

Romans 16 (Conrad Bowman) (October 15, 2008)

Chapter 16. This is – this is the end of our journey in Romans, and chapter 16 will wrap us up. Boy, it's been quite a trip too. So, chapter 16. I just want to look at a couple of things, and then I want to take you through a – just a summary as we move through Romans and touch off on each chapter. Chapter 16 is a commendation and to – to all the people that ...

Betijean Kennerly. We didn't pray.

Conrad Bowman. No, we didn't pray. That's right. We'll do that. Chapter 16 is a commendation to all the people that Paul had touched and encountered while he was – while he was dealing in Rome; and we want to look at that and just nail down some of the principles that are there; and now that we've settled down a little bit – hi Mary. You want to come on through here?

Mary Chambliss. I just rolled my pants up and took my shoes off and waded out to car.

Conrad Bowman. There you go. There you go.

Lady. That's what I did too.

Conrad Bowman. It was wet. If there's not moss growing on us before we get through here, it won't be our fault. Alright. Let's have a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for the time tonight, wet though it is, that You've given us just to dip into Romans; gather our thoughts together; and – and just rehash what You've taught us about this marvelous, amazing letter; and we pray Father that our minds are put at ease; any anxieties we have would be put aside; any distractions in our life, in our mind, and in what's happening around us will just be pushed away; and lead us through this time together so that we can see Your heart as it was captured by Paul and laid down here for us; just guide us individually and collectively as we move through these things; and we thank You for the privilege, in Christ's name, because He paid for it. Amen.

Thank you so much. Let's see here.

[Small talk with late comers to the class].

Now, in chapter 16 of Romans, Paul is wrapping this thing up, and we started on this two or three times. He first commends to you Phoebe,

1. ... who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.
2. and that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

Here's – here's a woman who is gifted in the area of "helps," and who has just given herself, apparently, without reservation, in serving the individual members of the Body of Christ; Paul as well, but many others, because she's noted for that; and Paul says – he starts with the servers. Look at that. He doesn't start with movers and shakers; he starts with those who serve; who uphold the ministry; who keep the wheels of progress going.

3. Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,
4. who for my life risked their own, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

Not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. So apparently, their ministry was not just for that local body, but was to meet in the churches around them wherever they saw them; and that's instructive to us, because she also is a member of the Body of Christ, functioning as the Body of Christ should function. One, was taking – Phoebe was taking care of the needs – intimate needs of the internal to that little church. Prisca and Aquila were taking care of needs outside the Body of Christ, and he binds them both for commendation for – for commendation.

6. Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.
7. And Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners,

They've endured the imprisonment together with Paul.

7. ... who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Now, the point I want to make is, Andronicus and Junias are called apostles here, but you never hear anything more of them, do you? This is the only place they're mentioned, but they were apostles. Now, we tend to think that all the apostles went out and did big things; and they were movers and shakers, and exercised authority around the community. But – but notice here are two apostles, acknowledged so by Paul, who we know nothing of. That's amazing. We have people in this class who are very quietly going about their work. We have people in this church, buried in little classes around, who are doing what God has commanded them to do, in very quiet ways. You'd never know it. What you get from them is a smile, or a pat on the back; or just a little bit of encouragement from time to time; and you have no idea of the depth of their relationship to God. Now what that means is, we need to treasure those people around us. We need to hold these people in high regard. If you're going to err, err on the side of honoring somebody. Don't err on the side of ignoring them. Okay? But assume better things of them, and encourage them; lift them up. Wait for God to tap you on the shoulder and pray for them; not just once; not just a little passing thing, but take them on. Add them to your prayer burden for Christ.

Betijean Kennerly. It says they were fellow prisoner. Could they have – have not survived the – they were believers before he was, is what it says. I just wonder if they could have ...

Conrad Bowman. Lost it in prison.

Betijean Kennerly. Uh huh.

Conrad Bowman. They could have been martyred in there.

Betijean Kennerly. Yes.

