

**ROMANS: CHARTER OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**  
**"Part XXII: GOD'S Lifestyle Resolution For US"**  
**(Romans 15:1-13)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

Inability to **re-live TIME** that inescapably marches onward!

This one was to be the *last* eclipse to occur on Christmas Day here in the northeast for the next **300 years!** I pondered the fact that I would never again in my **mortal** life be able to live through another solar eclipse on Christmas Day here in New England -- my chance to do so was now **irretrievably GONE!**

(2) Then, today, December 31, 2000, I realize is **arguably** the **real** final day of the second millennium A. D.! At midnight, historians say we will finally finish the total of 2,000 years A. D. of time and **begin** to live in the third Millennium A. D. With all of last New Year's "Y2K" hype aside, **we** who are living **today** will never ever again get to say "good-bye" in *this* life to an old **millennium** and "Hello!" to the new one! By tomorrow, that chance will be **irretrievably GONE!**

(3) As he used this holiday season to evaluate his life, one of the men in our Church recently spoke with me about his concern of finding more time to serve God in our Church. As he evaluated his years at the Church, he noted how his job, family and community obligations had roped off what time he would have **liked** to have given to such a ministry. So, as he sensed his chances to serve God this way were **irretrievably slipping away**, he asked for prayer in his behalf.

Well, as we view the IRRETRIEVABLE loss of TIME this New Year's Eve, and prepare for TOMORROW'S New Year and REAL New Millennium, WHAT adjustments should we make in our lives to make the most VALUE of what TIME we have left?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . . )

***Need: "This New Year's Eve and New Millennium's Eve Sunday when I take stock of where I am in life, I really desire to live so that my life COUNTS with the greatest VALUE it can from now on! What, then, should be the MAIN practical focus in my life?"***

- I. **In the view of our Savior, the most IMPORTANT PRACTICAL focus for us is to perform acts of selfless love toward one another:**
  - A. Just before He washed the disciples' feet and taught its related lesson, John reported Jesus focused on His **whole earthly life**, Jn. 13:1, 3-5.
  - B. Hence, the **lesson** involved is of **lifelong value** in **Christ's** view.
  - C. That **lesson of lifelong value** is that we should do self-sacrificing acts of **love** in meeting one another's needs, John 13:4-5, 12-15, 34:
    1. Feet-washing was a slave's task in Jesus' day performed upon guests to wash irritating dirt gathered from walking in sandals, Lk. 7:44; Edersheim, *Life & Times of Jesus, the Messiah*, ii, p. 498.
    2. After the feet washing event, Jesus explained His stooping like a slave to wash His servants', the disciples' feet was to exemplify **their** correct way of relating to one another, John 13:12-15.
    3. Namely, they were to put a high priority on performing acts of self-sacrificing, humble help to meet each other's needs, Jn. 13:34.
- II. **Paul RESTATED this call for self-sacrificing love in Romans 15:**
  - A. Strong believers were given the calling by Paul to bear the frailties of weak fellow believers at the **cost** of self-indulgence, Romans 15:1-2.
  - B. In the context, this admonition matched Jesus' call in John 13 to perform acts of selfless love to meet the needs of fellow believers:
    1. Paul showed the "weak" believer was one whose ignorance of the truth led him to see eating meat offered to idols or not observing a day as a testimony to pagans as being **sin**, Romans 14:2, 5.
    2. The "strong" were thus to **inhibit** their liberty in such matters, bearing up under the consciences of "weak" believers, 14:1, 5, 21.
    3. Since these acts of **self-inhibition** to bear up with the consciences of weaker believers were like Christ's selfless stooping to wash His servants' feet, Paul **reflected Christ's** call in Romans 15:1-2!
  - C. Besides, Paul **used** Jesus as an **Example** in such cases: he backed up his directive by referring to Christ's example of not pleasing himself in bearing our **sins** on **Himself** at the cross, Romans 15:3.
  - D. In referring to Christ's example, Paul cited Psalm 69:9 which Christ fulfilled in bearing our reproaches on Himself: this showed Old Testament Scriptures were written for our instruction so that by our bearing up under non-self-pleasing issues with Scripture's motivation, we might have hope of God's  **blessing** for doing so, Romans 15:4!
  - E. Thus, Paul said God's patience and consolation would equip us to be united in glorifying God were we to practice such things, 15:5-7.
- III. **Then, in view of our DEBT to God's GRACE, Paul supported his call for us to practice acts of selfless love to help fellow believers:**

