



ZWTF

Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

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ROMANS Part 150

Chapter 16:16-19

All the ecclesias of Christ



Greet one another with a holy kiss. Greeting you are all the ecclesias of Christ. 17 Now I am entreating you, brethren, to be noting those who are making dissensions and snares beside the teaching which you learned, and avoid them, 18 for such for our Lord Christ are not slaving, but for their own bowels, and through compliments and adulation are deluding the hearts of the innocent. 19 For your obedience reached out to all. Over you, then, am I rejoicing. Now I am wanting you to be wise, indeed, for good, yet artless for evil.

HOLY KISSES, BATMAN

Whenver Clyde Pilkington sees me after a long absence (or a short one, for that matter), he kisses me on the neck. It's a holy kiss. It seemed awkward the first time he did it because one doesn't experience this every day, but I got the hang of it and felt the love through it. (A holy kiss is a non-sexual kiss; it's a sanctified kiss.) Clyde is a very loving and demonstrative person, and I think that all members of the ecclesia, ideally, ought to be this way, but many of us are reserved. I am one of them. I can't bring myself to kiss a man on the neck, or anywhere else. This may be a personal flaw. If I kissed a woman on the neck, on the other hand, it would all be over. I know myself. I would linger to smell the woman's perfume and—bang—at that point the kiss would cease being holy and would graduate into the realm of the profane. I would feel the woman's hair on my face and—bang—same thing. After thirty minutes or so of me lingering upon her neck, the female believer would say, "Excuse me, Zender, but I think this so-called holy kiss has gone to the dark side." With my face still buried between her ear and left clavicle, I would say, "When did you first notice it?"

All of this is unfortunate. There should be more hugging and kissing going on within the body of Christ. We love each other so much and we ought to show it.

We need more human contact of the holy variety. (“Holy Romans 16:16, Batman!”) I am pretty good at hugging; I will hug a dude, no problem. I will kiss women on the cheek, but I generally keep 1.5 inches to the left (my left) of a woman’s lips—as a rule of thumb. Anything closer than 1.5 inches (1.49 inches, for instance) is what I call “the danger zone,” and everyone is in trouble at that point and the gospel is at risk of falling into disrepute.

As far as women in the body of Christ are concerned, my kiss stays holy on them as long as I keep myself 1.5 inches from the lips and completely out of the neck area—the neck area being that area between the ear and clavicle. It is a holy kiss as long as the woman is not wearing perfume. It also helps if she is bald.

7,111

Teaching was Paul’s life. Not just teaching, but right teaching. By the time he finishes Romans, the apostle Paul will have written 7,111 words under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the breath of God and when God breathes, every molecule of that breath knows where it’s going. When God decides to write, He’s His own best editor. He doesn’t need a dictionary, thesaurus or word-count tabulator. If there were only 7,110 words in Romans—or 7,112—then the letter would not be inspired. The Holy spirit spit out (rejected) all but 7,111 entries from the Greek dictionary for this monumental missive detailing our Christ-centric blessings.



What I’m telling you is that every word of Paul’s dissertation counts. Paul’s specific gospel contains words and the words convey teachings.

Now you know why Paul has conniptions over anything “beside the teaching” that could stick like cockleburs to the souls of the saints. He’s not protecting his own teachings, but God’s. We need to remember that. We tend to call this gospel “Paul’s gospel,” but it’s really the gospel of God. In fact, Paul calls it just that at the outset, in Romans 1:1—“Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, a called apostle, severed for the evangel of God.”

Anything that is *beside* this teaching, therefore, *isn’t* the teaching. God would have Paul keeping things straight. God doesn’t take kindly to having His words twisted or altered. And so Paul would say to anyone bending God’s words or subtracting or adding to them, “God knows what He’s talking about; how *dare* you inject your own opinions.” But that’s what people do, and they still do it.

DISSENSIONS

The Greek word translated “dissensions” here is *dichostasia*, and its English elements are TWO-STAND. Someone making a dissension, therefore, is presenting a second opinion other than the God-breathed teaching. Such ones are substituting an opinion *for* a teaching (standing the opinion next to the teaching) usually because the teaching opposes a personal (pet) belief. For instance, God says in Colossians 1:16 that, “all is created through [Christ].” But a dissenter (a two-stander) who doesn’t personally believe that all was created through Christ (for whatever reason), will say something like, “When Paul says ‘created’ here, he doesn’t actually mean that Christ created everything. Paul *says* that all is ‘created through Christ,’ yes, but when Paul *says* ‘created’ what he really *means* is that Christ is ‘upholding and preserving’ what was already created.”