Conrad Bowman. Could have been. Could have been. But – but apparently these kinsman of his – my fellow prisoners – they were people that this group in Rome would have known. So, we don't know beyond that. We just don't have that much information.

8. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

He let that soft heart come to the top. See, Paul – Paul the hard-nosed apostle has this beloved in the Lord, that he honors here.

9. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

10. Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

I wonder what it means to be approved in Christ? Does that sound good? It sounds good to me. Wouldn't I love to be known that way? That's Conrad. He's approved in Christ. The Lord loves him – thinks he's okay. That'd be alright, wouldn't it, John?

John Young. Absolutely. I'll take that any day of the week and twice on Sunday.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. If he's going to start a line somewhere, I want to get in it.

Ed Welbourn. ... a commentary by acquaintances of his who are attesting to his teaching and ...

Conrad Bowman. Yes. Yes. Yeah. Yes. That's right. Alright, let's move on.

10. Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

11. Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

12. Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

"Toil" is the word that's there.

13. Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.

You know. Choice man is hard to find. There would be several people that would be interested in knowing that he's out there.

14. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.

So there's a clique within the church that gathers together and meets. We've got several of those; and what's your first reaction to them? Aw, they get together on Tuesday night. They get together on Wednesday afternoon; or they get together on Thursday – they don't want to let anybody else in.

[Comments back and forth] .

Conrad Bowman. You're okay. We develop those, don't we? We gather in the people we like. You see. It's hard to get into my house on Friday afternoon because Adam, and this tall guy back here – we like to get together and study together on – so we kind of set that – we kind of set that time apart, don't we? That's our little clique. John would like to come, but he can't. [Laughter].

Lady. He's bad.

Conrad Bowman. He's really bad. We're just not going to let him in.

John Young. He didn't make the cut. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. He'd know everything we'd know, and that wouldn't be good. Isn't that funny how human nature just kind of arranges us and you don't think about that. But here in Romans as Paul is going through all this essential doctrine – is what I call it – he's – he's working with a group that's just like us. It's incredible; and there're hints at how to deal with that.

15. Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

16. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

That kissing business is okay.

17. Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

So what's the standard of truth? The standard of truth is what we have learned together. We've studied the Word; we've taken it in; we've agreed on what it says in the passages we've studied; and that becomes our standard. Now, we don't separate from people according to how we feel about them. We separate

between people based on what they believe to be true. Okay? We just had this discussion out there. Do you believe this? Do you believe this? Do you believe this? Do you believe this? What do you think about this? In about three minutes, we sorted out through most of the major areas of doctrine that are essential for a close bonded working relationship; and beloved passed between us – the love of Christ. It didn't take long. Direct; straight forward; to the point; all based on what we teach and what we believe to be true. Because that's the basis of our relationship. Okay? Nothing else. What we teach is everything. It's everything. That's what binds us here as a church within the Church. Okay? What we teach is everything. Now, we don't ever want to forget that. We're not here because there's a nice basketball court downstairs. That's not why we're here. Okay? We're here because of what is taught, and we're bound together by that. Now, he says,

17. I urge you, brethren, keep an eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned; turn away from those.

18. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

And that's the way the enemy works.

19. For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, and I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

We don't need to exercise any learned experience in time describing or digging into what's evil. We need to spend our time focusing on an understanding of the good of what Christ wants us to learn, of His standards; there's enough there. Okay. Life is too short to be trying to pick apart the evil around us. Concentrate and focus on the good. Okay?

20. And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Notice it's God who will crush Satan. Not you, contrary to the vision that some noted Evangelists had about putting their foot on Satan's neck and holding him down because he was going to get the man's daughter. So his – he put Satan on the ground and put his foot on his neck and held him down there. That's

foolishness. When Christ Himself was confronted by Satan, how did He answer him? Did He take authority over him? He did not. He answered him out of the Old Testament; and He gave him the Old Testament words of the Father. That's what Christ did when confronted by Satan. Now, if the Lord we serve, chose to answer Satan who was tempting Him and threatening Him with the words of His Father from the Old Testament, don't you think it's prudent that we adopt that same principle in response to the enemy in our life. Okay? It's very foolish to try to take the advice of some of these people about taking authority over Satan and kicking his rear end. You know. That's not what we do. We retreat from that behind a barrier of the Lord Jesus Christ because He alone can handle that enemy. Yes ma'am?

