

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

Paul quoted Isaiah, “The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope” (Rom 15:12). I glorify you today for your mercy, and I delight to fulfill what the prophets foretold so many years ago. It is my privilege to rejoice with your people and join with them in singing your praises (Rom 15:7–13)! You have filled me with joy and peace, and I worship your name with gladness! Hallelujah!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me the fourth part of Paul’s letter to the church in Rome. After explaining how you are working to bring both Jews and Gentiles into a saving relationship with Christ, Paul continued by challenging the Romans to manifest the power of the gospel by living transformed lives. His transition from doctrine to exhortation teaches me that theology is the foundation of Christian conduct, for right thinking must come before right living. It also reminds me that truth demands action, for faith is demonstrated by how it responds to your Word. Paul called the Romans to live out in practice what was true of them in spirit, and his commands are the calling of my life. First, and perhaps most important, I am called to consecrate myself to you (Rom 12:1). Before I was saved, I had nothing to offer you except my sin, but now that I have been washed in the cleansing blood of Christ, I can offer *myself* to you as a living, holy sacrifice (cf. Lev 1:1–4; Num 3:9–13). This is an act of submission and consecration, and it means that I give up the right to have my own way and surrender unconditionally to your will for my life. Second, I am called to be transformed by “the renewal of my mind” (Rom 12:2). This means that I must soak my mind in your Word and allow the Spirit to conform my thinking to yours. Third, I am called to use my spiritual gifts in humble service to the church, not thinking more highly of myself than I should, but working always to build up my fellow believers. Next, I am called to live in harmony with others, praying and rejoicing and weeping with them, not being haughty, but associating with the lowly. I am also called to repay evil with good, not seeking to avenge myself, but leaving room for your wrath. I am called to submit to the governing authorities, for all power and authority finds its source in you, and those that exist in my life have been put there by you. As long as man’s authority does not contradict your will (Acts 5:28–29), I must be in subjection, not only to avoid your wrath but also for the sake of conscience. I am called to fulfill the law by loving others, for “love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom 13:10). I am called to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, not making provision for the flesh to gratify its desires, but putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. I am called to welcome and support a brother who is weak in the faith, realizing that my actions could lead him to violate his conscience. I must not pass judgment on him, but should limit my liberty in order not to put a stumbling block or hindrance in his way. I am called to bear with the failings of the weak, not pleasing myself, but rather pleasing my neighbor for his good, to build him up (Rom 15:1–2). In this way I follow the example of Christ who came, not to please himself, but to bear the reproaches of many. Finally, I am called to welcome both Jews and Gentiles into the body of Christ, for Christ was a servant to the Jews in order that the Gentiles might glorify you for your mercy.

Reflection

Paul said, “Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin” (Rom 14:23). If there is doubt in my mind over whether or not I should do a certain activity, do I ignore my conscience and do it anyway?

Request

Father, you have given me a high and holy calling, and I need your grace to walk in the light of this truth. Help me today to live a transformed life that will show the world the power of the gospel!

Thanksgiving

Thank you for the strength and power of the Holy Spirit which enables me to abound in hope. You are indeed the God of endurance and encouragement—Praise the Lord! (Rom 15:5).

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “A Living Sacrifice” – Lucena C. Byrum.

Meditation Verse: Romans 12:1.