

Romans 11, 12, 13 (Conrad Bowman) (August 20, 2008)

... Chapter 11, and we'll get into chapter 12. I want to do the end of chapter 11, because it starts out, in chapter 12, with "therefore" in the *King James*, and "I urge you therefore" in the *New American Standard*. So, we're going to hit the end of chapter 11, and then move right into chapter 12 as soon as we establish the "therefore." Let's have a word of prayer.

Father how we thank You tonight for just the opportunity to study the Word together. Bless us Father with the energy that we need; the clarity of mind that we need; the focus that we need, for us to open our spirits so that the Spirit within us can communicate with us Your Word to us today. And we thank You in Christ's name, and for His sake. Amen.

Alright. Let's look at – look at chapter 11 for a minute. Let's start with verse 25.

25. For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery ...

And the mystery as it has been in this New Testament is the mystery of the Church, Jew and Gentile, being forged into one body, the Bride of Christ, known as the Church. That's the mystery. I don't want you to be uninformed of this mystery.

25. ... lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

And that fullness of the Gentiles is the end of Gentile reign. And that goes all the way to the Rapture. Now,

25. ... a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

26. and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,
"THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."

Or from the Israelites.

27. AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,
WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

So he says there will be a time when He takes the sin of Israel away. And that's exactly what John pronounced – we covered this same thing on Sunday morning, as I recall. That's exactly what John pronounced when he saw Jesus approaching him to be baptized and he said: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." So,

27. THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,
WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

Is a fulfillment of that pronouncement and Old Testament prophecy.

28. From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;

So it says, you who are Gentiles – Romans – are enemies of Israel for the sake of political – for your own sake. For the sake of political government. But from the standpoint of God's choice, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. It's because of promises made to the fathers.

29. for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

30. Just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,

So he said, you have been shown God's mercy because of the disobedience of Israel, and in that same way, now

30. ... now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,

31. so these also now have been disobedient, in order that [purpose clause] because the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

So when Israel was the agent of God for the dispensing of grace across the Old Testament period, and through them, Gentiles found God. Now that Gentile – the Gentile Church – is the agent of mercy in the Age of Grace – its through the

Gentile Church that the Israelite must find God. Role reversal. So that's – that's the statement that he makes right there in 30 and 31.

32. For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.

They messed up, and were disobedient. You messed up and were disobedient. When they were disobedient, I showed you mercy. When you are disobedient, I showed them mercy. So God says, don't look at Me about showing mercy because I'm consistent.

33. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

So 33 is a statement in support of what he just said before. Then the conclusion.

34. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?

35. Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN?

36. For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

And that ends his thought and discourse at that point. He goes to chapter 12. Any questions there on chapter 11? He goes to chapter 12.

1. I urge you therefore brethren, by means of the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

I think the *King James* has "reasonable." Ok. Which is your spiritual service of worship.

So chapter 12 starts with this grand declaration by Paul, and he says, "I urge you therefore brethren by means of the mercies of God, which he's just delineated in the end of chapter 11. "You are to present your bodies a living sacrifice." And the image that's drawn there for these Gentile believers in Rome and us too is that of

Christ presenting His own body a sacrifice for sin. And just as He presented His own body as a sacrifice for sin, so we should present our living bodies – our lives follows the metaphor – we should present our bodies a living and holy – set apart – sacrifice, that is acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. If you want to know what you're supposed to be doing as a Christian, there it is. You take your very life, the minute you spend in this physical body, and you present them to God. That's your sacrifice. You give up your time. You give up your energy. You give up your talent. You give up your will, to what God wants done in your life. Another way to say that, which we follow often, is in 1st Corinthians that says – I mean in Ephesians, it says – Ephesians 2:10 – We are His masterpiece – alright – created in Christ Jesus for the purpose of good works – inserted in there – not that we should do them, but that we should walk in those that have been prepared from before the foundation of the world. Now you think about that, because everything you do falls under the umbrella of that statement in Ephesians 2:10. There's nothing you can do that's not covered there. Nothing. Your job in life is to look for the work of the Spirit around you. And where you find the Spirit at work, you're to put your foots – correction – you're to put your feet right in his footprints, and follow after Him as closely as you can. You walk in the footprints of Spirit, you'll never be in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong crowd or doing the wrong thing. He ...

