

Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Lecture 12, Romans 10:33-12:13

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session 12 on Romans 10:33-12:13.

We were finishing up Romans chapter 11. As you may guess, this is partly dictated by where the natural breaks come in Romans, but it's also partly dictated by breaking at reasonable amounts of time for the videos. But Romans chapter 11, verses 30 to 32, kind of summarizes the themes of the preceding section where Israel and Gentiles exchange rules of disobedience so that the gospel ends up going to everybody. Now, here is a question that may have occurred to some people, namely, when you heard me in Romans chapter 2, perhaps you thought that I was a covenant theologian and the dispensationalists quit watching.

And then in Romans chapter 11, perhaps you thought that I was a dispensationalist, and then the covenant theologians stopped watching. Perhaps no one is watching now, but hopefully, some people may say, well, is this dispensationalism, or is this covenant theology? And when I was in Romans chapter 9, you may have said, is this Calvinism or Arminianism? I actually had a friend, he said, in your Romans commentary, you were kind of neutral. You shouldn't have been.

You should have agreed with me. But I wasn't exactly trying to be neutral. I was just trying to follow the text where it goes.

It's not that I don't care about how we harmonize the different texts together when we're done. I mean, I do care about biblical theology and ultimately systematic theology and pastoral application and all those things. But before we get to those, when we're studying the book of the Bible, our focus is, what does this book have to teach us? And so that's where I start.

And I'm not really trying to argue for covenant theology, dispensationalism, or anything else in particular. I'm trying to be faithful to the text. And then where the text leads us and you put it together with other texts and you put them together, that's what we believe.

And if it doesn't fit anybody's system and we need a larger system to accommodate it, well, I'm fine with that. And if somebody else isn't, well, I'm just explaining the text and you figure out how you want to put it together. But in any case, in Romans 11, verses 33 to 36, we have a concluding doxology.

It was common to conclude a section, and here concluding Romans 9 through 11, it's common to conclude a section with rousing rhetoric and especially to conclude a book that way. But you also often would conclude sections of speeches and so on in that way with a summary or with some sort of rousing rhetoric. Well, doxology is certainly rousing rhetoric.

It uses what's called the rhetoric of the sublime, at least that's what rhetoricians would sometimes call it, grand rhetoric at times. And at times this could border on the poetic. Now, sometimes people, as I mentioned earlier, sometimes people think certain things that we have in Paul's writings are pre-Pauline hymns, and some of them certainly could be pre-Pauline material, but we don't have to assume that because Paul was capable of lapsing into doxologies or grand rhetoric.

Sometimes you get so excited about God's Word, that it's just hard to contain yourself. And that's what happened, I think, with Paul here and in some other places. He's worshiping God and uses this language that's almost poetic the way we would see it, not with Greek meter, so to speak, but just very rousing rhetoric.

Chapter 11 and verse 34, he borrows from the Greek translation of Isaiah 40 and verse 13, who has known the mind of the Lord? And of course, the Hebrew says, who has known the spirit of the Lord? That's why 1 Corinthians 2.16 asks this and then says, but we have the mind of Christ because we have the spirit. We talked about that back in chapter eight, but here it's also preparing for what's about to come for Romans 12:2, where it talks about the renewing of our minds. Who has known the Lord's mind? Well, in 1 Corinthians 2, he says, who has known the Lord's mind? Ah, but we have the mind of Christ.

And here, who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has known the spirit of the Lord? But he's going to talk about the renewing of our minds. And that shows us that one aspect of the renewing of our minds is having God's perspective on history, on God's mighty works in history, looking at it through the lens, a theological lens as we have in this case. Not that we always agree with one another, just having a theological lens.

But in any case, 11:35, he quotes from Job 41:11, just scriptures coming out of Paul all over the place. And finally, he concludes in verse 36, one of the most rousing verses, I think, in all of Romans and perhaps all of scripture, for from him and through him and to him are all things. God is really sovereign.

Now, ancient writers, often from Aristotle onward, often thought in terms of different kinds of causation. Sometimes we have the problem today because somebody will say, well, this wasn't caused by God. It was caused by this natural phenomenon.

Or sometimes people look at things in creation the same way. But ancient thinkers and actually often medieval thinkers thought in terms of multiple levels of causation. There were different kinds of causation.

They could speak of from him like God was the source of this. Through him, God causes it to happen in terms of mediating it to him or for him. But ultimately, it's a teleological cause.

This is the reason for which it's done. So different prepositions were used for different kinds of causes. And Paul uses such different prepositions to show that God is in this process all the way through.

Paul trusts God's sovereignty in the history of his people and the nations, as we see in this section. And to quote from my Romans commentary, the reason I'm quoting from my commentaries is not because mine are the most thorough. Again, my Romans commentary was very short.