Joyce Wood. The Old Testament reference to that – Scripture reference?

Conrad Bowman. Oh, remember when Satan was tempting Him?

Joyce Wood. Right. Where?

Lady. The Scripture reference for it.

Conrad Bowman. It's – it's in Matthew when he took Him up to the – it's well over in Matthew. It's around ...

[Comments back and forth]

Conrad Bowman. Word. Yeah. He used three – He used three references, and the first one I think was the one about – but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of the God.

Gentleman. Was that Deuteronomy or ...

Lady. Yeah.

Conrad Bowman. Six; 6:2, or something like that. And then – but then there are the other two temptations that followed right behind it. There were three occasions and three statements that were used, Deuteronomy was the first one.

Gentleman. And the other one said, you shall not tempt the Lord thy God.

Conrad Bowman. God.

Gentleman. That was the second one. I think that's what ...

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. And then the third one.

Gentleman. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Yeah.

Gentleman. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Right. See. Now we know exactly why you were sent here tonight.

Lady. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Okay. Okay. And what did you say the reference in Matthew is?

Lady. Four-four (4:4).

Conrad Bowman. Four-four (4:4). Okay. That's the occasion. Temptation of Christ. Yeah. Now, while we're on that, just to note. Remember, those were not the temptations of Christ that were like as we are tempted; because Satan tempted Christ to turn stones into bread; cast Himself down from the parapet of the – of the Temple against the rocks, and the Lord would have an angel deliver Him. It says, since you are the Son of God. See, Christ was tempted to do things that were every bit legitimate; and they were things He was going to do anyway. But it wasn't time. It wasn't the right time. See, the Son of God had subjected His own will – remember? He emptied Himself. The Doctrine of Kenosis. He emptied Himself and became like we are, and He depended upon the Spirit within Him to move Him as to time and the message and the content; so that eventually in His own ministry He would say to those that were going to be the rocks in the church; He would say to them, greater things that I've done, you'll do; and He knew that was going to happen; not greater in terms of quality, but greater in terms of number; because we have the same Spirit within us that He had within Himself; and so the bar is set high for us, because He expected us to do exactly what He did. Depend on the Spirit within; not of our own strength. Don't come up with any clever way to beat the devil. Depend on the Father who already has declared victory for the Son, and – and use Him; put them face to face. There's just so much there. We'll get to it, because we're going to start through Matthew on Sunday in about a week and a half – two weeks.

Marjorie Sager. Ten o'clock?

Conrad Bowman. Yes? Ma'am? What time?

Marjorie Sager. Ten o'clock.

Conrad Bowman. Ten o'clock? Ten o'clock? I don't believe – Marjorie – I don't believe you said that. By ten – now I'll tell you what. I'll put you a cot over there and a pillow and you can come in and just kind of lay back like some oriental goddess over there and

Marjorie Sager. Curtains?

Conrad Bowman. Curtain. Give you a curtain.

Marjorie Sager. Curlers?

Conrad Bowman. Curlers in your hair. Yes ma'am. We promise we won't be scared. [Laughter]. Alright.

18. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

19. For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I [Paul says] am rejoicing over you, and I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

20. And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And then in 21, he starts again.

21. Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, and my kinsmen.

22. I, Tertius, who write this letter,

See, because he's the scribe who's writing this for Paul.

22. ... greet you in the Lord.

23. Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

Wasn't that good. They reached out and enlisted the city officials, and got them in the church. Bill White should be here.

25. 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 which has been kept secret for so long ages past,

And by now you know what that is. The mystery of the Gospel of Christ, which has been revealed to Paul. We learned that in Ephesians and Philippians and Colossians and 1st and 2nd Corinthians. Now it's revealed. Manifested means to uncover and reveal.