Joyce Wood. Can you say that one more time?

Conrad Bowman. I'll try. Ok. Your job in life is to watch for the work of the Spirit, where He's at work around you, and find His footprints. Just like footprints in the sand. And you take your feet and you put them in the prints that He is making right ahead of you. And you walk in His footprints. And you watch Him work. Because it's the Spirit that's doing the work of God. It's the only work that lasts. If you get distracted, and you get a little project going of your own, in order to show God just how busy and how good you are – when that hits the Bema Seat of Christ, its going to go up in smoke just as sure as if you were at a barbecue. And there's not going to be left – nothing will be left of it. You know. There's some saved so as by fire. Smoke and fire around them. There's going to be a lot of smoke in heaven when I arrive. True? And everyone of us can say that same thing.

Lady. Amen.

Conrad Bowman. Because we get busy and distracted and get sidetracked into all kinds of stuff. Our job is to watch the Spirit at work, and then to testify to that.

That's our job. We're pointers. You always wanted to be a pointer in life, not a worker-bee, well here's chance. You're to be a pointer. Always pointing back to God at work doing His work. And then the amazing thing is when that shows up at the Bema Seat, He give you credit for it. Now I wouldn't do it that way.

Joyce Wood. That is just new to me. I've never heard it put that way.

Conrad Bowman. You know. Well, now you start unfolding the Pauline epistles, and just sticking with him and watching it come through. And he says it to the Ephesians. He says it to the Galatians. To the Galatians, he said, let every man be watching and doing to others – doing – working for the other's good. Every man ought to bear his own cargo, but when you see a brother overtaken, and borne down with problems; he said you take those off his back. You just lift those off his back. Now the Spirit opens your eyes to see those things. Ok. That's the only way you see them. Is when the Spirit opens your eyes. And when you find them, the Spirit gives you strength to do what needs to be done. And so He gets the credit for that. But when you show up at the Judgment Seat of Christ – the Bema Seat – for rewards, and you present your works, and they go up in smoke, and you would be thoroughly embarrassed if that's all there was to it; but right there is when God says, wait a minute. Here's where you were. Walking in the footprints of the Spirit while He did my work, and He rewards you for it. That's grace! That's the only way it could be – grace. If it was in accordance with work, it wouldn't be grace. It would be pay, and God doesn't pay us anything. He gives us out of His grace. Ok. He rewards us for things we never did, because it brought glory to Him. And we were there, and that's the way that works.

Lady. What word is "Bema?"

Conrad Bowman. Bema? B-E-M-A? Bema Seat. See, that's the Seat of Rewards. Ok.

Phil Richman. Called the Judgment Seat. Judgment Seat of Christ.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah.

Mary Chambliss. Haven't you had someone come up here and say, when you said this Conrad, it really did something to me right then, and I'll remember it. And you'll say, well, what did I say? And sometimes when its God doing it, we don't know about it.

Conrad Bowman. That's true.

Mary Chambliss. If we know about it, sometimes its ...

Conrad Bowman. That's true. I can stand up here and teach you a lesson and be asked to repeat something, just like – just like Joyce did. And I'd likely not be able to repeat it. I could restate it, maybe a different way; but putting it back together in those exact same words is difficult; because I don't use those kinds of notes to this. You know. So, lets – any other questions on that? Let's move on a little bit.

Phil Richman. Those verses on bearing the other person's burden ...

Conrad Bowman. Galatians 6.

Phil Richman. Galatians 6. Just so they know. Galatians 6, Ok.

Conrad Bowman. That's a great chapter.

Phil Richman. In the beginning the first ...

Conrad Bowman. The first six verses ...

Phil Richman. Yeah. Even ten verses.

Conrad Bowman. That's a marvelous chapter. Alright, let's move – let's move on.

Lady. Just really quickly, can you repeat that verse in Corinthians 5:5?

Gentleman. 5:10.

Lady. Verse 10.

Conrad Bowman. Was it – Oh, you're talking about Ephesians 2:10?

Betijean Kennerly. No. 1st Corinthians ...

