

Part Four

Moral Exhortation: The Demands of Upright life in Christ

I. Introductory Notes.

- A. In a sense we enter a new phase here. All along Paul's primary focus has been doctrinal. He teaches about the Law, the need for grace and salvation, the inability of man in the flesh to attain justification, the Justification of Man through faith, and the question of the prerogatives of the Jews. Now Paul enters into a moral exhortation. Given our justification, what is the uprightness demanded of this state?
- B. This is not to say that moral exhortation is not doctrine. Emphatically it is. Nevertheless, it is usually separated out from doctrinal points.
 - 1. Doctrinal points teach what is. For example, we are taught truths about God, (e.g. the Trinity), truths about Man (e.g. our basic call to eternal life with God), and truths about creation (e.g. that God created it and made man its steward).
 - 2. Moral theology is doctrine that teaches our proper response to what is revealed by God and perceived in the natural order. Give our nature and the revelation of God, what is our proper response? What demands are imposed upon us and what freedoms do we enjoy?
 - 3. Moral theology usually flows directly out of systematic theology (i.e. Doctrine).
- C. Back in 6:4 Paul spoke of *a new way of life* and in 6:18 declared *you have become slaves of righteousness*. Now he spells out the implications of this truth. For Paul doctrine is never merely an abstract mental exercise; it is always a concrete exhortation. Whether the Romans really believe in Christ as their redeemer and Lord will be evident from the way deal with one another and how they resolve differences and tensions.
- D. The moral exhortation is not a systematic treatment of the subject or an ethical treatise. It is quite unsystematic (unorganized) and at times, rambling. Although Paul sets forth the fact that the Mosaic Law is no longer the norm for Christian conduct, there are demands on Christians flowing from Charity and fidelity to the Gospel. Many of the topics are quite general. However, Chapter 14 deals with a problem that seems specific to Rome.
- E. Given all that he has taught thus far then, Paul now draws forth some of the conclusions for the moral life.
- F. The Material of this first section of the moral discourse can be divided thusly:
 - 1. Life in the world as worship - 12:1-2
 - 2. Sober existence using God's gifts for the common good. 12:3-8
 - 3. Counsels for Christians living in community 12:9-21
 - 4. The relation of Christians to civil authority 13:1-7
 - 5. The debt of love that fulfills the Law 13:8-10
 - 6. Christian life as vigilant conduct 13:11-14:1
- G. On to the summaries of the these sections

II. Chapter 12

A. Sacrifice

1. *I I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

B. Sobriety

1. *²Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. ³For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him.*

C. Sociability -

1. *⁴For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

D. Sincerity -

1. *⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.*

E. Social Skills -

1. *¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited. ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰No, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

F. **Life in the world as worship** - 12:1-2 The basic message of this section is that Christians should live their lives in this world as if they were rendering worship by it. This is a "rational" response to the justification they have received. In effect the whole theme of this next section is announced in this first phrase: we are to offer our very lives to God as a pleasing and proper sacrifice as a proper response to the justification we have received from him.

1. *your bodies* - remember this is more than our flesh and bones. Perhaps the phrase can also be translated "yourself" since "your bodies" is understood as the whole person. Thus, we are to offer our whole selves to God as a sacrificial offering.
2. The phrase *your spiritual worship* is translated properly if we understand the world spiritual as something more than an emotional feeling about things. The Greek word translated here as spiritual is *logike* which can also be translated as logical, rational, sensible. Thus it is seen to more than something emotional or ethereal or vague. Our worship, both liturgical and the worship of our lives, ought to be sensible, well ordered and according to right reason informed by faith. It ought to be suited to our rational nature.
3. See how Paul reiterates the point in the next verse when he bids the Romans to *be transformed by the renewal of their minds*. In other words the whole intellect and the seat of moral judgement must be transformed and definitely not conformed to this world or this age. The intellect is not to be ruled by our passions, not by public opinion opinion polls, not by soap operas, rock musicians and the like. No, it is to be subject to Christ, by its renewal and transformation. The focus now is to be what is God's will and it is this we must discern.

G. **Sober existence using God's gifts for the common good.** 12:3-8

1. Paul develops the same theme in 1 Cor 12:12ff
2. The community life of Christians ought to be exercised in humility and charity.
 - a. the notion of humility is based on sobriety - which is a clear thinking and seeing unclouded by the inebriating power of self-delusion. We see ourselves as we are: gifted but fully in reception of that gift which is unearned because of any glory particular to our achievements.
3. Note how there is a recurring theme underlying this section: the norm of faith . There are two phrases used in this section: *according to the measure of faith* & *in proportion to the faith*. - Thus the norm by which we judge all things is the X-ray light of the Gospel. We are to measure all things by the norm of this faith which is knowledge received from God. In verse 6 Paul directs: *if [one has received the gift of] prophecy, [let it be] in proportion to faith*. The Greek word translated as proportion is *analogia* which means a right relationship to something. Thus all preaching and prophecy must be in accord with the revealed Christian faith. There is no sense here that prophecies are just spontaneous matters for anyone to freely declare. They must be discerned in the light of faith.
4. This community that Paul describes here has certain characteristics:

- a. it is one in Christ Jesus just as the many parts of our bodies form one body. v. 4
 - b. There is a diversity of gifts and different gifts are given to different members according to the grace of God. (v 4-6)
 - c. These gifts are gifts, that is they are received not achieved. They are accepted not grasped. (v. 6)
 - d. These gifts are in a right relationship with the norm of faith. Thus there is an order to the community and it is not wildly charismatic without reference to due order and decorum. (vv 3, 6b)
 - e. These gifts that are given are to be used for the good of the community generously and with cheerfulness. (v 6a, 8b)
5. Paul lists the following 7 gifts
- a. Prophecy - the gift is inspired by the preaching of the Gospel and must be conformed to it (in proportion to the faith)
 - b. ministry (*diakonia*) - service inspired by the power of the preached word.
 - c. teaching- when Paul uses this word elsewhere it always has to do with the communication of the knowledge of God's will.
 - d. exhortation - the exhorter was the spiritual father of the community who encouraged and admonished the members in their communal life.
 - e. contribution - i.e. an almsgiver
 - f. leadership - the Greek is *ho proistamenos* (literally: the one standing at the head). Thus, the one who presides directs or rules.
 - g. works of mercy - understood in the wide sense as any acts of kindness and mercy - the Christian Good Samaritan.

H. **Counsels for Christians living in community** 12:9-21

1. Having asserted the unity of Christians in the "one body," Paul now goes on to give a series of counsels for such Christians. He first enunciates the generic principle that love must govern all. Then he gets more specific regarding the basic obligations by spelling out counsels. These counsels specify not only the love that must exist between Christians but also with regard to enemies and persecutors. These counsels are remarkably basic¹ and by no means exhaustive. Nevertheless, Paul gives them based on the likely understanding he had that such counsels are needed. It is not at all unlikely that Paul is merely reproducing a list of instructions common in the preachers in the early Church. This is made more likely by the fact that Paul goes into a style² that is not his own.
2. *let love be sincere* - Here is the basic theme of this section. We must be sincere in love. That is, our love must be non-hypocritical. One might ask Ok Paul, I must be sincere in my love, well let's have some examples. What do you mean by sincere love? Paul answers by spelling out counsels that reflect sincere love viz. fellow Christians. He also gives ___ counsels relating to treatment of enemies and persecutors. the Greek word is *anypokritos* which is more literally rendered "non-hypocritical." The word hypocritical is overused today and so has lost some of its technical

¹in the sense that there is nothing new or particularly profound about them. They are basic counsels that ought to be evident to all.

²by the use of imperavital participles.

meaning. The word hypocrite from the Greek means "actor." Even in Greek the word often had a perjorative connotation. It meant that one was a phoney. When people were around to behold them they acted one way but the audience disappeared they stepped out of that role and became someone else. In effect they were actors, they were not the person people knew, they were only playing a role. Today however many people use the word much more broadly to mean one who is inconsistent in their life; especially between what they say and what they do. The problem is that most people are inconsistent. This may be due to weakness or any number of reasons. But the word hypocrite is really more specific by referring to one who more willfully acts, does a con-job. Thus Paul wants to ensure that Christians do not merely put on a show and thereby mask a very different reality underneath. Rather, let the external actions show forth a truly renewed inner man.

3. *you must hate what is evil and cling to what is good* - How can we do any of what is to follow if we do not hate what is evil and cling to what is good? Thus, this verse sets a premise for what is to follow. Evil has a certain glamour to not a few Christians are often attracted to evil. Why? The Holy Spirit wants to transform this desire to a love for goodness so that we will cling to it and hate evil with a revulsion that makes us instinctively turn away from it. This is a work of the love of God, the Holy Spirit, within us. Thus this is a sign of the true love to which we are called to respond.
4. The counsels concerning our love for God, ourselves and fellow Christians are:
 - a. **love one another with mutual affection** - more literally the phrase is "be devoted to one another with brotherly (philadelphia) love." Thus Paul is not speaking here of the wider and more perfect love that is Agape. But note that Agape, although a more perfect love, does not do away with the other types of love. Rather, it perfects them.
 - b. **anticipate one another in showing honor** - more literally "outdo one another in showing honor. Thus Paul sets up a friendly and fruitful competition. To avoid the possible confusion of the paradox our translators have opted for a more ambiguous but valid word: anticipate
 - c. **do not grow slack in zeal** - the Greek word *spoude* can be translated: zeal, diligence, eagerness. Notice how the word is linked with the verb "grow" Laxity creeps upon us and grows quietly like a cancer. We get flabby and lazy usually little by little. Cutting corners leads to avoiding whole blocks and never even leaving the house.
 - d. **be fervent in the spirit** - literally, "seething in spirit."
 - e. **serve the Lord** - this is the true end and purpose of all Christian's lives. We must serve the Lord and we can serve him, among other ways, by serving others. (cf Matt 25:31ff inter al.)
 - f. **rejoice in hope** - to rejoice is a natural and direct result of hope. It gives us a vision and an unshakable knowledge from which comes joy. Nevertheless see how we have discussed this word hope

before in these note. Suffice here to say that "hope" for Paul and the early Christians was a much more vigorous word than it is today.