But simply because it saved me working on the PowerPoint. Paul is saying something like God authored all things, and is a necessary agency through which they occur, and elsewhere we see that is through Jesus. And in the end, all these things will fulfill God's purposes.

Now, with this, we're ready to turn to Romans 12, which is very significant because Paul is getting ready to apply some of the theological insights that he's been laying out. Romans 12:2, I'm going to spend a lot of time on that verse, so I'm just introducing that up front. Don't follow the pattern of this age.

Instead, be transformed by your mind being made new. This way, you'll be qualified to evaluate what is good, pleasing, and perfect, and so recognize God's will. There are reasons I've translated it that way, and you'll see them more as I break out the individual parts of that when we get there.

But what we have here is a transition to application. Paul does that often in his writings. After he's laid the theological groundwork, he goes to the application.

First Thessalonians, chapters 4 and 5, he applies things to people's behavior. Even, I think, more clearly in Galatians 5 and 6, he's doing that. He's doing the same thing, I believe, here in Romans.

First Corinthians, he does it all the way through. But there are reasons why he structures his letters the way he does. Now, sometimes people think, well, if God's not going to punish me, I'll just behave however I want to, and that's what justification is about, which really misses the point.

In fact, it's not a very morally developed way of looking at things. In terms of moral development, at a certain stage in children's development, punishment is a deterrent. You take this away, well, then they gradually learn not to do that again.

But eventually, they learn to think about others, and at an advanced stage of moral development, they become more altruistic. Because they're right, you do things to help people, because people need help. And Paul has talked about justification by faith, but he wants us to live in the right way.

We've been made righteous. We have a new identity. So now we need to live like new people, not because we're afraid of being punished, but because that's who we are in Christ.

Presenting our bodies as sacrifices, 12:1. Well, we mentioned earlier the body can be used for good or bad. Here, presenting the body as a sacrifice to God is a good way to use it. Despite earlier warnings, Paul recognizes that the body can be used for good.

Earlier in chapter 6, verses 13 and 19, he spoke of presenting our bodies as hapla, which can mean weapons. He's going to use it in a probably military sense in Romans 13 or as instruments to God. Well, here, and probably in 6, it was just instruments, but here also, we are presenting our bodies to God.

And ultimately, in this context, our body is to be in the service of his body, verses 4-6. He speaks of presenting our body as a living sacrifice. Well, priests present sacrifices.

We are here priests who present ourselves as sacrifices. And he gives three adjectives to modify this. Living, holy, and acceptable or pleasing.

Well, what do these mean? Sacrifices were supposed to be acceptable or pleasing to a deity, and we have that language applied to sacrifices in scripture, in Ezra 6.10, Isaiah 56.7, Jeremiah 6.20, and Paul used that language elsewhere for figurative sacrifice. The Philippians' gift to Paul in Philippians 4.18 is a sacrifice pleasing to God. Sacrifices had to be pleasing to God.

They also had to be holy. We have some examples in the Old Testament, like Leviticus 2, 3, and 10, where the sacrifice is said to be holy. But once a sacrifice is devoted to God, it's consecrated to God.

It's holy. Well, we need to present our bodies to God in a way that's pleasing to him, like the sweet-smelling aroma of some sacrifices in the Old Testament is said to be pleasing to God, and also that is holy, that's consecrated to God. That's what we were made for.

Let's live for what we're made for in light of eternity. And the sacrifice is to be living. Now, that's kind of like an oxymoron.

People give various kinds of examples of oxymorons, like, well, a lot of humorous examples, but an oxymoron is where you use two terms together that normally would be considered contradictory together. A living sacrifice. Now, you did have grain offerings and things like that.

You also had the Azazel goat. You had the two goats in Leviticus 16 and one is set free. But normally, when people would think of a living sacrifice, that's kind of an oxymoron.

But for us, we're still alive, and this is a sacrifice by how we live our lives. I mean, we may give our lives for Christ, who may ultimately be another kind of sacrifice, but our sacrifice from day to day is by how we live. And it's to be a rational sacrifice.

Some people in antiquity spoke of spiritual sacrifices. Of course, you have a lot of figurative sacrificial language in the Old Testament, as well as in the New Testament. The sacrifice that you require, Lord, is a contrite and broken spirit.

You have Psalm 51:17. You have Proverbs 21:3. You also have texts like Amos chapter 5, where God says he despises their sacrifices and their new moons and so forth. And what he really requires is, let justice flow down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Isaiah chapter 1, Isaiah 58, and so on.

But here, the adjective that goes with it is a *logikos* sacrifice. Now, *logikos* can mean spiritual in certain contexts. Actually, in 1 Peter chapter 2, where it speaks of *logikos*, probably it's even used to connect back with what he just said toward the end of chapter 1 of 1 Peter, where it speaks of God's word.