Conrad Bowman. Oh.

Gentleman. About the Bema Seat.

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am. Please do.

Lady. [quoting 2 Corinthians 5:10].

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be receive for his deeds while in the body, whether good or bad.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. The difference there is, this is the Judgment Seat of Christ. Its not the Great White Throne Judgment of unbelievers, but it's the Judgment Seat of Rewards. The Judgment Seat where Christ gives His rewards out. And that's what the Bema Seat is. Ok.

Mary Chambliss. What's the bad things He's going to get out in that verse. Whether good or bad? What does that mean?

Conrad Bowman. Well, it means for the bad things, you don't get a reward. And the good things, you do.

Tom Douthit. The distinction is not so much moral. Its not a judgment under sin. Of our works.

Conrad Bowman. Right. Ok. Got it.

Lady. Conrad, I had someone – we had agreed to disagree, and I told – I said, we would get rewards. And she said no. So, am I right? [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. Do you want to restate that real good? [Laughter].

Lady. [Inaudible] ... She said we won't get rewards.

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am. Well, bring her. Maybe she won't. [Laughter]. Just feel real sorry for her. You know, the unusual thing about it is – just think about it. The rewards we get are the Bride's dowry. That's the dowry of the Bride. What's the bride do with the dowry? This is an Oriental wedding. An Asian wedding. What do you do with it? What does the bride do with her dowry? She gives it to her husband. So, we're at the Bema Seat of Christ – that's on the entrance to the wedding chapel. And here's this Judgment Seat of Rewards. And God grants us rewards based on His work in our life. You know, John and I laugh about it. We say, it's a good thing we don't know about it because there we'd be.

John Young. Claiming credit.

Conrad Bowman. Claiming credit. Man, we'd do it. We'd do it in a heartbeat. Well, we don't get a chance to do that. So we go into there, and then that – that collection of rewards – those crowns given – become the Bride's dowry which she throws at the feet of the Groom. And He takes them back. He made – He did the work. He gave us the reward in grace. We gave it up in grace, because what He owns, we now own; and we're one with Him in every sense of the word. We're joined to Him. And Christ says to us, you are joined now – today – you are joined to Christ. That's what Romans 6 is all about. We've been in union with Christ since we died to self in accepting Him. We accept Him as our Savior. We died to self. We join Him in the grave, where when He's resurrected, we're resurrected to new life. And that's what it says in Romans 6. You're raised to newness of life. And we walk in that newness of life. Now we've lost a lot of what that concept means. To walk in newness of life, because we are to walk today in the life that's He's pouring into us from where He is in heaven. And He pours that through you everyday. Now how little of that do we recognize? And the more we think about it, the more we let it fill our brains up, the more we can become aware of how much of His life is flowing through us on a moment by moment, day to day basis. Its just that simple. And we walk through life joined to Him – today. And that's a spiritual union – we were talking about spiritual in that a while ago. That's a spiritual union between us and Him that's not broken, and cannot be broken by anything or anybody that happens here on this earth. Now when the Rapture occurs, or when we die, one of the two; and personally I'm looking for the Rapture first. And when the Rapture occurs, and He takes us physically to Himself, the body's transformed. That which was mortal becomes immortal, and we are transformed into the same kind of life that He is; and we're translated from here to heaven all at one time. We are not resurrected as such. We're translated to heaven. And it's a marvelous, marvelous thing. It doesn't happen to anybody else. Didn't happen to Israel. Won't happen to the Gentiles or Jews in the Tribulation Period. Translation is a unique thing. And that's what happens to us at the Rapture of the Church when Christ returns for His Bride and takes us to heaven.

Lady. That was more about translation.

Conrad Bowman. Ma'am?

Lady. Tell us more about translation ...

Conrad Bowman. Oh, I don't know more. [Laughter]. I only know more about it. All I know is its going to happen, and I'll be there.

Lady. That being translated ...

Conrad Bowman. I'm going to leave you a note. [Laughter]. But you're going to have to read it quick, because its going to be right behind me. You know. You're going to have to read it fast, but I'll be happy to write you a note. I don't know anything about translation. Tom, you know anything about translation?

Tom Douthit. No more than you do. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. There we are. You know.

