Week 3: A life of love, sacrifice, and submission

Week 3: Unity in Christ

Chapters 15-16

- **Brief introduction about St. Paul**
  - Roman Citizen: Born a Roman citizen, enabling safe travel and legal protection.
  - Greek education: Born in Tarsus, major center of Greek learning, exposure to Greek philosophy.
  - Jewish heritage: Adhering to Jewish law and traditions and studied under Rabbi Gamaliel in Jerusalem
  - **1st Journey (44 AD, 2 years):**
    - Asia Minor (Turkey), with Barnabus and St. Mark.
    - After this journey, a council is held among the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem to determine that the gentile converts need not submit to the Law of Moses regarding circumcision.
  - **2nd Journey (51 AD, 3 years):**
    - Mainly in Macedonia (Greece), with Silas and Luke.
    - 2 Epistles: 1 & 2 Thessalonians.
  - **3rd Journey (54 AD, 4 years):**
    - Asia minor and Macedonia
    - 4 Epistles: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians.
  - **4th Journey (Rome):**

    - 8 Epistles: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews.

- The Lord said to him: "I will send you far from here to the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21)

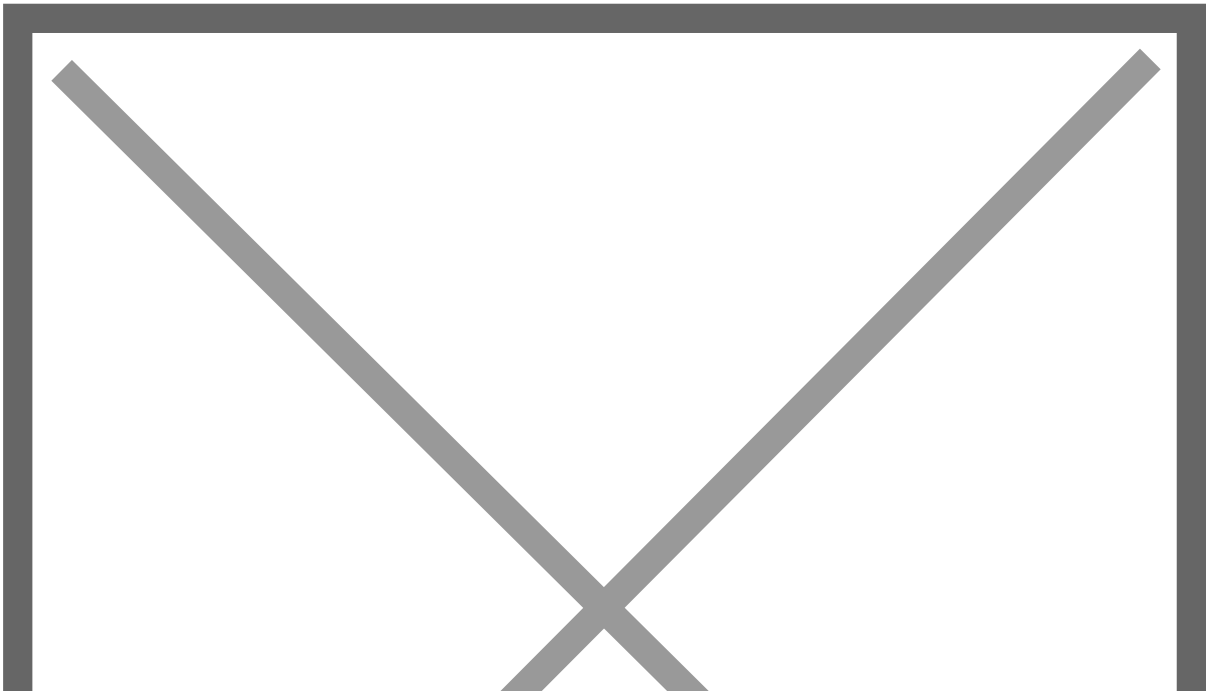
- Unmarried: “For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that." 1 Corinth 7:7

- **His early preparation for ministry**
- **Missionary trips**

- **St. Paul** wrote 14 epistles out of the 27 books in the New Testament.