And so, it's related to the *logos* there. But in any case, it also can mean rational or related to the mind, related to *logos*, reason. And that may be the issue here because he's about to go on and talk about the mind in verse 2. Now, when you have a semantic range of a word, sometimes what we consider different elements, may bleed over in the original language.

So, you may not separate necessarily spiritual and rational as much as we would. But in any case, Stoics spoke about having rational sacrifices that were not according to the mass's superstitions, but were sacrifices where you reasoned out, this is what would please the gods. Well, in verses 2 and 3, it's going to talk about the mind.

So, this is through our reason. Our mind is used so we can figure out what God really wants. And that's how we can use our bodies to serve God.

Because our minds show us how to use our bodies in the right way to serve God. Our minds can be used for God just as our bodies can be used for God. And so, in 12 to the very beginning, it speaks of being transformed in contrast to being conformed.

Conforming to the world, philosophers said don't conform to the masses. They're foolish. Of course, the masses didn't have very good ideas about the philosophers either.

Jewish sages said don't conform to the Gentiles. Well, instead, we should have a transformed mind. Paul says elsewhere, it speaks of the full transformation that we're going to experience at Christ's return, when we're fully conformed to Christ, 8:29, or Philippians 3:21, when our bodies are made to be like his own glorious body.

Philippians 3:10, conformed to his sufferings. But here also, this transformed, it's in the imperative. And it's a passive imperative, which is fairly unusual, but probably it's implying that it's God's action.

God is the one transforming us. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Don't be conformed, literally, it says, to this age, aion.

It's not cosmos world, it's aion world. I'm sorry, age. And so, we have a contrast between the new age and the old age.

Now, you'll remember that this is just very common in Paul's writings, the present evil age, Galatians 1:4, versus the future, you have that in Jewish thought all over the place. The contrast between the present age and the future, the reign of God, and the time of perfect peace and justice, and the reign of the Spirit, and the Messiah, and so forth. Well, in Paul, we have the already not yet, but he speaks of the wisdom of the present age, 1 Corinthians 1:20, 2:6 and 8, 3:18. He speaks of the God of this age, 2 Corinthians 4:4, and we mentioned delivered from this present age, Galatians 1:4. We also talked before about the Spirit as a foretaste, mentioning 1 Corinthians 2, 2 Corinthians 1 and 5. Also, you have that, not with the word ahabon, but again, our hope for the future is based on our experience of the Spirit in Galatians 5:5. So, don't be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind for a new age, not new age in the sense in which some people talk about it, but new age in the sense of the promised world to come.

Renewal for a new age. Renewing here, it's a term that's related to the term for new, he's been using that term earlier, new life in the Spirit. We've been delivered from the old person.

Well, that includes a new way of thinking, a new worldview, viewing things from the standpoint of how they would look from eternity or how they'll look from the world to come. Did we use our time? Did we use our resources in a way that honors God's

eternal purposes? A million years from now, will we look back on how we spent today and say, I spent today in a way that glorifies my Father? This new worldview, Paul talks about it also in 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 just to get more of the idea of what he means by it. He says, you know, now in Christ, we don't look at things the way we used to.

We don't even look at Christ the way we used to. We look at everything in a new way because old things have passed, that new things have come, and the new age has broken into history. And because we are new creatures in Christ, we're a foretaste of a new creation.

We live in this age, but we live in this age with a perspective of the future age so that we, in Jesus' words, are salt and light. We are here in this world to make a difference for the kingdom. We evaluate this world and live in light of eternity.

And he's going to deal with that more in chapter 13 verses 11-14 where, hey, don't be asleep anymore. The day is coming. The day of the Lord is coming.

You know, the night is almost spent. Don't live like the world that's asleep in the darkness. A new world is coming.

We are the first fruits raised with Christ. Our identity is in Him. And therefore, we need to live in the light of eternity.

If there's any question about what Romans 13:11-14 could mean, in light of 1 Thessalonians 5:2-9, which Paul wrote earlier, it's pretty clear that it's talking about living in light of eternity and living in light of the Lord's coming. Christians have different particular views on the details of the Lord's return. But what we can all agree on is that we need to live in light of that.

We need to live in light of the Lord's return, in light of eternity. What I see as tragic is that where the church today has the most resources, where the church is not persecuted, where the church is living fairly comfortably, we often squander those resources blindly on ourselves, neglecting a mission that's of eternal value. Every moment of our lives can count in light of eternity.

Now, I used to try to micromanage that, and I'm not suggesting that. That wasn't a good idea. We can't control everything that happens every moment.

Patience is a fruit of the Spirit. But to devote ourselves continually to God's purposes, making everything count for eternity. When I was starting my doctoral work, I had just gone through the worst experience of my life.

I mentioned before about it looked like my ministry was destroyed, everything was over. I was just hanging on to God for dear life. It really didn't feel like doing doctoral work, but the Lord actually closed all the other doors I had to do it.

I was completely broken. The Lord provided for me to do that. And so, well, I think I had a dollar.