26. [Now is manifested,] and by the Scriptures of the prophets,

That's the Old Testament.

26. ... according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations,

That's Gentiles.

26. ... leading to the obedience of faith;

27. to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever.

The glory is the Shekinah. Now do you have any questions on Romans 16 before you go back to Romans 1. Alright. Turn back to Romans 1.

Paul said he's a bond-servant of Christ, and you remember that; and in the first chapter of Romans, he makes his personal explanations first; and then he introduces his Gospel. I want you to read this 1 and 2.

1. Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called an apostle set apart for gospel of God,

2. which He promised beforehand through His prophets in holy Scriptures,
3. concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,
4. declared with power to be the Son of God by resurrection from dead, according to the Spirit of holiness,

Being set apart.

4. ... Jesus Christ our Lord,
5. through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,
6. among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

Semi-colon.

7. to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Your first period in the Book of Romans is found right there. Now, isn't that a mouthful. Look at what he's unfolded in that first part. He is in bondage. He is a bond-slave to Christ Jesus. He is called, one sent with a message. *Apostolos*. An apostle. He has been set apart in the past with the intent – with the result that he's currently continuing as set apart – or separated – for what? The Gospel. There's no "the" there. So he's set apart – Gospel through God. Good news of God. Paul is set apart unto that. Now, that's a mouthful right there. We could take that one phrase – opening phrase, and – and teach for – I don't know? A quarter? Six months? And – and never get out of it. Wouldn't that work, Gil?

Gil Parks. Sure. How does he become a bond-servant?

Conrad Bowman. Hmm. Well, that's the same word used for slave. Right? Now a bond-servant or a slave in that day, could become a slave in two or three ways. But the main way you could become a bond-servant is to owe somebody something. If you owed somebody something, and you had no means to pay – okay?

Gil Parks. Borrowed money, or ...

Conrad Bowman. Borrowed money; borrowed horse; or chariot; or coat; or whatever it is; and you had no means to pay for that, you could indenture yourself ...

Gil Parks. That's – get to work it off.

Conrad Bowman. ... and work it off. That's what that word means. *Doulos*. *Doulos* is the word. *D-O-U-L-O-S*. *Doulos*. It's a bond-servant. Now, he became indebted to Christ because of what Christ did for him. Christ did a work on his behalf and he accepted it. Christ paid for all of Paul's sins; and He paid for it on the cross. He paid the price with His own blood. So, that's how Paul got indentured. When he accepted the price that Christ paid, he indentured himself to God for that debt. Now, he goes to work serving the one to whom he owes that price; and that was Christ. Okay?

Gil Parks. This is after the crucifixion?

Conrad Bowman. This is – this is after the crucifixion. Yeah. That's Paul. He's speaking of after the crucifixion.

Gentleman. So he's just saying he's indebted to Him.

Conrad Bowman. He's indebted. Owe You my life.

Ed Welbourn. He's in Adam.

Conrad Bowman. Huh?

Ed Welbourn. He's in Adam.

Conrad Bowman. He's in Adam?

Ed Welbourn. Yeah. Everyone who accepts Him.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. That's right. See, Paul – Paul is on the road to Damascus. He's going there to kill Christians. That's his job. He's on this road to Damascus, and he's going up there – because he's heard there're some Christians up there – and he's going to deal with them; and all at once, half way to Damascus – yes sir?

Gentleman. Paul's doing this on his own, not under obligation. Is that right?

Conrad Bowman. That's right. He did – he relished it. He had zeal for it. Right? He loved doing that. That was his job. He was good at it. So he's up there killing Christians. Well, he's on his way to Damascus, to wipe out that nest. And Damascus – half-way to Damascus a bright light knocks him off his animal and into the dirt, and a voice comes out of that light that he can't even stand to look at, saying, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? And it was the voice of Christ; and – and Saul was – was just struck dumb by it. Well, Saul was sent to a man named Simeon who laid out the Gospel of Christ to Saul; and Saul ended up as a believer; and – and – and he – he discovered in that the grace of the work of Christ on his behalf – that the very one who he's persecuting the very name of, and all the followers of – that one did His work on his behalf; and he accepted that.