- **Known as the Apostle of the Gentiles**

- **Received 4 crowns**: martyrdom, purity, apostleship, and righteousness.



- **Introduction:**
  - Author: St. Paul
  - Written to: believers in Rome
  - Time of writing:
    - 58 AD in Corinth, before Paul’s visit to Rome in 62 AD
  - Purpose of the book
    - The need for all people, Jews or Gentiles, to be justified by Christ.
    - How a person can obtain justification and its blessings in life.
    - The rejection of faith by many Jews is temporary, but some will return to faith in Christ after the Gentiles accept the faith.
    - Basic teachings for practical Christian living.
    - Care for those weak in faith and encourage them
- **Outline**
  - The apostolic blessing and encouragement of the believers (Chapter 1).

- The need for all humanity to be justified by Christ, how they can receive it, and its blessings (Chapters 2–8).
- God chose the Gentiles just as He did to the Jews, who rejected Him but they will repent at the end of days (Chapters 9–11).
- Practical commandments for Christian behavior (Chapters 12–15).
- Paul's fatherly care and his greetings to his beloved friends (Chapter 16).

- **Reading:**
  - Chapter 15-16
- **Resources:**
  - Bible Explanation of the Epistle to Romans - Fr. Daoud Lamei English
  - The Epistle to Romans by Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty- English
- **Key verse:**
  - "Receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." Romans 15:7
- **Comments:**

1. - **The strong in faith is the one who bears with others (Romans 15:1-7)**
     - The one who is strong in his faith and love for God gives up what pleases and comforts himself to bears others.
     - If Christ—the holy and perfect one—accepted us, the sinful and impure, despite the big difference between us and Him, how much more should we, as weak and sinful humans, accept our weak brothers with love, no matter their condition or mistakes.
       - **Contemplation:** Don't forget **your main goal is the salvation of yourself** and others. That means loving one another, being patient when someone is struggling, and forgiving each other.
       - For example, be careful with your words. If you or someone in class makes fun of another person or calls them names, that's not acceptable. Instead of laughing or joining in, choose to be kind and stand up for what's right.
   - **The acceptance of Jews and Gentiles (Romans 15: 8:13)**
     - Jews and Gentiles are equal in that Christ served both by offering salvation to all.
     - One of the great mercies of God is that every person is included in His plan of salvation. Even those who were far off.
   - **St. Paul praising the people of Rome (Romans 15:14-19):**
     - - St. Paul wrote this epistle to remind the Romans of some truths of the faith. This is a kind and humble approach from him, as he considers his words to be a reminder to them, since they know everything.
   - **St. Paul's desire to visit them (Romans 15:20-33)**
     - St. Paul desired many times to visit Rome, but each time he was hindered from going.
     - In humility, he asks them to pray for him, because he was about to face a difficult trial—confronting the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem.

    - **Contemplation**: For this reason, the Church always prays for its leaders: the patriarch, bishops, priests, and servants, that the Lord may fulfill their ministry.
- **Greetings from St. Paul to the believers in Rome (Romans 16:1-16)**
    - This part reveals the feelings of love between the servants and the believers, as well as Paul’s kindness and appreciation for the servants who assisted him.
    - He sends them peace and love in verse 16 "the Holy kiss", just as the deacon says during the Divine Liturgy, 'Greet one another.' This signifies forgiveness and love, preparing us to welcome Christ's dwelling within us.
- **Warnings about false teachers (Romans 16: 17-20)**
    - St. Paul asks the believers to watch carefully, like guards, for anyone who tries to cause divisions or stumbling blocks in the church, in order to preserve the level of love and unity within the church.
- **The conclusion of the epistle (Romans 16:21-27)**
    - Tertius, mentioned in Romans 16:22, is the scribe who wrote down the letter to the Romans on behalf of Paul.. Paul did not write it himself due to his eye illness. Therefore, Tertius also sends his greetings to the believers in the Church of Rome.
    - Our loving God allowed the Gentiles to enter through the work of Christ.

2. **Review/recap questions**

    ** Servant may add more questions

8. **Homework**

    ** Servant may add more questions

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