But anyway, so I'd been struggling really in my own heart. I was a broken person. And I ran into this freshman named John.

And I had met John in a dormitory Bible study. And I didn't know he was just kind of politically making his rounds. He was the dorm president.

He was just making his rounds of all the things in the dorm. I assumed he was a Christian. But so, we started talking, and he was really bummed out because he had just bombed his Calc test.

He did pass Calculus, but he didn't do too well on this test. And so, we started talking, and I was sharing with him about what I was broken about. And the conversation just led on, and we kept talking.

And I could see the thing that John cared most about was his friends. But I could also see it didn't look like he was really serving the Lord. And so, I said, you know, John, which is greater, a million or one? You know, he had bombed his Calc test, but this math was easy.

Which is greater, eternity or one year? Obviously, eternity. I said, John, you really love your friends. There's nothing greater you can give them than eternal life.

But you can't give them what you don't have yourself. And tears came to his eyes. I could see that the Holy Spirit was touching him.

He didn't accept Christ right then. I didn't press him. But over the next month or so, the Holy Spirit was dealing with him, and God touched him so deeply.

He became a fired-up Christian and immediately called together 40 of his friends and shared Christ with them. He was pledging the wildest fraternity on campus before he became a believer. So, he's in this wildest fraternity.

He's witnessing to them. People are making fun of him and so on. But they found out it was very useful to have somebody who wasn't drunk because when somebody would get hurt, they were drunk.

You know, somebody slammed a door into their face or something accidentally. Well, John was the only one who could drive them to the hospital. So, in time, his witness spread.

John has led far more people to Christ one-on-one than I have in my life. But to think in light of eternity, how can we make the biggest difference? You know, in my country, I think it's different now because people do it by playing on the Internet, video games, and things like that. But at least some years ago, the average American Christian, North American Christian spent, I don't know, three, four hours a day watching television.

Imagine if you took just maybe 40 million Christians and you took those four hours a day or three hours a day for 365 days a year and you took 40 million Christians. I know there are more than 40 million, but just to take a number. And you converted all those hours into serving our communities sharing Christ with our neighbors or just meeting people's needs or spending that time in prayer.

Can you imagine the revival that would come out of that? Can you imagine what God would do with that? If we would live in light of eternity, not for just whatever entertains us, but for how we can be servants to make a difference. Recognizing that each of us has been gifted by God to make a difference, as Paul's going to go on to talk about as he talks about us being gifted in Romans 12. Well, there's a contrast here between this renewed mind and the old corrupted mind of Romans chapter one.

Romans 1, humanity failed to thank God, 1:21, and eventually they worshiped idols, 12:3. Here, believers worship God, dedicating ourselves as sacrifices, not to idols, but to the living God. They corrupted their bodies in 12:4, but we offer our bodies, 12:1, to serve Christ's body, 12:4 or 8. They belong to the present age, and that seems to be suggested by the verb tenses in 11:8 through 32.

We are not being conformed to this age, but our minds are being made new in 12:2. They did not approve of the knowledge of God, so God allowed their minds to be corrupted. But here, God renews our minds so we may approve his will.

And I'll talk about the connection in the Greek there. It doesn't come out in English quite as well. Their corrupted minds yielded selfish vices in 12:8 through 31.

Our renewed mind yields acts of service to Christ's body in 12:1 through 8. So now we're going on to talk about discerning God's will. I don't know if you've ever had a problem discerning God's will. Sometimes I have.

You can see I'm a little thick-headed here. But discerning God's will, he goes on to talk about our minds are renewed so we may discern God's will, 12:2 says. The

person who boasts about the law in 2:17 to 18 thinks that he discerns God's will, but it turns out he really doesn't know what he's doing.

But here, the renewed mind really discerns God's will. I think he's evoking the language he used earlier in the letter because, again, the way people read Romans initially wasn't reading a verse here or a verse there or even reading a chapter here or a chapter there. They'd hear the whole letter read to them at once.

And so, they would be thinking of the later parts in light of the earlier parts. And presumably they would hear it read more than once. And so eventually they would pick up these connections.

There's a contrast with the corrupted mind of 12:8. They didn't, the language, they didn't approve or evaluate his right to retain the true knowledge of God. So, God handed them over to a disapproved or evaluated as the wrong mind to do what's not fitting.

But in 12:2 with the renewed mind, we can evaluate what is God's will. He uses the same wording here. They didn't know because they didn't want to know God and so neither could they know what was right.

But here we can evaluate God's will because we have a renewed mind. So, it's a reversal of humanity's corrupted intellect that we see here in chapter 12. Again, we talk about world views.

The assumptions you start with make a difference. And starting with the fear of the Lord makes a difference. Philosophers and orators used evaluative criteria such as good and perfect.