- g. **endure in affliction** - this too flows from hope and joy. The tribulation is seen as temporary and even a vehicle to greater glory when Christ shall come and give recompense. This provides the motive for endurance.
- h. **persevere in prayer** - the Christian must learn to commune with God continually. The Christian who does not pray is like the lover who never pays any mind to his beloved. It is just not a possible situation. How can one say a young woman loves a young man if she never wishes to speak with him? How then can one say a Christian loves God if she never wishes to speak with him.
- i. **Contribute to the needs of the holy ones** - literally "taking an interest in the needs of the saints." Christians have an obligation to help those in need but especially those of the household of faith.
- j. **exercise hospitality** - literally "pursue love of strangers" This is the extension of the norm in "i" just above. Charity begins at home but it doesn't end there.
- k. **rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep** - we must join people in their joys and sorrows especially those of significant nature: wedding, funerals, graduations, birthdays, etc. We need to take an interest in one another, this is what family members do. .
- l. **have the same regard for one another** - literally "thinking the same toward one another." Paul recommends a mutual esteem among all the members of the community for the sake of concord.
- m. **do not be haughty** - literally, "Put aside lofty thoughts" which could refer to ambition but more likely connotes pride. It reinforces what was just said in "l"
- n. **associate with the lowly** - this is a recommendation flowing from the two previous points. In this case it is a direct remedy for pride. It also helps us to avoid the trap of using people merely for our own ends because of what they can do for us. Nevertheless the opposite trap must be avoided wherein we hang around the lowly because in a paternalistic way that builds our ego.
- o. **do not be wise in your own estimation** - remember the norm is faith. It is by faith and its truths that we must judge matters and "estimate" them. We must avoid conceit.
- p. **be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all** - there is a value in maintaining a decorum that is pleasing to people lest they be distracted from individual peculiarities. Good hygiene, pleasant manners, and deference to proper norms are important to observe. Again however, slavish attachment to custom can be destructive and Paul in no way means this. Recall verse 2, "Do not conform yourself to this age..."
- q. **if possible, live at peace with all** - again, it is a good thing to be peaceable with people. Nevertheless, it is not always possible. Our Lord himself declared, *Do you think I came to bring peace to the*

world? I assure you the opposite is true, I came for division... Thus the preaching of the Gospel cannot be suppressed to bring about a peace which would be a false peace anyway. Some are bound to create conflict with us for what we proclaim. Thus we should not seek for conflict but we should not be surprised that it comes. This prepares us for the next section of counsels.

5. The counsels related to one's enemies and persecutors
 - a. **bless and do not curse those who persecute you** - this echoes what Jesus did and said³ This is difficult but is an important acid test for the Christian who wants to truly say he is a follower of Jesus.
 - b. **do not repay evil for evil** - again this echoes the words of Jesus.⁴ To repay evil with evil would be to give the devil twice his pay. Paul does not mean to suggest that wrong doing may never be punished by the proper authority. He first of all acknowledges that the Lord will punish evil-doers. He will also discuss the role of the state in punishing. Further, it must be understood that parents will have to punish wrong-doing in their children since this is intrinsic to their role. Yet, what Paul seems to focus upon foremost here is the persecution an individual Christian may experience. Here there is an obligation to respond in a holy rather than an evil way.
 - c. **do not look for revenge** - the right to avenge oneself is not within the Christian walk. This does not deny the need to struggle for justice but the justice is not a merely private agenda, it is concern for the common good.
 - d. **leave judgement to God** - God will avenge injustice and sin ultimately. Despite our need to work for justice for the common good, we must be careful not to put ourselves in the position of God, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay says the Lord.* (Deut 32:35)
 - e. **feed and give drink to your enemy** - Love of enemy does not mean having good feelings toward him. Rather it involves good will toward him. We must desire for our enemy the things we desire for ourselves. Fundamentally then we hope he will be saved and brought into the kingdom of God. We must also wish that he will have the goods basic to life especially food and water. These we are obliged to provide if it is in our power to provide them. We need not provide an enemy with the weapons he may turn on us but we must provide him with the most basic needs if he be in need of them.
 - f. **conquer evil with good** - notice then that this approach is not a pacifist approach to life in the world. Rather, it is a strategy for the battle of Christian life. This is not allowing the devil to win, it is a way of conquering him and refusing to be an instrument in the promotion of further evil.
6. you will heap burning coals upon his head - This is Prov 25:22 and its meaning is quite obscure. Many of the Fathers have understood the image to be one of shame and remorse. The enemy will be ashamed at our good

³see Matt 5:44-47; Luke 6:27-28.

⁴Matt 5:38-39; 43-44; Luke 6:29, 35.

conduct and shamed into goodness himself. Others have seen the proverb as rooted in an ancient Egyptian ritual that penitents carried on their head a dish of burning coal as a sign of repentance. Thus kindness to an enemy would make him express repentance. Some others have taken a more negative approach. In effect, kindness to an enemy who then persists in his hostility makes his offense worse which in effects makes his punishment (symbolized by the burning coals) worse. That retaliation is deferred to God makes that punishment of the enemy all the more perfect. This later interpretation seems a bit out of bounds especially considering the next verse wherein the Christian is exhorted to overcome evil with good.

III. Chapter 13 - Obey Lawful Authority

A. Origin of Authority

1. ***¹Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ²Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.***