Gentleman. But he had never met Jesus?

Conrad Bowman. Right there. See, the – the qualification for an apostle is that you had to be an eye witness of the resurrected Christ. Saul was the last of – of the men elected by God who saw the resurrected Christ; and he saw Him in His glorified state; in that illuminated glorified state; he was the last one to see Him that way. That's how he qualified as the last of the apostles. That's why we know there're – there have been no others, because that nailed that contract shut. So, Saul became the bond-servant – he indentured himself to Christ right there. He was called an apostle, and – and later in – in several of the other letters that he wrote, he – he went into that "called an apostle" specifically, "unto Gospel of God." "The" is not in the text. The Gospel of God is there. Good news. Which He promised,

2. which He promised beforehand ...

This is God.

2. ... promised beforehand through His prophets in holy Scriptures,

So he reaches back and grabs all the holy Scriptures in this statement, and he says, the holy Scriptures – the Old Testament Bible – promised us the – the coming one – the Messiah; and it happened. Okay; and I, "called an apostle, and set apart to that Gospel,"

3. concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,

And he identified Christ as being the promised one to come out of Israel; and who was

4. declared with power to be ...

Not only the Son of David – seed of David, but

4. ... Son of God by resurrection out from dead,

His resurrection was very important, because it was His certification that He was the promised one and was the Son of God; because God had spoken from heaven and said, "this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And – and – and men killed Him and God raised Him up again; and He appeared to many in His resurrected state between His resurrection and His ascension on day forty. Okay? So, during that period – thirty-seven days – He appeared to many; and that's what the Acts were all about; the Acts will tell us how He appeared to people. And – and Saul was aware of that. So,

4. declared with power to be the Son of God by resurrection out from dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

The Spirit of holiness – holiness being the same word – *hagios*, or *hagiasmos*, which means, "set apartness." Okay? So the word "holy." The word "set apart." The word "sanctify." "Holiness." All come from the same Greek root word "*hagios*," in one form or the other; and it means to be set apart, because it's what the priest did when he went to – when he wanted to the flock and got an animal and – and separated it, and – and put it in a pen and tested it for three days to make sure it didn't have any sin; or hidden blemish or defect; and he tested that animal to make sure it was perfect and there was nothing was wrong with it before they offered it as a sacrifice. That's what the trials of Christ were all about. They were satisfying the types of the Old Testament. What the Jew did in testing the animal that he selected to give to God, because it had to be a perfect animal, the Romans and the Jews did for Christ inadvertently. They didn't know. But they culled Him out and tested Him hard for three days; and then they killed Him. And it satisfied the very type of everything that they had ever seen in the past. It even reaches back to Cain and Abel, and the election of the animal as an