Here is a little cartoon about evaluation. When I told you to assign grades to students, I didn't mean first grade, second grade, and third grade. I draw cartoons for my seminary sometimes when I am on an overload mode for my brain.

I can't keep doing my writing. So sometimes I just imagine something completely absurd. But anyway, philosophers and orators used evaluative criteria such as good and perfect.

Stoics said that the highest good is virtue as opposed to Epicureans who thought the highest good was pleasure. But by that, they meant the absence of pain. But in any case, perfect, what we translate sometimes as perfect, to layas, can mean complete or mature in whatever sphere is addressed.

So, you know, often when the Bible speaks of perfect, that doesn't mean you necessarily got 100 on your exam. You might have even bombed your calculus test. But perfect means within the sphere that's under consideration.

You are complete or mature. So, philosophers used these criteria already to evaluate whether something was good. Orators did the same thing.

They used various criteria to determine what was the best choice to make in a particular situation. Stoics were always interested in the best choices as philosophers. Good, pleasing, and perfect as criteria.

Jews and Gentiles alike sometimes accumulated positive adjectives as synonyms. So, this doesn't refer to three levels of God's will. Like, well, you know, you could choose his goodwill, but better than that, choose his pleasing will.

Better than that, choose his perfect will. No, that's not the point here. Rather, these are ways to recognize God's will.

If something is good or pleasing or perfect, it's his will. Now, I'm not denying that God can lead us in other ways. For instance, my brother-in-law, M. A. Musunga, during the war, there was a time when he was going back to try to get to the family.

And he felt just a sudden urge within him, no, he's not supposed to go forward. He needs to go back. And moments later, the public market where he would have been erupted into gunfire.

The Holy Spirit has additional ways of leading us, just like the Spirit deals with our minds. The Spirit also does deal with our spirit. Spiritual intuition, Nehemiah 7, verse 5, God put it in my heart to assemble everybody.

But while God can lead us that way, wisdom is also God's leading. God can lead us both ways. Often, they line up.

And when they line up, well, you know what to do. Otherwise, you do your best and trust God to order your steps. Where I was teaching before, Palmer Seminary, I loved teaching there.

I loved my students. But periodically, places would offer me, to come here. And if they'd offered me a lighter teaching load, so I'd have more time for writing, I might have just jumped at it as much as I loved where I was.

But there was this one thing. One place offered me something, and it was \$30,000 more than I was making a year. And I didn't feel at peace about it, but I thought, you know, if you're \$30,000, let me just pray about it anyway.

So, I prayed about it, and I had a dream. And in the dream, I asked my friend, Ben Witherington, for advice. And Ben, I forget what, I don't even remember if he gave me advice in the dream.

I just remembered I asked him. So, when I woke up, I said, that's not a bad idea. So, I emailed Ben, and Ben said, oh, you should come here because we're about to have an opening here.

Well, I didn't, I wasn't looking for an opening. So, well, the door opened for me to come to where I'm at the moment. And I wasn't really sure whether I should do it or not.

And I went back and forth. And my wife, she was praying, and she felt like God was saying we should do it. Well, Paul says we know in part, we prophesy in part.

I didn't hear anything, probably partly because I was biased. But in any case, I tried what I would feel peace about. I actually, sometimes felt peace about either one.

I tried to weigh the alternatives using these criteria. I still couldn't figure it out. And finally, we had to make a decision.

And so, you know, rather than eeny, meeny, miny, moe, I said, you know, if Isaac had listened to Rebecca, would have saved a lot of problems with Jacob and Esau. So, my wife heard, let me go with that. And after that, the Lord gave me confirmations.

But sometimes we don't know exactly. And we just have to go with the best we know. We know in part, we prophesy in part.

But often God gives us wisdom and we know what is best because it's good, it's pleasing, it's perfect in God's sight. We know it will work. And especially it will edify the body of Christ.

And actually, that was something the Lord had spoken earlier to us about. Look for those who have the same vision, the same mission, and the same vision to reach the world. And certainly, Tim Tennant has that.

That was another thing that drew me here. But anyway, the literary context for this renewing of the mind. Well, we have God's own mind in the preceding context.

Remember, who has known the mind of the Lord? It's just a few verses earlier. Paul doesn't use that term very often in Romans, but he uses it in both of these texts just one paragraph apart. 12:1 begins with the connection, therefore.

So, you know, it's based on what precedes, which really it's based on all of 9 through 11, and maybe, you know, 1 through 11. But in any case, also 11:34, you see God's wisdom in arranging history. So, who has known the Lord's mind? Well, as we read this, we see God's wisdom in history.

God shares some of his own insights with us. I mean, obviously, God's knowledge is infinite, but he shares some of that with us where we need it, some of his wisdom with us. The Bible often talks about having divine wisdom, which 1 Corinthians shows us is focused on the cross.

It's focused not the way the world does things, but on the way God does things. But also the following context shows us how this renewed mind thinks. It's a mind for the body of Christ.