B. Objective of Authority

1. ***³For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.***

C. Observance of Authority

1. ***⁶For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.***

D. Overarching Duty to all

1. ***⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.***

E. Overall Duty to ourselves

1. ***¹¹Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.***

F. Introductory notes

1. Chapter 13 is a fascinating chapter and frustrating too. It seems to generate as many questions as it answers.
2. Paul's basic focus is the relationship of the Christian to legitimately constituted authority. He does not specifically refer to the state though this can be inferred from what he says. It is important to recognize this fact however since we do not want to artificially narrow Paul's focus which is not the state per se, but is all legitimate authority. Thus, political officials yes, but also, police, supervisors at work, parents, et al.
3. Why does Paul take up this theme in this letter?
 - a. One theory is that it is simply that he writes to the people of Rome, who, living in the capital of the empire, would have been more conscious of the question of authority, especially imperial authority. This may be so but it can hardly be the only explanation.
 - b. Another more convincing view is that Paul was concerned about a mounting Jewish insurrection against the Roman Government. The Jewish zealot party (although not yet organized in any way) was in its incipient stages and there were rumors of a planned uprising in Jerusalem and Palestine. As is so often the case with any military action, not every Jew favored a zealous war against the Romans. Some thought success unlikely or impossible. Paul seems indisposed to any insurrection.⁵ Given the fact that the Roman officials did not really understand Christians as anything but another sect within Judaism it is not improbable that Paul had concerns that the Christians would be lumped in with the Jewish zealots. He apparently wished for some distinctions to become evident in the way in which Christians and Jews were disposed to Roman authority. The bottom line is this, Judaism was on the brink of a catastrophe as a result of its longstanding resistance to Roman imperialism. An emerging Christianity inextricably tied to the Jews by culture and history was inevitably drawn into this crisis with the Romans. What was the right posture to adopt toward Rome. Paul answers that question in this Chapter.
 - c. If this is Paul's reason for writing this section he does not explicitly state it and thus many do not agree with this theory. Nevertheless, it at least gives some context for the view he expresses. Perhaps Paul does not explicitly mention Jewish zealots for two reasons
 - (1) They were not actually a group at this time. In fact they were not formally organized until AD 66 (Paul writes this letters in the mid 50's). Thus, the whole movement was very vague and there was nothing to specifically address.
 - (2) Paul also seems to mirror the approach of the Lord who was in many ways very non-political. On many occasions when the crowds try to draw Jesus into political matters he steers clear of such things. Many Jews had a political

⁵It should be noted that the Jews did launch a war against the Romans. It ended in 70 AD with absolute defeat for the Jews. Jerusalem was totally destroyed. Over one million people were killed in the siege of that city alone. 97,000 Jews were taken as slaves. The temple has never again been rebuilt. Our Lord certainly prophesied this was and the destruction of the Temple. Likewise, there is a school of thought which is growing that the Book of Revelation is actually about this, and not the end times only. We can discuss this in class.

notion of the Messiah who would come to save them from the Roman oppressors. Jesus however rejected this view and emphasized that he came to save them from their sins. The Lord counselled the Jews to pay their taxes and to obey legitimate authority. Paul simply echoes this view and stays out of specific political questions.

- d. Lastly another important point should be clear. The Jewish-Roman conflict was significant but we must remember that Paul was trying to move the early Church beyond a merely Jewish identity. Thus we can rephrase the whole question before us, "Why does Paul urge the Roman Church to submit to Roman authority?" The answer is because he sees Christ as spanning the chasm between Jew and Gentile. To get all wrapped up in this conflict would be to short-circuit that process.
4. What is problematic about this Chapter?
 - a. Paul seems to presume a just and equitable government. The supposition running through this chapter is that civil authorities are conducting themselves rightly. What happens when this is not the case? Should Christians then rise up? Is there any role for legitimate civil disobedience? Paul does not say, it is beyond the scope of his discussion which is very general.
 - b. What are the limits of authority? Again Paul is silent about such things. This is simply not an exhaustive treatment of the role and the limits of earthly authority.
 - c. Since this letter was written before any persecutions by Rome against the Christians had started, would Paul have sung a different tune in the light of those? Who knows. yet the example of the early Christians seems to suggest he might not sing a different tune. The early Christians seldom took their persecution as an pretext for any uprisings etc.
 5. Finally then, we are left with what amounts a to very general discussion about the Christian's relationship with authority. All specifics aside, presuming a reasonably just system, and, other things being equal, the Christian should respect authority and seek to support it for the sake of the common good.
- G. Romans 13:1-7 Obedience to authority
1. **every person** - literally *every soul*, which is a Hebraism stressing the obligation of every individual. Thus Paul does not refer only to Christians here.
 2. **be subordinate** - literally, *be subject*. Thus there is not a mere obedience in mind here. Obedience can be merely a surface conformity whereas subordination is more thorough and internal.
 3. **there is no authority except from God** - this is fundamentally an Old Testament teaching (2 Sam 12:8; Prov 8:15-16; Jer 27:5-6; Isaiah 45:1; Dan 2:21,37; 4:17; Sir 4:27; Wis 6:1-3). God is the source of all the welfare, prosperity peace and blessings that come from human civil rule. Authority is a divine institution. God made the world hierarchical not egalitarian.
 4. **those that exist have been set up by God** - This is seldom considered today. We tend to think of Politics as a human process from start to finish. Yet, scripture tells us that God has more than just a hand in the whole process. Does this mean that God approves of every ruler that exists? This

is unlikely. Perhaps the flip side to this is that we get the rulers we deserve. Unjust societies tend to breed unjust rulers. In a way it is God's choice to let us have it our way. Either way, whether they serve to assist us or punish us, civil authorities are God's instruments by which He blesses us or punishes us.

