

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 144

Romans ~ Part 32

Note: To examine the graphics in this series, click on them for a pop-up version.

As I've stressed in my previous post, our journey to comprehend the profound significance of **Sha'ul's Letter to the Romans** is not just a study but a crucial cornerstone of our faith.

Believer's Life and Conduct ~ Part 1

You may find engaging in service within the Kehillah challenging because you feel unqualified or unsure of your gifts. Take time this week to pray and ask **God** to reveal your **spiritual gifts**. Use your **Kehillah's** resources to participate in a workshop or find a mentor to help you identify your strengths and how they can serve the **Body of Yeshua**. Remember, your contributions, no matter how small you perceive them, are essential to the functioning of the **Kehillah**.

Call to Holiness

12¹ I exhort you, therefore, brothers, in view of God's mercies, to offer yourselves as a sacrifice, living and set apart for God. This will please him; it is the logical "Temple worship" for you.

Therefore, because of everything **God** has done and is doing in chapters 1–11, **I exhort you** to do everything in chapters 12–15, all of which is epitomized in the instruction to **offer yourselves as a sacrifice**. **God's mercies** were spoken of throughout chapters 1–11, especially in chapters 9–11, and explicitly at 11:30–32. **God's mercies** form the pivot of the book of **Romans**, on which **Sha'ul** turns from doctrine to the practical advice introduced by the **Greek** word "**parakalō**" ("I exhort" or: "I advise, counsel, encourage, request, comfort"). **Offer yourselves** (literally, "your bodies") **as a sacrifice**—a striking metaphor when animal sacrifices were still being made twice daily in the **Jerusalem Temple worship**. At 6:1–14 and 8:13, **Sha'ul** explained what kind of death is required: the **Believer** is not to live by his old nature but by the Spirit: then he will be **living** with the Messiah's life (8:10–11) and thereby be **set apart for God**. **It is the logical "Temple worship" for you.**

2 In other words, do not let yourselves be conformed to the standards of the 'olam hazeh. (This age or this world) **Instead, keep letting yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your minds; so that you will know what God wants and will agree that what he wants is good, satisfying and able to succeed.**

Presenting **God** in your body for the right action commences with **your mind**. Turn from **the standards of the 'olam hazeh**, rooted, as they are, in everything but **God** and His word, and learn **what God wants**. After consideration, you will **agree** that what he wants is morally **good**, psychologically **satisfying**, and, in practice, **able to succeed**.

Use of Spiritual Gifts

3 For I am telling every single one of you, through the grace that has been given to me, not to have exaggerated ideas about your own importance. Instead, develop a sober estimate of yourself based on the standard which God has given to each of you, namely, trust.

The warning to **Gentiles** against boasting and conceit (Romans 11:18, 25) is extended to **everyone** because a person committed to doing **God's will** (v. 2) is easy prey to delusions of grandeur.

The standard which God has given to each of you, namely, trust. Or: "the standard of trust" (or: "faithfulness"), namely, that of **Yeshua**, "that God has given to each." Or: "the amount and particular pattern of trust God has given to each."

⁴ For just as there are many parts that compose one body, but the parts don't all have the same function; ⁵ so there are many of us, and in union with the Messiah, we comprise one body, with each of us belonging to the others. ⁶ But we have gifts that differ and which are meant to be used according to the grace that has been given to us. If your gift is prophecy, use it to the extent of your trust; ⁷ if it is serving, use it to serve; if you are a teacher, use your gift in teaching; ⁸ if you are a counselor, use your gift to comfort and exhort; if you are someone who gives, do it simply and generously; if you are in a position of leadership, lead with diligence and zeal; if you are one who does acts of mercy, do them cheerfully. ¹

As part of a renewed mind, the **Believer** is to **think** wisely about himself and his function in the body of **Yeshua** (the **Kehilah**; see 1 Corinthians 12:12–28). **Sha'ul** exhorts **Believers** to be humble and to use what **God** has given for the good of the body. Based on Romans 12:3, 1 Corinthians 12:8–10, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Kefa 4:10, **Believers** are given **gifts** to use for the good of others.

The **Brit Hadashah** lists at least 17 kinds of gifts. **Believers** are defined not just by their personal faith but also by their inclusion in local faith fellowships that are expressions of the body of **Yeshua** (see 1 Corinthians 12:12–31). Only some of the gifts are explained in this present passage. **Prophecy** was a direct revelation from **God**. This gift was to be used and measured in concert with the objective body of **Believer** validation. **Service** is the origin of the word "deacon." A deacon here is not a member of a board of directors but a servant. It describes not a title or office but a gift of ministry. **Pastors** should have this gift. **Teaching** is an essential gift. Parents teach children, older **Believers** teach younger **Believers**, vocational pastor-teachers are the primary instructors in a **Kehilah**, and elders should be able to prepare also. All **Believers** can be introduced to some level, but those with a unique teaching facility are responsible for developing and utilizing it. **Exhortation** is the gift of motivating and encouraging. This gift is similar to the **Ruach's** function. **Giving** is to be done with generosity. All can provide, but capacities differ. Some delight in giving out of minimal means (Mark 12:41–44); others give a "reverse tithe"—they offer 90 percent and live on 10 percent. (I have heard Rick Warren and his wife are reverse tithers.) **Leading** is a gift of vision and direction that is effective but should not be overbearing. **Mercy** is helping the sick, the poor, and the sorrowful. This gift is to be exercised with cheerfulness. Practical assistance to needy members was a primary emphasis of the early **Kehilahs**. This same emphasis should characterize **Kehilahs** today.²

In our next post, we continue our theme, **Believer's Life and Conduct**.

¹ Romans 12:1–8.

² Edwin A. Blum, "Romans," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Commentary*, p. 1223.