Tom Douthit. I mean, I know more than you. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. That's one for Tom. Alright, let's see. Now, "through the grace given to me" – in verse 3. No, no. verse 2. I'm sorry.

2. So do not ...

"Stop" is what it says.

2. ... Stop being conformed to this world.

This age. Stop it. You're doing it. Stop it.

2. ... but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, in order that ...

"That" – a purpose clause again, for this purpose.

2. ... that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

So here's part of your answer, right there Ms. Marty. Right there. Have your mind renewed. In other words, you want your mind subdued and exchanged with the mind of Christ. You want the mind of Christ in you directing your steps, and that's possible as we grow and mature.

2. ... the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove ...

And you can't do it without the mind of Christ.

2. ... in order that you might prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

You remember what Scripture said about Christ? He's perfectly revealed the Father. Nobody has seen God at anytime but the Son has perfectly revealed Him. "Manifested" is the word in the *King James*, I believe. Manifested. But it's the Son who reveals the Father in all that He is. So if we're walking in the footsteps of the Spirit, and the Spirit always points to Christ, and Christ always points to the Father to glorify Him, now we've got the right order of things. And what is seen in our life is going to be that which is good and acceptable and perfect; or full or mature. That's what it is.

3. Through the grace of God given to me I say to every man among you, don't think more highly of himself than you ought to think;

Ok. Don't get caught up in your own – in your own strengths.

3. ... but think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

And there's verse 3. It said, don't walk in your own strength. Don't get caught up in your own character traits. If you're a strong willed man or woman, you need to be cautious about that, because you'll walk according to your own outline of how life ought to be, and God may change that all at one time. Right. Because He wants people that will subvert their own instincts and follow His instructions. Now,

4. Just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,

5. so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

What that says is, we can't separate ourselves from one another. You know. We've got people that we like, and people that we like less. And there will be people that we like a lot less. [Laughter]. True? And you – but we're all one Body. We're all one Body. Christ died – Christ died for every one of them. He died for all mankind. Now if we could ever get that through our skulls, we would begin to view people individually as people for whom the Lord Himself died. Ok. Because I take it to heart. I believe that Christ died for the sins of the

whole world; not just for the elect. I don't know where you are on that, but everything I say is based on that. That Christ died for the sins of every man. There's not one out there who's a throw-a-way. Now when we start arranging our prayer list – don't we? We put the nice guys up top. [Laughter]. Right? If you've got a daughter, you put all the nice guys up at the top. If you've got a son, you put all the nice girls up at the top. Right. And then in declining order on our prayer sheet – here we go. And down at the bottom are the rascals who probably will become Senators and bankers. [Laughter]. And we'll have to deal with – the lawyers. [Laughter]. John – I gave him a hard time for being a lawyer and then Scofield was a lawyer. Yeah. C.I. Scofield – the Scofield Reference Bible that you're holding. He was an attorney. A practicing attorney. He was a hard-drinking attorney. Yes ma'am. He had a reputation as a womanizer. God reached down there and got him and shook him out, and look what came out of it. John Nelson Darby, who wrote the text that I use up here, was an attorney. A hard-drinking attorney ...

John Young. You can repeat the same thing you just said. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. Repeat. You go down the list of some of God's most notorious people who have been used to gorgeous, beautiful advantage in instructing us in the Word, and they came from the ranks of attorneys. So, I've had to revise and extend my remarks because of this corner of heaven – I guess we're going to – we can fence them off up there, but they're going to be there. [Laughter]. We can't do anything about it, but they're going to be there. Ok. Now, if God can do that, who am I to say I can't love them as a brother. See that not happen. We've got to look through people and what they do, even what they do to us. And we've got to look through that and see them through God's eyes; and that's what this is talking about. You know. We've got to view the world through His eyes; and we can do that if we have the mind of Christ in us and are thinking with His mind and not our own. And the Spirit has perfect communication with His mind in us

Ed Welbourn. You needed to have this class last night for me today when in a business meeting at 1:00 o'clock where a gentleman was personally attacking me; and I wasn't even going to put him on my list, much less on the top of my list. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. Did you bottom him on the list?