5. ***whoever resists authority opposes what God has appointed*** - The argument is: submission to civil authorities is a form of obedience to God. Does this mean that individuals can never disagree or protest? That would be a strong conclusion. This is especially the case since civil authorities are not infallible. Nevertheless, protest and disagreements should be done respectfully, avoiding personal attacks and unnecessary side issues.
6. ***for rulers are not a cause of fear to good conduct*** - one of the essential roles of civil authorities is to oversee to common good and provide for public safety and good order. Thus the individual ought to respect civil authority and in so doing to aid the promoting of the common good as well as good order. See 1 Tim 1:8-9 & 1 Tim 2:1-4.
7. ***it (civil authority) does not bear the sword without purpose; it (he) is the servant of God to inflict wrath on the evildoer.*** the sword is a symbol of the punitive authority of the state. Note that Paul once again links a power of the state (in this case to punish wrongdoing) to the authority granted by God Himself. Paul takes the strongest punitive power of the state (capital punishment) and makes it the symbol of his argument to add force. If this be the case with so grave a power, how much more so with lesser examples of that power. We will discuss capital punishment in class.
8. ***conscience*** - Paul makes obedience a matter of conscience since what he has proposed here is God's truth binding on the conscience of all true believers.
9. ***pay..taxes, tolls, respect, honor*** - not only because they are God's servants but also because they are due these things. In effect they have earned them by public service and by the fact that they represent not just themselves, but God and all the people. Note that Paul does not discuss the limits of these things. Rather, he speaks generally. He also does not set limits on these things because we ought to be generous with these things, especially honor and respect.

H. Romans 13:8-10. Love fulfills the law.

1. Summary - The uprightness that must govern earthly and civil life is based on the uprightness of the new covenant which is a living out of the law of Love. Everything that we are bound to do by precept can be traced back to the fact that we are called to love one another. To love some one is more than to feel good about them. It is to act for and will goodness for them, especially the eternal good of everlasting life.

I. Romans 13:11-14

1. Summary - There is an urgency to doing what is right since this is the last age. We cannot be conformed to this age (12:2) but we must be transformed by the renewal of our minds to live in the new covenant of grace. We must therefore be sober and alert. Paul has already told us back in 2:5-11 that we will have to reckon with God for what we have done whether good or evil. We must therefore live in this knowledge and sobriety for the times are short and life passes swiftly. As our Lord had said, *we must do the works of him who sent me while it is still day for night approaches when no one can work.* Paul uses the following oppositions to illustrate his point

- a. vigilance versus sleep
 - b. day versus night
 - c. evil works versus righteous ones.
2. sleep - i.e. the sleep of unconcern about ones conduct and existence
 3. our salvation is nearer - Paul seems to specifically refer to the time lapse between the beginning of the Messianic age and the second coming not so much our own personal deaths. However, both are true for us.
 4. Light, darkness - are very vivid images in the New Testament, especially in John.
 5. make no provision for the desires of the flesh - we have discussed what Paul means by flesh. There can be no halfway measure. The commitment must be total. We cannot even have foresight for the needs of the flesh, it must be put to death.
 6. Pastoral note - when St. Augustine heard a child singing "Tolle, Lege" (Take and read) - he picked up a scroll of the Letter to the Romans and it was open to these verses from Romans 13:13 & 14. Thus they sparked the conversion to the faith of this saint who so strongly shaped western theology.

IV. Chapter 14

A. Pious Practices

1. *¹As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. ²One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. ³Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand. ⁵One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. Let every one be fully convinced in his own mind.*

B. Purpose of Pious Practices

1. *⁶He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.*

C. Person (to whom we are accountable)

1. *⁷None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*

D. Prescription (Remember Judgement)

1. *¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." ¹²So each of us shall give account of himself to God. ¹³Then let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.*

E. Prudent Practice

1. *¹⁴I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for any one who thinks it unclean. ¹⁵If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶So do not let your good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; ¹⁸he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. ¹⁹Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. ²⁰Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for any one to make others fall by what he eats; ²¹it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble. ²²The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God; happy is he who has no reason to judge himself for what he approves.*

F. Primacy of Conscience -

1. *²³But he who has doubts is condemned, if he eats, because he does not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.*

G. General notes

1. Whereas Paul has been rather general in his remarks about Christian conduct. Now he gets a bit more specific. The issues before us in this chapter involve the questions of the eating of meat, the drinking of wine, the observance of holy day and the like. These are specific questions but the problem is rather generic. It goes back to the question with which we have been dealing all along: the law versus freedom. Because communal life always develops regulations how does one cope with them. Some individuals react scrupulously others have a more general and easy going attitude. Given these different approaches how should the differences be resolved? Paul answers that question here.
2. Paul seems to take sides in the issue when he uses the terms "strong" and "weak." The weak are those who are scrupulous whereas the strong are those who are not so bothered by all the details of the scrupulous. Yet it is also possible that Paul simply takes into his vocabulary word that the Romans were using much as we use the terms conservative and liberal.
3. We do know that Paul had strongly negative reactions to those who sought to reimpose the Jewish Law and this can help explain his perspective here. Nevertheless, the matters of concern here are of lesser importance and those Paul shows some concern, understanding and leniency for the "weak." Such persons have really not grasped what is meant by uprightness through faith and have sought to find assurance in added practices. Yet, they are not per se Judaizers - that is seeking to re-establish the Jewish Law as the requirement for Christians. Thus they are not heretics, but are weak.
4. One textual problem is Paul's use of the word "faith" in Greek (Pisteos). He seems to use it in a different and more loose sense than he has throughout the rest of the letter. It has meant *that act of God in us by which we adhere to what God has done and said and by which we come to justification*. Here, however Paul seems to use the word but with a secondary meaning, to mean conscience, or conviction. We shall see how this is done as we look at the text.