offering acceptable to God. Even farther back into Eden when Adam and Eve sinned and their sin became evident; and God took an animal and killed the animal and took the skins and made coverings for them to cover their sin. And that was the whole message throughout the Old Testament – cover sin. Cover it. Cover it. Cover it. And then John saw Christ coming through the crowd while he was in the water baptizing. He said, “behold the Lamb of God who’s taking away the sin of the world.” He’s not covering it. He’s taking it away. And that cannon shot went – ka-boom – right down that main street of Jerusalem; and the Jews heard a message they’d never heard before; that sin wasn’t just being covered up; it was being done away with. And that was the content and the foundation stone of the new Gospel – was that sin was gone. They didn’t have to ask for forgiveness any longer, because sin had been forgiven forever, and done away with; and that’s the message that we need to be bringing to people; that’s why the Church is not given the message of – feel sorry for your sin and repent. The Church is given the message of the Ministry of Reconciliation. Christ has done away with sin, and we don’t have to deal with that, except in the flesh. It’s there by our own will; but it’s been paid for, and NO MAN GOES TO HELL BECAUSE OF SIN. HE GOES TO HELL BECAUSE HE REJECTS THE PRICE THAT WAS PAID FOR SIN AND REFUSES TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD; but God has opened the way to reconciliation and that’s our ministry. If the Church has a job, that’s what it is. It’s not evangelism. It’s the Ministry of Reconciliation. It’s the fact that evangelism has been accomplished already. He sent the Spirit to do what the Son paid for; and our message is that you don’t have to do anything for salvation. You don’t even have to ask for it. All you have to do is take what’s there; and that’s Reconciliation. You see the difference? Boy, let that soak all the way into your soul; because it – it – it is not the message that you hear in the Church today. The church [message] you hear today is we ought to send people out there, and convict people of sin; and convince them that their living in their lifestyle is wrong and offense. No, we don’t need to do that. That’s what the Spirit does. The Spirit convicts the world of sin, of righteous, and judgment. Now if He’s doing that, what is our job? Our job is the Ministry of Reconciliation. We need to follow right along with the Spirit and tell people; that your way to God is open, because of the work of Christ; and you have been reconciled to Him. There’s nothing that separates you from God the Father, except the person of Christ. You embrace Him, and you accept Him, and you have moved into God’s family. Not next to Him, but in Him. Where can you go with that? Where can you go with that? You can walk right up to the gates of hell and not be touched by it. Where can you go with it? That’s our message. That’s our burden. Okay? If the Church has a job, that’s our job. The Ministry of Reconciliation. We are to give away what is free to us. Okay? Enormously costly.

But we have it in our hands and we ask nothing for it, except that to those to whom it's offered accept it. Okay? IF A MAN DIES AND GOES TO HELL TODAY, HE GOES TO HELL BECAUSE HE PUSHES THAT AWAY, AND ABSOLUTELY REFUSES TO ACCEPT IT.

I've got to go because – shoot. Well, we're going to – we'll probably finish recap of Romans over the next two, three, or four weeks. Maybe? [Laughter]. That'd be okay?

Class. Yes.

Conrad Bowman. Alright. Alright. Alright. Now, you – I want you to look at this. Look at this first chapter of Romans, because you see what – what power; what intricate detail and power is woven into that first foundation stone in this letter. It's an incredible, remarkable letter; and you could go through here and just spend days looking at it, and let it soak into your soul. Okay? Let it soak into your soul. It's too good not to spend that kind of time with it, and let it work on you.

Ed Welbourn. The Gospel given personally to Paul.

Conrad Bowman. Gospel given personally to Paul.

Ed Welbourn. Paul said, if you believe the Gospel we've rooted to you.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Ed Welbourn. He leaves no other message.

Conrad Bowman. And over and over he's going to say that. What did he say to the Galatians?

Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? Who told you, you could finish in Law what you started in grace?

I can hear him now just blowing it off at them. He said if I, or if anybody – if I or an angel from heaven would come to you with any other gospel other than I've given to you, let him be accursed. And he's pointing the finger at him. Don't you take another gospel. Don't you believe it. Don't you accept it. You hold on to that Gospel. Spend your life with that Gospel, because that's the – that's what God has given us. Boy, I'm telling you. This thing is precious. This is like a gold brick

in our hands right here. A gold brick in our hands. You can't go forty feet from where I stand right here and hear that same thing declared that clearly. You can't. That's – that's not – that's not bragging on anything. That's not drawing attention to anything except the Gospel that God has given us. It is so, so precious. Listen, the Dark Ages tried to crush it, and they did it until that wild drinking Monk – Luther – got it together; nailed it on the Wittenberg Door, and put people back in the Word of God. And he happened to do so – wasn't it lucky that he did that at a time when – when – when Gutenberg – you can't hardly pronounce his name – developed a crude press that could print that word and distribute it so that all men – commoners, just like me and you – could have our own Scripture and read it and understand it.

Ed Welbourn. In English.

Conrad Bowman. In English. Yes. Isn't that amazing? There's a copy of that Bible – there's a copy of that Bible in – in – what's the museum? In California? L.A.?

Norma Bowman. It's the Railroad Den Garden. Whatever it's called.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. I can't – I can't remember. I can't remember the guy's name. We went to his house and we looked at it, and everything.