Ed Welbourn. Well you convicted me. I need to put Bruce at the top of my prayer list. And I ask all of you to pray for Bruce. [Laughter]. The Lord will know who you're talking about.

Conrad Bowman. Ok. That's true. Certainly it is.

Pat Welbourn. It was just a couple of hours ago.

Conrad Bowman. Certainly it is. Certainly it is. How many of you were praying for – Obama?

Pat Welbourn. I pray regarding Obama

Conrad Bowman. Now, now Pat. No. No. I didn't say praying – huh? And McCain? I didn't say praying about Obama.

Pat Welbourn. We ought to pray for God to choose the one who He can work with.

Conrad Bowman. To choose the one He can work with? But Pat, you missed the point. He can work with both.

Pat Welbourn. That's right. But the one that He can work with

Conrad Bowman. ... with the easiest? [Laughter].

[Banter back and forth].

Conrad Bowman. He finally said it. That's true. See how trapped we are? You see how trapped we are? Ok. Christ died for Ben Laden. Christ died for that loud-mouth that heads up Iran. Ok. He died for them all. He died for them all. And we have to be willing to look through His eyes to see that or we're going to miss the point. And we cannot do it with love that comes out of our own heart that's too much based on *phileo* love – do we like them or do we not? Or do we enjoy the same things? Its got to be *agape* love that is sourced in the will, because the will is subverted to the Son. And the Spirit is whispering to us the mind of the Son. He does all things to honor His Father. Are you aware that the leader of Hamas has a son that has declared his Christianity out in California? Yeah. He's the leader of Hamas – its his son, and he has moved to California, left the movement, become a Christian, and you know what that cost him in his family? Nothing is beyond the reach of an omnipotent God.

Lady. Yet we are His masterpiece.

Conrad Bowman. Yet we are His masterpiece.

Lady. And Ben Laden is too?

Conrad Bowman. No ma'am, not yet. The Church is God's masterpiece, the Body of Christ. Now you think He's not chipping away at us?

Tom Douthit. But Ben Laden is just a faith step away from being a child of God.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. That's it. That's a great way to put it. Thank you, Tom. Faith's step away. That's where He is. He can in one heartbeat become exactly what you are – a child of God.

Lady. Are we to pray for them?

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am. Yes ma'am.

Betijean Kennerly. The Scripture here says, that he is given every man a measure of faith. So God has given all of us the faith that we have.

Conrad Bowman. Uh huh. That's right. The third verse ends with that. God has allotted to all – to each – a measure of faith, for, verse 4,

4. Just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same direction,

Huh. We can guarantee that, can't we.

4. ... and don't have the same functions,

5. so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually are members one of another.

So we're joined individually with one another. Its not that I love you as a group. The command of God is I love you as individuals. That I don't leave anybody out of that love. That's what it says in plain terms.

Lady. In Christ.

Conrad Bowman. In Christ.

5. We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually are members one of another.

6. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise that gift accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

7. if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;

8. or the one who encourages and exhorts, in his exhortation; and he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

9. Let [*agape*] love be without hypocrisy.

Now does everybody understand what the work *agape* means – and the difference in that? *Agape* is an act of the will. It comes from God. You will to love. Ok. *Phileo* is something that comes from the soul. You – you love because you – you come from the same family. You enjoy the same kind of music. You enjoy the same kind of sin. And they have a dark side also.

9. ... Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

Let love be without hypocrisy, or that mask that covers up its real intent.

10. Be devoted to one another ...

That' *Philadelphia* – brotherly love, coming up.

10. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love [*phileo* love]; give preference to one another in honor;

Show the other one – the other person – let the other person take the first place.

11. don't lag behind in diligence,

But persevere.

11. ... be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

12. rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

13. contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Now there's a mindset for you that will lead you through live and have you adored. Right? If you're devoted to hospitality, and you contribute to the needs of the saints, and you rejoice always in hope, because you have hope, and you don't lag behind in diligence and stay energized and fervent in spirit in your service – that's a person you want to be around.

14. Bless those who persecute you;

Are persecuting you. Are persecuting you. Doesn't say bless them after the fact.

14. Bless those who are persecuting you; bless and curse not.

15. Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who are weeping.