H. Romans 14:1-12.

1. Summary - Paul counsels the Christians of Rome to welcome fellow Christians be they weak or strong, but especially the weak. They too stand before the Lord and we ought to all recall that one day we shall stand before the Lord in judgement.
2. ***weak in faith*** - The Greek word *pistis* is properly translated here. However, Paul cannot mean faith considered in its essence. He is using a secondary meaning of the word. Some translators therefore translate the phrase as "weak in conviction." As you might guess, scripture scholars are not entirely in agreement as to how to interpret *pistis* here. Nevertheless, there is general consensus as to the fact that Paul does not mean faith, considered in its essence.
3. ***disputes over opinions*** - opinions in this case means "inconsequential matters" Thus Paul does not mean that there should never be any debates about important matters. His whole life shows that he was more than willing to engage in debate about the weighty matters!
4. ***Who are you to pass judgement*** - this will be a fruitful discussion topic

for class. We must be careful of this line. It does not mean that we are never able to make judgements. It is important to distinguish between what judgements we can make and what judgements are forbidden us.

5. ***someone else's servant*** - the servant in a household is answerable only to his master not to his fellow servants.
6. ***one day more important than another*** - given a person's background there might be some importance attached to certain days. This was especially true to those of Jewish background who might still be culturally attached to the Jewish feast cycles. But, Gentiles also had their special days.
7. ***Let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind...observe[s] it for the Lord*** - What is important here is the motivation. If a person observes a day it must not be as a return to pagan worship or to the yoke of the Law. Rather it must be as a way to worship and serve the Lord. Paul develops the notion of our servant status in the verses to follow.
8. ***the judgement seat of God*** - here is a scriptural basis for the particular judgement. Not only will there be a general Last Judgement but also a particular or personal judgement that we shall all face. Paul seems to hint at the words of our Lord regarding how careful we should be about passing judgement for, "the measure with which we measure shall be measured back to us." If we expect to be shown mercy we had better show mercy. Again this does not mean that we are to abandon all standards. But let our standards be God's standards and when we invoke them upon others let it be unto instruction, admonishment and merciful correction. Let it be out of care for their souls and not unto our own agenda alone.

I. Romans 14:13-23

1. Summary - Paul now addresses the strong especially. He counsels them to be patient with those of weaker faith (conviction or clarity) and not to unduly criticize or unsettle them. Again, remember the context here is not about the essentials of the faith. Rather, the context is about inconsequential matters. Thus, the strong ought to defer to the consciences of the weak in such matters and not set up a stumbling block for them. This is an important point since, even though something might not be wrong in itself, if a person thinks it wrong and then does it, it is a sin for them. Thus we must have patience and respect for their conscience and not lead them into temptation by unwarranted pressure.
2. ***nothing is unclean in itself*** - see Acts 10:14-15
3. ***it is unclean for someone who thinks it unclean*** - as we said above.
4. ***If your brother is hurt by what you eat, your conduct is no longer in accord with love.*** If we can avoid scandalizing or upsetting others about non-essential issues we ought to avoid it. In moral theology this is called "scandal of the weak." The strong, in vaunting their enlightened or emancipated consciences before the weak, are not making profession of Charity. It is, in fact, an inconsiderate use of freedom. Paul thus calls on Christians to relinquish their legitimate claims of freedom for the sake of those who are weak.
5. ***For the kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*** - The essence of the kingdom is not about freedom from dietary matter but about freedom to react to the promptings of the indwelling Spirit.

6. ***building up one another*** - as opposed to shocking one another or unnecessarily challenging one another about non-essential issues.
7. ***Keep the faith that you have to yourself in the presence of God*** - again Paul does not mean faith in its essence. What he means here is the convictions we have about these non-essentials. Clearly faith, it is essence is meant to be shared and proclaimed but that is not what Paul means here. We might translate the phrase in a more sense this way: "Keep your opinions to yourself."
8. ***blessed is the one who does not condemn himself for what he approves.***
-in other words, blessed is the one who does abuse his freedom in such a way as to condemn himself through his lack of charity.
9. ***For whatever is not from faith is sin*** - again Paul uses the word faith in a very loose sense here. We might more directly understand the phrase by substituting the word "conscience" *Whatever is not in accord with our conscience is sin.*

V. Romans 15

A. Outline

1. Core - *¹We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; ²let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. ³For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me." ⁴For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*
2. Catholic - *⁸For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise thee among the Gentiles, and sing to thy name"; ¹⁰and again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; ¹¹and again, "Praise the Lord, all Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and further Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, he who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles hope."*
3. Concern - *¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. ¹⁴I myself am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. ¹⁵But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*
4. Calling - *¹⁷In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. ¹⁸For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has wrought through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, ¹⁹by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ, ²⁰thus making it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on another man's foundation, ²¹but as it is written, "They shall see who have never been told of him, and they shall understand who have never heard of him."*
5. Course - *²²This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. ²³But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, ²⁴I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be sped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little.*
6. Contributions - *²⁵At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem with aid for the saints. ²⁶For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make*

some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem; ²⁷they were pleased to do it, and indeed they are in debt to them, for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.