The thinking theme continues in verse 3. It says, don't think of yourself inappropriately. Instead, think soundly. That is, recognize, he goes on to say, that God gives to each person a measure of faith.

So don't boast yourself like I'm better than others, and also don't waste yourself as if you're not worth anything and you can't do anything. Some of us have one problem, some of us have the other, and some of us have both, depending on what mood we're in. But what does he mean, God gives us a measure of faith? He's going to go on to talk about something very similar to this a few verses later.

If somebody prophesies, let them prophesy according to the proportion of their faith. In this context, some people think that it has to do, especially in the later reference to prophecy, that it has to do with we are supposed to do this according to the measure, the standard, the canon of scripture that God has given, or the basic message of the gospel. Well, theologically that's true.

I mean, obviously, God isn't going to contradict what he's spoken through all of history, through apostles and prophets whose message has been tested over time, and others, whose message has been tested over time, and this is like the minimum agreed upon. We use this to evaluate other things. That's true.

But in this passage, I don't think that's what it's talking about. I think it's talking about faith being apportioned for different gifts. That is, God gifts one in this way.

He gives another faith to be expressed in this gift. He measures to another faith to be expressed in this gift. So that we are each given measures of faith for what God wants us to do.

Some of us are better at some things than others. I have friends who have gifts that just, wow, how can they do that? And then with me, it's like as I'm studying scripture,

it just comes alive to me. And teaching scripture, it's just a gift that flows through me.

And it's been that way for years and years and years. So, we each have different gifts. By the way, I mentioned my wife hearing from the Lord.

Just in case we're thinking of gifts again, I mentioned earlier that I do pray in tongues. My wife doesn't. But she's the one who heard from God in that case.

So, we have different gifts, and we need to respect all the gifts. We can't look down on one another. The renewed mind considers, how can I contribute to Christ's body? What are the ways God's gifted me? What are the needs that are there? And where our gifts and the body's needs coincide, well, we know that's God's will for us to do.

You don't need any extra revelation for that. When there are no gifts available to meet certain needs in the body, well, then you can do like 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 14:1, that kind of sandwiched that love chapter that's rebuking the Corinthians for all the things it says love is, that he's already told them in the letter that they're not. We can seek God for gifts.

We're not seeking them for ourselves. We're seeking them for the up-building of the body. Well, you can pray for things for yourself, too.

I'm not saying you can't, but especially to seek for gifts to build up the body. That's what they're especially for, for ministry to one another. And so, you can pray for God to raise up that gift, whether for you or somebody else.

Just be open in case he chooses you. Remember Jesus told his disciples, to pray for laborers for the harvest. And right after that, whom does he send? When he says the worker is worthy of their hire, it's the same word for labor in Greek.

In my own life, I've had a special lead for some books. Like with the Revelation commentary, I felt led that I was supposed to write something on Revelation for Zondervan. And I'd never written for Zondervan before.

And because I was working on my John commentary, I didn't get around to proposing it. And then one day, an editor from Zondervan called me and said, we have an opening in this series. Would you be willing to write one of the commentaries for us? This one that we just got an opening about.

And I said, well, you know, I really, I don't think I have time to do this, but just in case they were just asking me for Philemon or Third John or something, I said, what book is it on? He said, Revelation. I said, oh, I think I had better say yes. But then other

things like the background commentary, I just wrote that because I saw a need and the Lord had given me the information.

I didn't need a specific leading to do that because I knew if nobody else wrote it first, it needed to be done. I could do it. Why not? And the same with this Romans commentary.

I was co-editor of the series. The person we asked initially couldn't do it. And rather than asking around for somebody else, I said, look, I've been saving up this information to write a big Romans commentary someday.

I've got this information. Well, it's not going to take me very long to sit down and write this small one. Why don't I just do it? So that's how I did the Romans commentary and that's why they're letting me do this video.

But how does the renewed mind think? Well, how does the renewed mind think? It discerns what's good and right. We saw that in 12:2. It places our individual lives in a larger context, the context of salvation history, 11:34, the Lord's mind, and the context of the body of Christ, 12:4 through 6. So, a larger context, the context of God's word, the working in history, and the larger context of the body of Christ, our brothers and sisters, our life together as the people of God. Christ renews our intellect as well as our spirit so we can serve him in the optimum way and make a difference in this world in this age for his namesake, for his glory in the light of eternity.

12:9-21. Here we have what's often called paranesis. That was a term for just having a list of exhortations. Often these are considered to be loosely connected exhortations.

But there is a kind of connection. There's a logic in the way Paul arranges these, more so than some forms of paranesis in antiquity. It's not just randomly arranged like some proverbs in the Book of Proverbs are, or many of the proverbs in the Book of Proverbs are.