Lady. Conrad?

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am?

Lady. But – now – regarding missionaries. Aren't missionaries – like the missions. Isn't that what they're doing? The Reconciliation message, or not?

Conrad Bowman. I don't know. I hope so. I hope so. But I haven't seen – I've been – I've been in so few places where that's taught, that I'm – I'm struck with lack of confidence that they heard that message before they left here. I hope that the Spirit has infused them with that message. Our job is to make sure that they have; that they're not correspondence with one another; that they're not correspondence with their own missionaries; we want to – and they're coming here, by the way. Our missionaries come back for a conference, and – and – and that's what we want to share with them. We want to know that they're doing that. You know. More than that, how many people are sent through Houston on an annual basis. You know. From all over the world. Kent. Like Kent, from Athens, Georgia; and now we've got a guy in Athens, Georgia, who – but how many people are sent from all over the world through this place, and they need

to hear this message when they're here; and God would touch their heart and change them; and wherever they go, they'll be able to take that. Now, I've got somebody that wants to share something here right at the tail end of this. Ah, come up here, David. And we're going to take this up again next week. Well, maybe I want touch on it. Maybe I want take it up. Adam will take it up. Bill will take it up. We'll have – we'll have to get into that. We'll – we'll figure that out. I've got – I'm sorry. I – short explanation. I've – I've got a little surgery. It's nothing; nothing exceptional; but I've got a little surgery coming up on Monday; and – and I may be out for a week or two. Maybe. Adam is already going to start Titus for us. He's – he's wavering a little bit, but he's – he's going to be there. Hmm. And you guys – you guys can bring appropriate things to throw, if you want to, or whatever. [Laughter]. He's ready. He's ready, I'm telling you. He's ready. David has something he wants to share with us, and – so I told him I'd give him some time right here at the end of the class; and he's going to do that, and then we'll close with a word of prayer, and go from here.

Betijean Kennerly. He's a sweet young man.

Conrad Bowman. There you go, brother.

David Yeary. Conrad is a tough act to follow, I tell you. I – I just wanted to share with you guys very briefly about a ministry I'm involved in; and myself and about forty other guys do this twice a year. Three weeks from tonight we'll be in a little church called "Weldon Baptist Church." It's Northeast of Huntsville. We are about five miles from the gate of the maximum security East Cam Prison unit; and we go in for four days; and I've been involved with this ministry for about six years. We go in – we'll be preparing on Wednesday night; and we go in on Thursday for four days and minister to forty-two men that have been selected by the prison Chaplin out of the twenty-five hundred felons in there. We will spend four days with those guys going through a program that is very similar, if you are familiar with some of the other spiritual weekend retreats like "Walk to a [Inaudible]." This is called [Inaudible], if you will. [Laughter]. But it is – a structured program like that – it's ripe ground in there; and it is amazing to be on-site and see the Holy Spirit work with these men. What I wanted to ask you guys to please do, if you would consider, just simply praying for these forty-two men while we're in there. And while I'm telling you just a little bit about it, I'm going to hand out some of these sheets. Mike, there's one over there; and if you can – if you're interested in doing that and praying, you can just put – just your first name, and your city; or anything that – you can put your initial. Here are also some reminders to pray for these guys. But that would be – here's some of