7. *Course (2) - ²⁸When therefore I have completed this, and have delivered to them what has been raised, I shall go on by way of you to Spain; ²⁹and I know that when I come to you I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.*
8. *Call - ³⁰I appeal to you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, ³¹that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, ³²so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. ³³The God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

- B. Summary and introductory remarks -
1. Paul continues with the same point but advances it to underscore to the universal call of God to both Jew and Gentile
 2. This is a demonstration of the fact that one of the essential marks of the Church is its catholic (universal) quality. All are invited and none are excluded on the basis of race, nation, culture, or tongue. Whoever will accept the teaching of our as set forth by the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, is invited.
 3. Why is the Church catholic? Because God is faithful to his word. Paul sets forth the obvious point that God had fulfilled the promises he made through prophets by the Ministry of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Likewise, however, God had promised to include the Gentiles. Paul demonstrates this point by the presentation of four passages from the Old Testament which send forth God's invitations to the Gentiles.
 4. Paul then declares how fruitful the work of God has been among the Gentiles in fulfillment of scripture. He likewise shows how he considers himself an instrument in this regard.
 5. Next, Paul declares his intention to go to Spain and proclaim the Gospel there. He hopes to pass through Rome on his way. He does not intend to stay in Rome for any length since others have already well established the Gospel there.
 6. In the meantime Paul will visit Jerusalem to bring contributions to the Church there which he has collected from Macedonia and Achaia. He perhaps more than hints that the Romans might consider this charity.
 7. Finally Paul asks for prayers on his behalf for he is aware that in going to Jerusalem he goes into dangerous territory.
- C. Romans 15:1-6 Christ is the Model for all Christian Conduct.
1. ***the insults of those who insult you, fall upon me*** - Psalm 69:10. The suffering of the individual are actually leveled against God. Acts 9:4-5 recalls how Paul experienced this fact when The Lord said, *Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?...I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.*
 2. ***Whatever was written previously was written for our instruction*** - Although the scriptures were written directly for the people of old they were not exclusively intended for them. The scriptures are thus relevant for us today. Later, Marcion would reject the Old Testament as irrelevant for Christians. This is clearly an error according to scripture itself. Likewise though who, today, reject the scripture's bind force due to its ancient origin are wrong.
 3. ***that, by endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope*** - When the suffering of Jesus is viewed against the whole of sacred history it is seen in proper perspective and as a fulfillment. So it is for the Christian who may experience trial and set-back who must see this in the same perspective and thus have hope.
 4. ***May God...grant you to think in harmony with one another*** - note how unity is a work of God. It is not enough to merely have the scriptures as many protestants claim, we must have unity with the Lord. Clearly the scriptures are an important source of unity but they are not the only. And, without the work of the Holy Spirit they can even be a source of division. How else can we explain the myriads of protestants, all of whom claim to read the Bible faithfully and yet, all of whom disagree about important matters?
 5. ***that, with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father***

of our Lord Jesus Christ. - unity is itself a means by which God is glorified. *I pray for them...that they may be one, as you Father are in me, and I in you, that they may also be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.* [John 17:20-21]

D. Romans 15:7-13 Jews and Gentiles must welcome one another's presence in the Church.

1. Paul now stresses how Jews and Gentiles must accept one another following the very model of God who sends forth his Word through all the earth. He quotes from four passages which come from the three major sections of the Old Testament: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings.
2. ***Christ became a minister of the circumcised*** - Christ had to be a Jew in order to confirm God's promises to the patriarchs and to confirm God's fidelity.
3. ***but, so the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy[. As] it is written*** - in other words, the O.T. scriptures also contain promises to the Gentiles and Paul lists them here.
 - a. Psalm 18:50 (2 Sam 22:50)
 - b. Deut 32:43
 - c. Psalm 117:1
 - d. Isaiah 11:10
4. ***May the God of hope fill you with all joy, and peace in believing so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*** - Here Paul concludes his moral treatise and now he will wrap up the letter by the conclusion and commendations.

E. Romans 15:14-24.

1. Paul has essentially concluded his letter and now he adds some incidental closing remarks. He declares news about himself and mentions his plans to go to Jerusalem and eventually to visit Rome on his way to Spain where he hopes to spread the Gospel. He also compliments the Romans on the good things he has heard of them
2. Textual notes
 - a. ***a minister*** - the Greek word is *Leitourgos* which means "cultic minister." The word could have a secular meaning just as it does sometimes today: (eg. minister of justice, Transportation Minister, etc.) But it could also have a religious meaning and it is this sense that Paul uses. Paul is, in effect and servant of the Gospel and his task is that of preaching it. The preaching of the word is a liturgical act.
 - b. ***the priestly duty*** - scripture scholars debate as to whether Paul is using this term as we do today. Was Paul saying he was a priest or was he simply speaking metaphorically? The trouble is that this phrase is used nowhere else by Paul. Nevertheless, Paul was a priest as we understand the meaning of the word. He baptized (eg 1 Cor 1:14-16). He presided at the Eucharist (eg 1 Cor 11:20, Acts 20:11). In fact we can go further to say that he was a Bishop. First of all he was an Apostle and thus, by that very fact a bishop (Acts 13:3). But it is also likely that he, along with others, ordained Timothy as a bishop (2 Tim 1:6). This pertains to the office of bishop.
 - c. ***Illyricum*** - This area would correspond to modern Albania and the former Yugoslavia just north of Macedonia.