You have an inclusio from 12:9-21 where it's good versus evil in both of these verses. Well, in 12:9-21 you can divide it into two sections more or less. 12:14-21 isn't completely this way, but how to treat your fellow believers, 12:9-13, and how to treat those who are not fellow believers in 12:14-21. So we're going to start first with how to treat your fellow believers.

In 12:10-12 we learn about various exhortations. One of them is brotherly love, Philadelphia. That was where we talked about brotherly love.

Philosophers often emphasize that. And certainly, if we are brothers and sisters in Christ, that applies to how we should treat one another. Treat your fellow Christians like members of your family.

Well, if sometimes you have arguments with members of your family, but you're still family, it's the same with the body of Christ. But ideally, you know, well, we read a lot in other parts of scripture about controlling your temper and things like that and watching what comes out of your mouth because you may regret it later on. So brotherly love, familial love for your fellow believers is very important.

Honoring one another above yourself. Now, keep in mind that ancient Mediterranean culture very much emphasized honor and shame. Many cultures do.

Most cultures have that concept in some ways. But here in Rome, ancient masculine urban Mediterranean culture in general, but especially in Roman culture, was a culture where people would vie for honor. It was a culture of rivalry.

But Paul says, honor one another more than yourself. I think of how I used to run cross country sometimes. And it was an opportunity to be able to share Christ with people because we had a relationship that way.

But I remember how what I would do well, it was something that my brothers and sisters in Christ, could be proud of. And when another believer would do well, it was something I could be proud of. We rejoiced in one another's honor.

Rejoicing in hope and enduring tribulation. Well, he's already talked about that in more detail back in chapter five, verses three through five, rejoicing in hope, enduring tribulation. And the way Paul arranges this rhetorically would be very pleasing to the ear.

It's something that would hold people's attention. Repetition could be used to drive home the point or to hold attention. And here in Greek, you have three clauses in verses 10 and 11 that end with *oy*.

And you have seven clauses in verses 11 to 13 that end with *ontes* or *untes*. So it would keep people's attention or rouse them emotionally. Verse 13 gives us a couple more exhortations, caring for the needy and hospitality.

Well, caring for the needy was something that was already emphasized throughout the Old Testament. For example, in Deuteronomy 15, God says, when I give you prosperity in the land, then make sure that you care for the needy because there will always be poor among you. He also talks about, in the same context, how the needs of the poor will be met so nobody will be poor, but there will always be the poor, so you need to take care of the poor so the needs will be met so nobody will be poor.

In other words, when God supplies the needs corporately, it's so that those who don't have the needs met individually, their needs can be met by others who have extra. Paul makes the same principle in the same way when somebody who gives later on, may be in need and somebody can give to them. We can trust the Lord to supply us through the body of Christ.

It was a major emphasis in Jewish practice. It wasn't very much among Gentiles. They did speak of benefactors, but normally their benefactions usually were civic benefactions like dedicating buildings or so forth, which would then be dedicated in their honor, and have an inscription in their honor.

But Jewish people emphasized giving to the poor, and that's also the case here. Now, I'm not getting into the questions about what are the best ways to remedy social structures that keep poverty going, and those are all important things to think about too. That wasn't something that most of the believers, as a fairly small but growing movement in the first century, had access to deal with.

But obviously, if you can deal with the root issues of poverty, even all the better. But certainly, there's to be a care for the needy. Hospitality.

By the way, in my country, in the early 20th century, you had a division in the church between what were called fundamentalists and modernists. A lot of people actually were somewhere in between the poles, but you had the fundamentalists who were carrying on the 19th-century evangelical tradition of certain fundamentals of the faith. They disagreed sometimes on other things, but they agreed on these.

We believe in the real supernatural, that God did miracles. They didn't always believe he still did. There were other Christians who believed that they sometimes were excluded from both groups, but that's to date, that's changed considerably.

But in the early 20th century, they said, we believe in the deity of Christ, we believe in the virgin birth, we believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and so on. Then you had others who were saying, well, we don't, some who said, we don't believe in those things, because that's not rational, that's not sophisticated. But they took other things from the 19th-century evangelicals, and they were also taught in scripture about caring for the poor, loving your neighbor, and so on.

Sometimes the fundamentalists and the modernists were reacting against each other. Actually, the fundamentalists were reacting against the modernists and saying, let's go back to the original things. Around the 1940s, and there were some people in the middle all along, but around the 1940s, there were some people who said, like Billy Graham and some others who said, you know, actually the Bible does teach both of these.

It teaches these fundamentals of the faith. It also teaches caring for the poor, social engagement, and so on. Sometimes we still have that legacy today where some people say, well, they're suspicious of caring for the poor, or suspicious of believing in certain other things the Bible teaches.

The Bible teaches all these things. We don't have to make an arbitrary division of that just because some church traditions do that. Some other church traditions never made that distinction.