See how it works? “Upholding and preserving” is stood up beside “creating” and thus—*voilà*—a dissension is made.

Dissensions are rarely subtle. The result is always that someone stands his or her opinion next to the actual teaching and presents the opinion not only as a viable competitor to the teaching, but something that trumps the teaching itself.

In another example, there are some in the body of Christ who believe that, when Christ comes in the air to bring the body of Christ into the air with Him as He makes them immortal (1 Thessalonians, chapter four) He brings the saints back to Earth. Thus, the people meeting Christ in the air (God is the One who said “meet”; God



is merely using Paul as a middle-man to pass this word along) aren't really body of Christ members at all, but rather Israelite saints whose destination and field of ministry is Terra Firma. The people foisting this dissension upon unsuspecting saints stand their own understanding of the word "meet" next to the actual meaning and promote their definition as the correct one. This is in fact the best way to create a dissension: make up your own definition of a word. I'll briefly illustrate this and then move on.

The Greek word Paul uses and that we translate "meet" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, is *apantēsis*. The definition in Strong's Concordance (it's word #529) is as follows:

► *apantēsis* (pronounced ap-an'-tay-sis) from 528; a (friendly) encounter:—meet.

Here is the Thayer's Greek Lexicon definition—

► *apantēsis* 1) to meet one

Simple, right? Everyone knows what "meet" means. It means meet. But no. If one entertains a pet belief (a personal desire) to make the event of 1 Thessalonians (the

snatching away) apply to Israelites rather than to the body of Christ (for whatever reason), and thus one *needs* the people rising to meet the Lord in the air to return to Earth, then one must stand one's own personal definition of *apantēsis* against the actual definition. It's a desperate move, granted. It's bolder than running with the bulls at Pamplona and about as stupid. I read one brother's personal definition of "meet," and it went like this (this is a literal quote)—

In every case this word "meet" does not mean continuing on into the place from where the one being met came. On the contrary, it means to go out and meet the one coming to the place from which those meeting him came. In other words, 1 Thessalonians 4 is about that company of that time going up from the earth to meet the Lord in the air as He descends to the earth out of heaven.

Did you get all that? No? Good. Because it's a dissension. It stands itself against the truth. It's a competing definition. Talk about torturing a word to promote a pet belief. Talk about two-standing; talk about stand-

ing a different, personal definition of “meet” into the God-breathed, Scriptural definition naturally bred by divine context.

SNARES

A snare is a snare. (How is *that* for a safe definition?) It’s something that traps another person. A dissension *becomes* a snare, but a snare is already a snare; it need not be a dissenting teaching. For instance, the teaching that “death is really life” is a dissension. The teaching that “creating is really upholding and preserving” is a dissension. The teaching that “to meet means to go out and meet the one coming to the place from which those meeting him came” is a dissension; it’s an addition to the proper definition. Dissensions will snare one. Inviting someone to go to church in order to be baptized, on the other hand, is a snare itself. Telling someone that they have to add law to grace is a snare itself.

A snare is something that one does; a dissension is something that one believes.

Paul says concerning Israel (quoting David), in Romans 11:9—

And David is saying, Let their table become a trap and a mesh, And a snare and a repayment to them.

Israel, apparently, relished the consumption of unhealthy foods. David’s thought was, “Let them go ahead and scarf down their Twinkies and potato chips;

they’ll become a bunch of fat sloths. Their fleshly desires will dull their spirits.” The junk food that Israel physically ate became, for David, an analogy of what she ate spiritually: self-righteousness, jealousy, hate. Both things will bow the back, darken the eyes and spiritually stupefy anyone tripping at such a snare.

NOTE AND AVOID

Paul’s remedy for dissensions and snares is to note those making them and avoid them. These dissenters are to be avoided in their capacity as dissenters. It’s not like, if you see a dissenter at the grocery store, you move to another check-out line. For instance, I refuse to teach at any conference where I know that another teacher will be there (in the capacity of a presenter) who denies the sovereignty of God. How can I sit and subject myself to such unscriptural tripe? Thus, I avoid them. But if I saw them on the street I’d give them the old “heidi-ho” and say, “How’s the wife and kids?” (If it were a female, I would attempt a holy kiss.) If I saw a brother on the street who was a snarer, I’d happily flag him down and converse. But if he said, “Come to church with me this Sunday,” I would say, “I have to go now. Bye-bye.”