So what it says is, you come along side; put your arm over their shoulder and cry with them. When you can't do anything else, improvise. Share their grief. Demonstrate that you have care and concern for where they are. Nobody does it but a brother who cares. Ok? Nobody.

16. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind [or hold yourself up], but associate with the lowly Do not be wise in your own estimation.

17. Never pay ...

Boy, its – I'm telling you. You don't want to be filled up with your own notes. Don't be wise in your own estimation – is right there.

17. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.

That "getting even" game is a coker, isn't it?

17. ... Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

18. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

I remind you of 1st Thessalonians 4:11 again.

Make it your ambition to live a quiet life. Tend to your own business. Work with your own hands, so that you might live at peace – not be in need and live at peace with all men.

Marching orders for the Church.

19. Never take your own revenge,

Boy that's bad. You know. That fight's every good cowboy movie that was ever made, doesn't it? Don't you watch cowboy movies – it comes on AMC 5 o'clock in the morning every Saturday. [Laughter]. John Wayne – he gets – and he was only like twenty or twenty-one when he made that movie.

19. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

20. BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS UPON HIS HEAD."

But Lord, I want to see him piled up now.

21. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Now that sets the standard – chapter 12 does.

Lady. Twelve? You know, I've always wondered about the first twenty – I mean,

Conrad Bowman. Yeah?

Lady. It seems contrary to the rest of the verses about what he is asking us to do. Is that in reference to – I mean, I'm just not getting – I mean, I think the point is, if all we do is be nice to our friends, and not our enemies, what kind of Christianity or faith do we have? And, it almost seems like we're getting revenge right there, by – its giving us permission to get revenge. I don't get it.

Conrad Bowman. Let me see what you're reading into that. Verse 19 says ...

Lady. Is this in reference to an Old Testament thing? Or what?

[Inaudible class comments]

Conrad Bowman. Oh, you're talking about, you're talking about, you're talking about – you would heap burning coals on his head?

Lady. Yeah. I thought the point was to be kind to your enemies. To help them.

Conrad Bowman. Well it is. It is. Heaping burning coals on his head is a different sort of thing. See, if you – I'm going through Revelation on Sunday morning.

Lady. Yeah. It's too early. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. I know. Yeah, that 8 o'clock hour cripes in there, doesn't it? But in Revelation, God's wrath is turned loose, and it's turned loose on His enemies, who are also our enemies. And in Revelation, especially through that Tribulation Period, and then at the end of the Millennium, what the unbeliever has looking – what he's looking at, full in the face – he's just seen, through the Tribulation Period, seven years of earthquakes; of mountains exploding; of meteors falling; of the sea turned to blood; of rivers dried up; of horrible, horrible judgmental conditions. Now what God says, the unbeliever has enough grief looking forward. What you are to do, is not take your own revenge because God's vengeance is coming. His wrath on sin and sinfulness is on its way. We don't need to add to that. By our showing mercy, all we're doing is allowing that unbeliever one more chance to fail to appreciate or to deny or to respond to our attempts to show mercy by harsh action; or, by taking what we have; or by even worse; because the earth is going to be under judgment at that point. So it said, when you're good is offered, and he turns it down, what's happening is, the coals of fire that are going to catch up with him, are being heaped on his head. Not by your choice, but by his or her own actions. They're taking that on to themselves. So, you don't offer them good in order that they might be burned in a hotter place. That's not why you do that. You offer them good because God chose to send Christ to His death for them too; because He died for all men. And by their own choice, they're putting themselves in a position of having the coals of fire heaped on them. So that's what you're looking at, in there. If anything I said indicated otherwise, that was a mistake on my part.

Lady. It seems incongruent with the rest of that chapter, you know; about what being what a Christian is about; that we're all members of the Body, and then ...

Conrad Bowman. Right.

Lady. ... right after the fall.

Conrad Bowman. Right.

Lady. And then, what is it, James or Peter – if we are only kind and helpful to people who are our friends, what kind of faith and Christianity do we have?

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Lady. That's just, ah, ...

Conrad Bowman. That's right. That kindness shouldn't ...

Lady. ... fringe benefit of being – you know, someone who hurts you.

Conrad Bowman. Hmm? That you would do it?