Most of the African American churches in the U.S. couldn't afford to make that tradition. Catholic social teaching has been balanced on that issue. In any case, to bring together the whole, sometimes when I speak about controversial issues I probably create more trouble than it's worth because some of you didn't even know that these things were debated.

In any case, hospitality was a widespread value throughout Mediterranean antiquity, particularly in Judaism. It was everywhere, but Jewish people emphasized that especially for fellow Jews it went so far as including lodging for fellow Jewish travelers, sometimes at the synagogue, often in your own home. Now, obviously that could be abused.

You'd want to be careful who you took in, but often people would carry letters of recommendation from somebody who was trustworthy in an earlier city. Often, they would take people in for up to three weeks. Now, today there are cultures that value hospitality.

In Cameroon, when my fiancée, now my wife, came out of war, she stayed with a family, the Mumas, in Cameroon for about eight months. We're very grateful to them for the hospitality that they showed and to our friend Charlemagne who helped set that up. But hospitality was a major emphasis and Christians were to show that as well.

Well, we've talked about loving one another, and serving one another. Now we need to look at loving and serving outsiders, 12, 14 through 21. Now, some of these verses may include fellow believers as well as those who are outside.

So, I'm going to talk about this first, but verses 14 and then 17 through 21 actually talk about enemies. So, verses 15 and 16 can talk about just anybody, I guess. Rejoice with those who rejoice.

Weep with those who weep. That was highly valued ethics and antiquity as well. In fact, it was taken so far in Judea that if a rabbi was lecturing in a wedding procession

passed by, they would let out their school and they would all go and join in the wedding procession.

If a funeral procession was passing by, they would do the same thing and join in the funeral procession. Weeping with those who weep, rejoicing with those who rejoice. And he says, associate with the lowly.

Again, this is part of honoring others more than ourselves. If you associate with the lowly, you're not seeking your own honor. I often think of Luke chapter 2 where Augustus is the one who sends out the order, everybody should go back to where they can be taxed.

Everybody should go back to where they own property for the census. So, Augustus looks like he's moving the narrative, but really the narrative isn't about Augustus. Really the narrative is about God's plan and about a greater king than Augustus was.

Augustus has long since, he was cremated in ashes, but the true and eternal king who reigns forever was born in Bethlehem on that day. And you have this contrast there in Luke chapter 2 because here is this mighty emperor who reigns from a palace and there are temples worshiping and hailing the emperor and praising the emperor because he is the bringer of the Pax Romana, the Roman peace, which was nothing but a fiction in any case, as Parthia knew and the Germans knew and so on. The Britons in his day still knew and certainly, the Nubians knew.

He was hailed as the bringer of peace. He was hailed as the savior of the world and the benefactor of the world, the Roman world. His birthday actually was celebrated around the Roman world.

Well here you have the birthday of the true king and he's born in an animal feeding trough and he doesn't have temples or earthly choirs celebrating his greatness, but instead, you have heavenly choirs saying, on earth peace, goodwill towards humanity and today is born to you a true savior, Christ the Lord, not Caesar the Lord as he would be called in those temples, but Christ the Lord. And yet where is he born? He's born not in a palace, but in an animal feeding trough. He's born and the people to whom this is revealed are shepherds who were considered low class, outsiders in most of ancient urban culture and often agrarian culture as well, respected in the Old Testament, but they're looked down upon sometimes certainly by the rabbis, they're looked down upon in Roman urban culture and so on.

God's presence was found among the lowly and the broken. And I think if we are yearning for God's presence, if we are not lowly and broken, we'll often find his presence among the lowly and the broken, not hobnobbing with the powerful. I mean God loves the powerful too, but especially if we're powerful we need to recover what it means to just be broken and depend on God.

Of course, some people who are in powerful situations know that they're actually in situations where they desperately need God's help to help the people, but associate with the lowly. Don't boast yourself wise, chapter 12 and verse 16. He's using this term *phronutes*, comes back and uses the term *phronutes* again in verse 16, then uses the word *phronimoi*.

He's talking a lot about the mind and about wisdom, the right way of thinking. This is the way you should think about yourself. It's the same verb as in 12.3, where don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think.

So, we associate with the lowly and we don't boast in ourselves, but we recognize gifts that God has given us and we use those to serve others. But in 12.14 and in 17-21 he's going to talk about how we should think about how you should treat your enemies. Bless those who persecute you.

Don't curse them. Don't repay evil. Take into account what all of them deem good.

Be at peace with everybody insofar as it depends on you. Don't avenge yourself, but leave a place for God's wrath and make your enemies into friends. Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil by doing good.

In the next session, we will talk more about this behavior towards outsiders and then move into chapter 13, verses 1-7, where it talks about how to behave in relation to the state, to the corporate group entity as a whole. And then chapter 13 verses 8-10, where he gives a summary that covers all of it. Loving your neighbor as yourself.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session 12 on Romans 10:33-12:13.