F. Romans 15:25-29

1. First however Paul must journey to Jerusalem to carry a collection for the Church there that he has collected that he collected in Macedonia. He describes the collection as a gift that ought to be expected of the Christians in those regions who ought to have reverence and give support to Jerusalem, the mother-church.⁶ This is an important sign of unity and solidarity. It is not just a collection, but a recognition of Jerusalem as the chosen sight of the Lord for the going forth of the Gospel.
 2. Textual notes
 - a. Achaia - the southern peninsula of Greece where Corinth was.
- G. Romans 15:30-33
1. Paul reveals that he is apprehensive about the trip he is to make to Jerusalem and the reception he might encounter there. Let it not be forgotten that Jerusalem was a highly charged and polarized city religiously speaking. There was little tolerance of alternative forms of Judaism. Recall the fear in the Apostles as our Lord set his face toward Jerusalem. Thus Paul asks the prayers of the Romans that he might be delivered from the hands of unbelievers. Recall too Paul's own difficulties in Jerusalem (Acts 14:2; 19:9; 1 Thess 2:15).

⁶Much as we have the collection for the Holy Land now.

VI. Romans 16

A. Outline

1. Commendations - ¹*I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchre-ae,* ²*that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well.* ³*Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,* ⁴*who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I but also all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks;* ⁵*greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ.* ⁶*Greet Mary, who has worked hard among you.* ⁷*Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners; they are men of note among the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.* ⁸*Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.* ⁹*Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys.* ¹⁰*Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus.* ¹¹*Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus.* ¹²*Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord.* ¹³*Greet Rufus, eminent in the Lord, also his mother and mine.* ¹⁴*Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren who are with them.* ¹⁵*Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.* ¹⁶*Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.*
2. Concern - ¹⁷*I appeal to you, brethren, to take note of those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught; avoid them.* ¹⁸*For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by fair and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded.* ¹⁹*For while your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, I would have you wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil;* ²⁰*then the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*
3. Commendations (2) - ²¹*Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.* ²²*I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord.* ²³*Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.*
4. Conclusion - ²⁵*Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages* ²⁶*but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—* ²⁷*to the only wise God be glory for evermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

- B. Paul ends his letter with a recommendation of Phoebe and a greeting to 24 others in Rome. He admonishes the Romans to preserve unity and to avoid contact with smooth talkers who sow seeds of division. Several of Paul's companions then add a brief salutation, including the scribe of the letter.
- C. Romans 16:1-2 Textual notes
1. Phoebe - an otherwise unknown Gentile Christian woman who is the one who carries the letter to the Christians of Rome. Her name surely suggests her pagan background and likely denotes that she was a freed slave. The name was of mythical origin and meant "shining, beaming, or bright."
 2. **a minister** - the Greek here is diakonos. From this Greek root we get the title "deacon." Some would use a scriptural reference such as this to indicate that women can be ordained as deacons. The reference here is ambiguous however. Many questions are raised:
 - a. What was the theological understanding of deacons at the time Paul writes? Did he, and the early Church have the same understanding that surely developed later? Remember that, although the role of deacon, priest, and bishop are clearly rooted in scripture, this does not mean that the doctrines surrounding these levels of holy orders were fully developed or thought out at this time.
 - b. Did the early Church conceive of the diaconate as a part of holy orders?
 - c. What was the role of the deacon. Was there a different role for deacons and deaconesses?
 - d. Was the title deaconess simply the title for the wife of a deacon but merely title, not an actual functioning ministry in the Church?
 - e. These questions and many more make the whole question of woman deaconesses questionable at best. There is no evidence that they ever received a ministry by the laying on of hands (the outward sign of the sacrament of Holy Orders). We are certain that some women in the first 300 years of the Church had the title "deaconess" but we do not know exactly what they did. A likely role was the baptism of women. (Remember, baptism was usually done absent any clothes). Thus, for the sake of modesty women usually baptized women. The most recent and most thorough study of this question of deaconesses is 500+ pages in length and concludes against the ordination of women as deacons. The author of that work goes to great lengths to show that although some women had the title of deaconess, their role was quite distinct from that of deacons.
 - f. Hence, our translation, which renders the Greek word Diakonos as minister chooses the generic meaning of that Greek word and it is a proper choice of words given what has been said.
 3. **Cenchreae** - there are at least six place or towns with this name and it is unknown to which one Paul refers.
- D. Romans 16:17-20 Warnings about false teachers
1. All throughout his ministry Paul has had to deal with those who preach a false Gospel message, be they Judaizers, or those who preach other falsehoods. All the other epistles (not just Paul's) of the New Testament,

almost without exception warn against false teachers. Thus it seems to have been a problem in the early Church. Paul also seems to indicate the modest quality of his preaching. His opponents seem to be good preachers and Paul less so. They are smooth-talkers but Paul is more rough-hewn and perhaps less outstanding in his preaching quality. Nevertheless he admonishes the Romans as he does other communities to stick with the truth and not be trapped by smooth talkers and fancy packaging.

2. ***Watch out for those who create dissensions and obstacles*** - Paul does not say who these people are. Paul either assumes they know of whom he speaks or he keeps it generic as a general counsel. They create obstacles by tripping Christians up in their pursuit of the truth.
3. ***Such people do not serve our Lord*** - To serve the Lord is to lead an ecclesial life in union with the teaching authority of the Church. These people tear at the unity of the Church by rejecting the faith proclaimed by the Church in union with the Apostles.
4. ***the innocent*** - literally the "nonevil." The simple, the pious are perhaps more easily led astray by these smooth talkers.

E. Romans 16:21-23 Final greetings

1. Eight other Christians who are in some way directly affiliated with Paul now chime in with greetings as well. These greetings are through Paul.
2. ***I Tertius who write this letter*** - that is, he is the scribe of the Letter. Paul used scribes to dictate his letters. This is attested to in numerous places eg. 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; 2 Thess 3:17; Col 8:14

F. Romans 16:25-27 Final Doxology