION. WHILE CREMATION WAS FORBIDDEN BY THE RELIGIOUS JEWS, IT IS NOT MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT; THEREFORE IT IS NEITHER RIGHT NOR WRONG. EACH PERSON MUST DECIDE WHAT IS RIGHT AND BEST FOR THEM.**

**GENERALLY, PEOPLE ONLY ASK QUESTIONS LIKE THIS ABOUT THOSE THINGS FOR WHICH THEY ARE CONVICTED. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT CONVICTION IS EVIDENCE OF THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING WITHIN YOU.**

**LISTEN, WE NEED TO HAVE A CLEAR CONSCIENCE ABOUT THESE THINGS. IF WE HAVE ANY DOUBT WHETHER WHAT WE WANT TO DO WOULD BE RIGHT IN THE EYE'S OF GOD AND BRING GLORY TO HIM, IT SEEMS WISE NOT TO DO IT!**

**IF WE ARE NOT FULLY CONFIDENT THAT IT IS RIGHT, AREN'T WE RISKING THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES THAT MAY RESULT FROM A BAD CHOICE? THAT'S WHY PAUL EXHORTS, "HAPPY IS HE WHO DOES NOT CONDEMN HIMSELF IN WHAT HE APPROVES."**

**CONSIDERATION IS THE THIRD AND LAST OF THESE GREAT PRINCIPLES:**

**TURNING NOW TO CHAPTER 15, VERSES 1-2, PAUL SAYS, "NOW WE WHO ARE STRONG OUGHT TO BEAR THE WEAKNESSES OF THOSE WITHOUT STRENGTH AND NOT JUST PLEASE OURSELVES. EACH OF US IS TO PLEASE HIS NEIGHBOR FOR HIS GOOD, TO HIS EDIFICATION."**

**THIS IS WHAT CONSIDERATION OF OTHERS IS ALL ABOUT! AND IT IS SOMETHING THAT OUGHT TO AFFECT A GREAT MANY CHRISTIANS IN THEIR CONDUCT.**

**MAYBE YOU HAVE A CONVICTION ABOUT THIS OR THAT AND YOU DO THIS OR THAT, AND MAYBE YOUR CONSCIENCE DOESN'T CONDEMN YOU FOR DOING IT. BUT HAVE YOU EVER STOPPED TO THINK WHAT EFFECT IT MIGHT HAVE ON SOMEBODY ELSE?**

**THERE IS ALWAYS THE OTHER PERSON TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION. AND MAY I SAY THIS TO YOU — A CHRISTIAN DOES NOT PLEASE HIMSELF; HE PLEASURES THE LORD.**

**IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF WHETHER IT'S RIGHT OR WRONG - THE WORLD IS NOT THE STANDARD FOR CHRISTIANS - GOD IS! IT'S A QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT WE ARE WALKING IN THE LIGHT.**

**JOHN TELLS US IN 1 JOHN 1:7, "BUT IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT, AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS, HIS SON, PURIFIES US FROM ALL SIN." PEOPLE, IT SHOULD NOT COME AS A REVELATION TO ANY OF US THAT WE LIVE IN A WICKED, DARK WORLD, FRAUGHT WITH GREED, POWER, CORRUPTION — AND A TURNING AWAY FROM THE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES THAT WERE THE FOUNDATION GIVEN TO US BY GOD AND PUT IN PLACE BY OUR FOUNDING FATHERS.**

**BROTHERS, LET US TODAY, WALK IN THE LIGHT WITH CONVICTION, CONSCIENCE AND CONSIDERATION AND PRAY THAT OUR ACTIONS WILL TAKE US ONE-STEP CLOSER TO BRINGING OUR NATION BACK TO ITS ROOTS AS "ONE NATION, UNDER GOD!" AMEN!**