Lady. No, not do that for it, but by the way, its not going to be pleasant for them later on.

Conrad Bowman. Well, I think I understand what you're saying. I'm not sure I do. I'll talk – I'll catch you afterwards and make sure.

Lady. Ok?

Conrad Bowman. Ok? Now,

17. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all.

18. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

19. Do not take your own revenge, but leave room for the wrath of God, for its written, VENGEANCE IS MINE, AND I WILL REPAY, says the Lord.

20. BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS UPON HIS HEAD."

21. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good things.

And then chapter 13 opens with a closing statement based on 12,

1. Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities.

And that's talking about human government.

1. ... For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Doesn't matter.

2. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

I think next week I'll spend some time right there as we open those first two verses up to talking about politics. [Laughter]. Not long, but we ought to talk just a little bit about the political process and where Christians fit into that. And that would be a good opportunity to do it. Any other questions before we close?

Lady. I have one thing to say about the coals on the head.

Conrad Bowman. The what on the head?

Class. Coals.

Conrad Bowman. Coals?

Lady. Burning coals.

Conrad Bowman. Yes.

Lady. When you turn some meanness that has been ...

Conrad Bowman. Done to you?

Lady. ... done to you, around to that person – kindness. That's the way it happens. And the burning coals of fire on that person's head. I mean, that's just a human thing, isn't it? So don't be kind to them?

Tom Douthit. Isn't there some sense of, you know, when the coals – when a person responds in kindness to a vile act, you know, I can't speak of all the historical references to burning coals on the head, but the change and the hope of being changed is a mere sign that person's soul that he is given an opportunity to respond. And so there's a definite purpose to this. Its not – it isn't like a hypocritical kindness, you know, I'm going to be nice to you so God will really dump it on you. If my actions toward you are going to – just like in 2nd Corinthians, where is it, where it says, to one – aroma like you, other aroma of death. You know, sometimes a kindness will just expose sort of a the death stench of a person's life. Let them know that they're, that they're not saved; that they have need of something that you have. It's sort of – you've got the jist.

Conrad Bowman. Absolutely.

Gentleman. This was written long enough ago back in the time when people used to toss ashes on their head in basic repentance. Isn't that maybe in line with that too?

Conrad Bowman. Could be. Could be. It was never part of my practice. Yeah. The problem is – the problem I'm having right now, I'm so deep into that Revelation study about the wrath of God being poured out on the unbeliever and the wicked and what-have-you, that I'm seeing that in real terms. In terms of what He's doing to them as we're moving along. The plagues of Revelation. And I may be communicating some of that unnecessarily back into Romans. We'll see. Beth?

Beth Davis. [Inaudible] ... your goodness to him will overcome evil ... [inaudible] ... and your act of love kind of melts them down. You have the love of the Lord and he does not ... [inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. That's a good picture. That's a great picture.

Mary Chambliss. When somebody is being nice to me and I know in my heart I'm not that kind of a person ...

Conrad Bowman. Uh huh.

Mary Chambliss. And I wonder in my heart, how can they do that? How can they be that kind? How can they show me that person? How can they whatever? And it brings some fiction in my heart,

Conrad Bowman. Uh huh.

Mary Chambliss. ... which can literally sometimes give you heart-burn. But [Laughter]. But it brings conviction in my heart when they're nice and I know I'm not that kind of person.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah.

Mary Chambliss. It's a good thing for me to see my own heart.

Conrad Bowman. Uh huh.

Mary Chambliss. Whereas if they do did – if they were mean and ugly, then I'd say, huh, back to you. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. Back at you.

Mary Chambliss. Back at you. That's right. I forget the slang.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. Back at you.

Betijean Kennerly. You know, that's what Jesus did. He asked His Father to forgive them. They know not what they do.

Gentleman. The ultimate – that was the ultimate demonstration of that, wasn't it? Ultimate demonstration of that.

Conrad Bowman. Man, I shouldn't threaten to break that. Let's close with a word of prayer.

Father we thank You for the evening and for the time in the Word. We just thank You for the way You bless us. Keep us centered in Your will, and we know, Father, we're centered in Your love. And we thank You, in Christ's name, who paid for it all. Amen.