

Parson to Person

April 3, 2022

Romans 16:19 For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.

Romans 16:25-27 Now to him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever.

“wise in what is good, [unmixed=]simple toward what is evil [innocent or naiveté]”

First, let's review what this “wisdom” is and assume that this desire of Paul's is a summary of his teaching in the book. That is, the book is SOTERIOLOGY and ISRAELOLOGY with an application that pertains to “wisdom” by which Paul means that his long discussion of being SAVED BY GRACE ALONE THROUGH FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE AS PRECISELY MAPPED IN THE BIBLE ALONE

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND GOD ONLY is in part aimed at being WISE IN WHAT IS GOOD. Likewise, his long explanation of Israelology, by which we understand God's promises to Israel throughout history will all be kept, regarding land, kingdom, territory, rulership, on this earth...all this Israelology is ALSO in part aimed at helping church-age saints BE "WISE IN WHAT IS GOOD."

We've already touched on what this means, but I want to review it and give focus to it vis-à-vis FAMILIES. Of course. I have one note: FAMILIES.

Working our way back:

1. Paul had just said he was confident of the Roman church-age saints, and not only were they "full of goodness" (Romans 15:14) but also "filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." Admonish is NOUTHETEIN, as if we made up a word, "MENTATE" or BRING OFFICIALLY TO MIND. It means "warn" or "admonish" but specifically not as a stirring of emotion, but rather as a sharp appeal to reasoning. To wisdom. "Filled with knowledge able to appeal to one another's best minds."
2. Paul had framed his missionary urgency as, in part, a mission of instruction, of wisdom: "I have made it my

aim to preach the gospel not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, but as it is written, 'To whom he was not announced, they shall see, and those who have not heard shall UNDERSTAND.'" (Romans 15:20-21)

3. Paul's prayer for their unity (around the whole will or counsel of God, not the fake, constructed unity against which Pastor Paul warned us last Sunday) was a prayer for "patience and comfort" NOT for emotional, sentimental unification—"May the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like MINDED toward one another, according to Christ Jesus" and he repeats the mind concepts, "that you may with one MIND and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Before I go on, let me underline that these emphases are not accidents. Paul could have said they were competent to encourage one another; he could have said he wanted to preach in new places so that those who haven't heard would FEEL Christ's comfort; he could have exhorted unity based on the EMOTIONAL alignment and connection of one church age saint with another—but he didn't. He said "competent to FORMALLY REMIND another," "full of KNOWLEDGE;" he went to gospel frontiers so those who

haven't heard would UNDERSTAND, he asked for one "MIND AND MOUTH to glorify God."

This emphasis clarifies some of Paul's prior urgency we've noted already. Romans 12 underlined being transformed by the renewing of our MINDS, not feeling but PROVING what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, and thus also to not THINK of ourselves more highly than we ought to THINK, but to THINK SOBERLY as God has dealt to each one a measure of THE faith. After seventeen admonitions, like abhor what is evil, cling to what is good, be affectionate toward one another with brotherly love, he says in 12:16, "Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your MIND on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be WISE IN YOUR OWN OPINION". Amid 26 distinct commands about how to live as a born again believer, none of which are repetitions of each other, there are three commands on one theme, WISDOM AND THE MIND.

The hardening of Israel's heart in 11 is not merely emotional but is a "spirit of stupor" 11:8, their "eyes darkened" 11:10, in chiasmus or "sandwich" structure with chapter 1 in which the Gentiles are given over to a "reprobate mind."

Surprisingly, perhaps, the case for the gospel itself in Romans 2-8 is in part an essay on foolishness and wisdom, since “the MIND of the sinful man is death but the MIND of the Spirit is life and peace” (Romans 8:6) and “The carnal MIND is enmity against God” (8:7). Paul had commanded them to “reckon yourselves dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord (6:11). “Reckon” is the Greek word “logizomai,” which strongly echoes the word logos or “word” and resonates with matters of LOGIC and REASONING. We are to reason with ourselves as if we are alive in Christ. Even Abraham in Chapter 4 (verse 19) did not “CONSIDER his own body, already dead...and the deadness of Sarah’s womb” but instead (verses 20-21) “was strengthened in his faith, giving glory to God, and being fully CONVINCED that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”

At all these points, the Apostle is drawing from a deep well to which both he and the Roman believers, both Jew and Gentile, had automatic access but which we, today, do not. It was the Hellenist/Greek preoccupation with WISDOM: with the role of the will of the mind in its effect on the course of one’s life. Even as Paul was explaining the soteriology and the Israelology which are the doctrinal fabric of the book of Romans, he was constantly assuming

and referencing their need to USE his explanations to be “wise in what is good.”

Remember that the Lord Jesus had prophesied about the Queen of Sheba rising at the judgment of Israel (Matthew 12:42) and condemn the generations of Israel that have mirrored the unbelief of His day, because the queen had come “from the ends of the earth to hear the WISDOM of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.” Think of this: Our Savior is wiser than Solomon! The coming Millennial King of Israel is wiser than the wisest king who had ever lived!

It is He, the soon reigning King, “God [only] wise” (Romans 16:27), who wants us to be “wise about what is good” (16:19).

Let me encourage my Candlelight family to pursue wisdom through the grace and gifts that pertain to being born again. Amen and Amen. Love you all!

Pastor Jason