BOWEL MOVEMENT

“...for such for our Lord Christ are not slaving, but for their own bowels, and through compliments and adulation are deluding the hearts of the innocent” (Romans 16:18).

“Bowels” is figurative for an inner and thus personal desire. (What is more personal than one’s own bowels?) A two-stander falls in love with his or her own personal, pet teaching. To forward one’s personal, pet teaching, it helps if one compliments and admires (it can be genuine or feigned; but is probably feigned) ones potential audience, like this: “Say, I love that new hairstyle on you; have you considered that ‘meet’ doesn’t really mean ‘meet’?” The firm heart will hold its Scriptural ground, but the innocent heart will pat its hairdo and entertain the dissension. The innocent heart is that which could never believe that a fellow member of the body of Christ could ever set out to delude it. But whether one sets out to delude or not (no one in the body of Christ, I don’t believe, ever consciously sets out to delude another) a delusion is a delusion.

I’m not sitting here on high telling you that I am immune to receiving and promulgating bad teaching, or





that I could never somehow inadvertently delude someone due to a pet belief. But I guard against it by focusing on and believing God’s inspired words and definitions. Paul commended the Bereans for checking up on him, to see if the Scriptures indeed said what Paul was promoting (Acts 17:11). If you think that I’m off, I want you to correct me. If I am off, then I’ll admit to being off if confronted with the evidence. I want to slave for Christ, not my bowels. If I start complimenting you before I start teaching you, beware of me. If I’m eating a Twinkie while doing it, I’m probably a snarer; avoid me.

“For your obedience reached out to all. Over you, then, am I rejoicing. Now I am wanting you to be wise, indeed, for good, yet artless for evil” (Romans 16:19).

Don’t get hung up on the word “obedience.” Paul is not throwing the Romans under the speeding bus of law. The Greek word is *hupakoe*, and the English elements are UNDER-HEARING. This word simply means (according to the Greek-English Keyword Concordance of the *Concordant Literal New Testament*, page 209), “to hear and heed.” The Romans were simply hearing and heeding the words

of God’s evangel as dispensed through Paul. They were sticking to the right words and the right definitions of those words as determined by divine context. For this, they were famous (it must have been a rare thing), for Paul says of them, “your obedience reached out to all.” Paul says, “Over *you*, then, am I rejoicing.”

He was *not* rejoicing over the dissenters and snarers. “Wise for good and artless for evil” probably refers to the good and evil of the context. The good of the context is believing God’s words and definitions; the bad of the context is believing dissensions and snares as promulgated by dissenters and snarers.

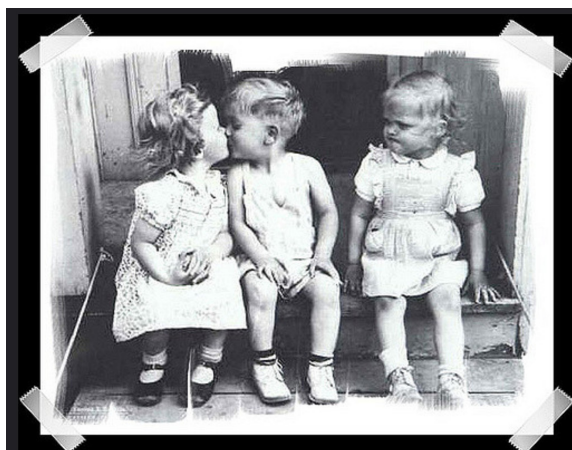
“Greeting you are all the ecclesias of Christ” (Romans 16:16).

I may hold the distinction of knowing and communicating with more members of the body of Christ than any other member of the body of Christ. I think of myself, in this capacity, as a liaison. As a liaison among the body, therefore, I would like to say to you: “Greeting you are all the ecclesias of Christ.”

There are many ecclesias of Christ in the world today, though few occupy them. Some ecclesias (such as the one in Poland) consist of three people. I believe that there are now four in the ecclesia of Norway. We are small in number but great in power. When we greet one another, we are a veritable army. Can you imagine if we ever all got together in the same place at the same time, prior to the snatching away?

A kissing booth vendor would do brisk business.

—MZ



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