

The Blessing Of Victory – Romans 16:17-20

Bible Study ~ 11/2/16
Grace Church of Lockeford

These verses depict three requirements for victory.

1. Victory Requires Conflict vv. 17-18

Paul's words here in v. 17 are not a command. He says "I urge you". This is "to plead or exhort". He is pleading for two actions concerning those who cause division and offense contrary to doctrine. 1 – Note them. 2 – Avoid them. "Note" is the idea of carefully being on the lookout for them. We are to do this because they cause division. They split up a group and it seems to imply that they do so intentionally. They also cause offense. This is the Greek word σκάνδαλον skandalon *cause for stumbling. Cause of sin (trap) – any cause that results in (or is intended for) a person sinning; whether by preventing righteous action or by promoting sinful behavior.* They cause people to sin, to act in a way that is contrary to what they have learned and been taught. So be on the lookout for them, and avoid them. Stay away!

Why? Paul gives us two reasons in v. 18 why those who practice this behavior are to be avoided. 1 – They do not serve Christ but their own appetites. 2 – They deceive the simple. These troublemakers are not slaves of Christ but of their own passions and lusts. They use eloquence and flattery to completely deceive the simple. "Paul is describing people whose conduct is base, but whose words are excellent."¹ "Simple" – ἄκακος akakos *innocent; guileless. Innocent (naïve) – a person marked by or showing unaffected simplicity and lack of guile or worldly experience.* This is a negative thing here (Eph. 4:14).

It is impossible to live a victorious Christian life and not experience conflict with those who are contentious, offensive, self-serving, and deceptive. What is striking here is that Paul's solution, his call to victory over these kinds of people, is not to talk them down or convince them of how wrong they are. Paul's Holy Spirit inspired solution is to avoid them! Some battles are won through conquest. Others are won by not fighting. There is conflict, but Paul says to eliminate the conflict by avoiding these people. The blessing here is subtle. The blessing is being equipped with the tools necessary to recognize these people and avoid them. This enables us to have victory. **The second requirement for victory is that...**

2. Victory Requires Obedience v. 19

Here Paul combines commendation, praise, and exhortation.

Commendation – Your obedience has become known to all. This word describes a settled pattern or habit of life. They were established in their obedience. It was a way of life that all knew. This is huge! Everyone who hears about this church hears that they are obedient to the Lord.

Praise – Paul is glad on their behalf. Paul rejoices for them in their obedience. Why? Because he knows how important, vital, and blessed obedience is.

Exhortation – Paul has a deep desire, a passionate longing for two realities to be evident in their lives. 1 – That they be wise (discerning) about good. 2 – Simple (innocent) about evil. There is a balance here. Don't be ignorant of Satan's devices (2Cor. 2:11). But be innocent in regards to sin. At the same time be discerning about good. "Hodge quotes from Grotius a neat summing up of what Paul is looking for: 'to good too deceive, to wise to be deceived.'"²

If there is no obedience there can be no victory. An army that ignores its commander is an army that will be defeated. The army must know the tactics of the enemy while not engaging in enemy behavior. The blessing here is that it is obedience that allows us to be discerning and innocent. Victory is achieved through obedience. **Lastly we learn that...**

¹ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; InterVarsity Press, 1988), 540.

² *ibid*, 541.

3. Victory Requires Christ v. 20

Here Paul gives encouragement in the form of a reality statement and request.

Reality – The God of peace will crush Satan soon. Under your feet! This is not presented as a maybe but as an absolute fact. This could almost seem contradictory. The God of peace will crush? But ultimately this crushing of Satan is peace! The idea is that God is the God of harmony, freedom, and tranquility. And in order for those to be a reality Satan must be crushed. Crush – συντριβῶ syntribō *crush; shatter; smash. To overcome – to utterly defeat, conceived as breaking one’s opponent into small pieces.* This is obviously a reference to the Genesis 3 promise. Satan will be utterly and completely defeated. Like when we say an enemy force was crushed. Satan will be crushed under the feet of the believer. This is what we look forward to and anticipate. The absolute defeat of Satan at the consummation of the age. Paul says that this crushing of Satan will be easy, speedy, and soon. That’s the idea of “shortly”.

Request – The grace of the Lord be with you. Why? We cannot survive without daily, hourly, limitless grace! In this context His grace is manifested in the victory He gives over Satan. Aren’t you glad that it is not our job to defeat Satan? God will crush him without effort! Here is the blessing. We anticipate the total and effortless victory of God. Until then we have His peace and grace supporting us on a continual basis. Victory is ours through the Cross! Depend on the Lord and He will see us through!

CHALLENGE: Avoid troublemakers, be obedient, and rely on Christ and His victory!

V. 17

Urge – παρακαλέω parakaleō *urge; implore; exhort. To entreat – to ask for or request earnestly.*

Note – σκοπέω skopeō *notice look out for. To watch carefully – to be vigilant, be on the lookout or be careful.*

Divisions – διχοστασία dichostasia *dissension. Divisive dissension – discord that splits a group.*

Doctrine – διδαχή didachē *teaching; instruction. Teaching (content) – a doctrine (or collection of doctrines) that is taught.*

Learned – μανθάνω manthanō *learn. To be taught (of information or knowledge).*

Cause – ποιέω poieō *make; do. To make (cause) – to make or cause to be or to become.*

Avoid – ἐκκλίνω ekklinō *avoid; stay away from. To avoid (disincline) – to avoid, conceived of as having a negative disposition towards someone.*

V. 18

Serve – δουλεύω douleuō *serve; be a slave. To slave – to serve as or as if a slave.*

Belly – κοιλία koilia *belly; womb; stomach. Craving (stomach) – an evil craving understood as the bodily area where physical cravings of hunger normally originate.*

Smooth words – χρηστολογία chrēstologia *smooth speech. Eloquence – using language well, as speaking with fluency and elegance.*

Flattering speech – εὐλογία eulogia *blessing; generous gift. Flattery – excessive or insincere praise.*

Deceive – ἐξαπατάω exapatāō *cheat; deceive. To deceive thoroughly – to deceive in an exhaustive or pervasive manner.*

V. 19

Obedience – ὑπακοή hypakoē *obedience. Obedience (state) – the state of submissive conformity to the law, custom, or practice of an authority.*

Glad – χαίρω chairō *be glad; rejoice. To rejoice (feeling) – to feel happiness or joy.*

Want – θέλω thelō *wish; want. To desire – to feel or have a desire for; want strongly.*

Wise – σοφός Sophos *wise. Wise (characteristic) – having or prompted by accumulated knowledge or discernment.*

Good – ἀγαθός agathos *good. Good (moral concept) – moral excellence or admirableness.*

Simple – ἀκέραιος akeraios *pure; innocent. Pure (guiltless) – in a state of ritual cleanliness or free of guilt and sin.*

Evil – κακός kakos *bad; evil; wrong. Evil (behavior) – morally objectionable behavior.*

V. 20

Peace – εἰρήνη eirēnē *peace. Peace – harmonious relations and freedom from disputes; especially during the absence of war.*

Shortly – τάχος tachos *short time; speed; soon. Quickness – a rate that is rapid.*

Grace – χάρις charis *grace. Grace (outworking) – the resulting activity that is a necessary consequence of genuine, beneficent goodwill; especially used of the outworking of God’s goodwill.*