these reminders right here. Pass those down. Ah, just like your first name, and if you want to put a word of encouragement on there; because what we've got to do – this prayer chain is very powerful. Now I want to tell you just a little bit about the prayer chain and how it's used by God over this weekend. First of all, the East Cam Unit was – the prison ministry has been there since 2000 and it is literally changing this prison. In 1986, *Newsweek* did a cover story entitled, "Inside The Toughest Prison In America;" and it is this prison. You can imagine the brutality and the things that go on inside the toughest prison in America; and – and that's where we go to minister to these guys. The pray chain is one of the tools that we use, we bring out on the second day; and we're letting you guys know that there are people on the outside that are praying for them. In the Spring, the prayer chain was five hundred feet long. What we do, is we take these scripts and we staple them, and we make a chain, and it wrapped around this gym two times; and it had people's names just like you guys that are praying for them; and it floors these guys that people on the outside are actually praying for them. So that's what the prayer chain is used for. We do a closing ceremony that I wanted to invite all you guys to come to, if you're interested in coming. I've got some of the applications up here on the table. It's – I'll tell you. It's about a hundred miles to the prison unit. And the closing ceremony – my mom has been there. It's on a Sunday evening; it starts about 4 o'clock and ends about 7 o'clock. But we do these twice a year. If you guys are ever interested in getting a group of you guys that want to car pool and come up there. The closing ceremony is an incredible blessing; and these inmates will get up and have an opportunity and open microphone to share what the weekend meant to them. And they will say things like, I just came here for the food; because we bring in food from the outside. Fried chicken, and shrimp, and all these things that these guys haven't eaten – some of them in twenty years or more. These are guys that are doing a long amount of time there. So the food is one of the blessings that we bring in to them. But they'll get up and say, I just came for the food, but here's what I found along the way. And they will share a personal testimony; and these guys will share how they came to Christ; or came closer; or at least have some hope now that there is something else besides the life they're living. So, if you guys would pray for our group, I would really appreciate it a lot. Thank you, Conrad.

Conrad Bowman. You welcome.

Marjorie Sager. Are you especially giving them good – the Doctrine of Reconciliation? Are you honing in on that?

David Yeary. Yeah. I was just questioning myself. Are we doing an effective job of that. What we do it – we give a series of talks over the weekend that simply – all we're doing is we're bringing in a message of what God has done for us. We're not beating them over the head, and they have completely free choice. But we do a series of talks that are designed to introduce them to what Christianity is all about. We do personal testimony of our own while we're up there talking to them and let them know what God has done in our lives, and how He's changed us; and we find common ground with these guys. One of the common things we say is, the only difference between you and me is, you got caught and I didn't; because often our stories of personal testimony are very similar to the things these guys have dealt with and they just got caught. We were fortunate that God got us in time and changes our hearts. So that's our message.

Lady. And I'll say when I went, I'll always remember that experience. To go to a real prison with the gates and the guards up in the tower, and the gate closes behind you and you're locked in. I mean, I wasn't afraid, but it's something that I'll never forget; being around the prisoners and, you know, I was grateful for the opportunity to be there.

David Yeary. I'm going to see if Tom would be interested in sponsoring an inmate also. It costs about \$8,000 to put the weekend on, and we're the ones that pay for it when we go in. So, I'm going to see if Tom might be interest in that this time or another time; and then that way also the church will get a letter from one of those inmates kind of detailing how the weekend was. Hopefully, that'll work for you.

Conrad Bowman. Thank you, David.

David Yeary. Sure. Thank you.

Conrad Bowman. Let's close with a word of prayer. Kent?

Kent Erb. I was just going to say, at the time the Church was established in Jerusalem, there were a lot of gospels being given to the Jews; and this Gospel was given to Paul as an Apostle to the Gentiles.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Kent Erb. And so they were saying, this was the Gospel you hear.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. Very much so. We'll – we'll track that along, and maybe tag right on to the end of the, the Gospel across Acts as it was – as it was applied. That would be an excellent way to do it. There's just no way to stop these things. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for the time You give us; and – and just the frustration of not being able to – to take it all in at one time and see the whole thing; just open our minds up. Take us beyond ourselves and our understanding; guide us in our pathway through Scripture, and help us to make the right distinctions so that we understand what You were doing through these men that we so admire and love and depend on for truth; and we thank You for it. Thank You for giving us the opportunity to gather here and for the blessing it is just to be able to share these things amongst us. We thank You in Christ's name, who paid for it all. Pray it blesses us for the rest of this week; and bless David and the work that they're doing and that prison; and just to make that productive Father; help us to take that Ministry of Reconciliation like a bright light right into the middle of that dark place. Thank You in Christ's name. Amen.