- A. Paul taught Christ served the needs of the Jews in **bearing** their *sins* on the **cross** to fulfill God's promises to their forefathers, Rom. 15:8.
- B. As Gentiles had not received these promises, Paul noted God planned to grant them access to such blessings by *unmerited favor*, 15:9-12:
  - 1. As Paul cited from Ps. 18:49, God planned to bless the Gentiles by **gracious extension** of **Christ's GRACIOUSLY bearing man's sins upon the cross**, Romans 15:9 (Isa. 52:15a; 53:11-12).
  - 2. Then, in citing Deut. 32:43 and Ps. 117:1, Paul revealed these blessings would be applied to the Gentiles so that they in turn would rejoice **with** the Jew by God's unmerited favor, 15:10-11.
  - 3. In fact, as Paul cited from Isa. 11:10, the "root of Jesse", or the divine **Source** of David's earthly father, Jesse would reign over the Gentiles so that they would **believe** in (and thus be *saved* from damnation by) Jesus Christ, Rom. 15:12 (Isa. 53:11-12; 52:15a)!
  - 4. **Thus, by Christ's GRACIOUSLY bearing our SINS as BOTH Jews AND EVEN as GENTILES that WE might be eternally SAVED, WE all OWE a debt of "bearing up under" acts of selfless love to each other, a debt WE can NEVER repay Christ!**
- C. Having shown how **willing** we should be to **mimic** Christ's bearing **our** burdens of sins by how we are to bear up under one **another's** needs, Paul promised God's enabling for us to do such bearing, 15:13.

***Application:*** To make the **MOST** of what is **LEFT** of our days on the earth, (1) believe on Christ for salvation from sin to become a child of God's by His unmerited favor, Jn. 1:12. (2) Then, noting (a) God's saving **UNMERITED FAVOR** and (b) our **SAVIOR'S** charge obliges us, and (c) His **EXAMPLE** of selfless love for **OUR** needs via the **CROSS** directs it, we (3) give ourselves to the high calling of selflessly bearing the needs of fellow believers!

***Lesson:*** The highest calling a believer can practice is to do **SELFLESS** acts of love in bearing the costs other believers' needs: our Savior's example, His grace to us via the cross and command teach us to do so!

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . . )

(1) Earlier this year, there arose a teaching vacancy in the teen Sunday School class. In fact, on one Sunday, several teens showed up in the classroom to be taught, waiting in vain to be taught.

Mike Terwilliger heard about the vacancy, and offered to teach the class. I remember him telling how he didn't consider himself to be the most qualified of all teachers for the job, but the thought of his **not** doing *something* at least to **HELP** the teens who bothered to show **up** to be *taught* was unthinkable. They **needed someone** to teach them, so Mike offered to be the man to "stand in the gap"!

**This desire and ACT on Mike's part epitomizes what Jesus and Paul wanted -- SELFLESS ACTS of LOVE to address the NEEDS of our teens in our Sunday School!**

(2) You may have noticed Jim and Anita Mills were absent for several Sunday worship services. Well, it was for a good reason: they put out a request for sweet breads to be given out to the seniors in our Church, several of whom are shut-ins and are unable to meet with us.

Well, their request for breads was met so bountifully by this congregation that Jim and Anita had to spend many hours delivering these breads. They were so tired that they missed some services to save up energy to make it to our Christmas Eve service!

**Jim and Anita's ACTION coupled with the GENEROSITY of ALL who gave breads epitomizes what Jesus and Paul wanted -- SELFLESS ACTS of LOVE to address the NEEDS of our seniors!**

(3) Several teens approached me last week to ask if they could put an announcement in the bulletin. They want to host a gathering to honor their adult teen group leaders! I gladly agreed to their date and told them about getting an announcement in our bulletin.

This ACT on the part of the teens which was precipitated by the love of their adult group leaders epitomizes what Jesus and Paul wanted -- SELFLESS ACTS of LOVE on the part of BOTH the adults and teens to minister to ONE ANOTHER in LOVE!