

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES
a Christian Church
Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...a worldwide Christian Church based in Mesa, AZ...my name is Pastor Rory Clark.

Welcome to the final lesson for Barah Ministries in the year of our Lord 2014. I am usually on vacation in this week of the year...so this is the missing lesson...the lesson where most Pastors take time to look back at the year. I'm actually not a fan of looking backward, except at The Lord's Supper Celebration. But this year, our Lord has presented the opportunity for us to look back...so look back we will...a look back at our ministry...a look back at ourselves. This time of year is a great time to look back on our own lives, to see if we can notice the challenges that the Lord has brought forth in our lives this year, and how we handled them.

As the apostle Paul closes his second letter to the Corinthians, in Chapter 13, Verse 5, he invites such introspection...

2CO 13:5

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is indwelling you— unless indeed you fail the test?

As Christians we do well to regularly examine ourselves to see what God is doing in our lives as He keeps on perfecting us. If you are like me, what you will see is weakness and repeated failure. All of us live in the delusion that we have some kind of human power. Yet our human power proves itself over and over again to be frail. I often wish I were free of the maladies that I call you to examine...not to lord it over you...but to be a fine example to you...but I claim no power of my own, and as I reflect, I am certainly no example. Christ is our example. Yet as I look at my own life in reflection, I see the power of God doing His work in me. I stand frail, yet His power is strong. In Second Corinthians, Chapter 12, beginning at Verse 7, Paul

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

laments about his own weaknesses and glories in the source of his real power...

2CO 12:7

Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations (in my visit to the third heaven), for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself (to keep me from becoming conceited), there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!

God has given all of us a thorn in the flesh, a constant reminder of our weakness.

2CO 12:8

Concerning this thorn in the flesh I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.

We don't want to be weak...we prefer to be strong and self-sufficient. We are not.

2CO 12:9

And the Lord has said to me (by way of reminder), “My grace is sufficient for you, for divine power is perfected in the presence of human weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I (Paul) will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

In the midst of our human weaknesses...in the midst of human failure...in the midst of our feelings of inadequacy...it is not our power that matters...it is the fact that we can remember to let God's power be our real power.

2CO 12:10

Therefore I am well content with human weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak in the human sense, then I am strong because of divine power working in me.

So as we take a look back today, at this ministry, and at our lives, let us remember the power that is indwelling us...the power of the Risen Christ. Let's examine ourselves...let's ask ourselves, “What kind of person is the

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

Lord making me?” Let’s ask ourselves, “What kind of church is the Lord building here?” Welcome to our year-end lesson.

MUSIC AND REFLECTION

Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ
Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

IN THE BEGINNING

Let’s begin our worship of the Lord with an opening song. Here’s June Murphy to sing...**IN THE BEGINNING.**

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We’re grateful to you, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Thank you for this year...thanks for waking us up every day...thanks for the blessings of tribulation...for the blessings of prosperity...for just the right mixture of both...thank you for your gracious provision of everything we need to thrive...everything we need to be content...everything we need to grow...

We ask that You help us reflect on the year gone by with an accurate perspective...Your perspective...and we ask that You help us to see your power in everything we have experienced...help us to look ahead and to see where all of these experiences You have provided for us are leading us, as You continue your divine good work in us that began in eternity past...

We ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ’s name...
Amen.

TODAY’S STUDY

What Kind of Church is the Lord Building Here?

I’m not sure if you ever ask yourself that question ... “What kind of church is the Lord building here?” ... I certainly do. I know one thing for sure...the

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

Lord is not building the kind of church I want. Barah Ministries is seven years old in a couple of weeks, and I am quite sure this is not the church that I envisioned. It's much different, and much better. "What kind of church is the Lord building here?" The Lord is building the kind of church He wants. And I am quite certain that it is better church than I could EVER imagine.

I started the year with what seemed to be a simple question, as directed by God the Holy Spirit...

Are you limited in your thinking?

If in any area of your life, your thinking is limited, I want you to know that those limited thoughts are not from the Lord.

As I look back on what God the Holy Spirit was asking us in January 2014, at the start of our year, I feel a bit like Robert De Niro in the movie Taxi Driver... "You talking to me?" ... "You talking to me?" God the Holy Spirit was indeed talking to me. He was talking to you, but He was also talking to me. And yes...my thinking was limited. Little did I imagine that our "nomad congregation" days would be over...a nomad is a member of tribe that has no permanent home, but moves about from place to place. In the seven years that we have existed we have had at least seven different homes. Last year at this time we were having our lessons in the Chandler Hilton hotel. And I must admit, it was nice to have a Starbucks right outside the door of our church! Well our nomad days ended in April when we moved into our new, and now quite snazzy residence. At this time last year, did you see us moving into such a nice place? When we moved into it, did you see it coming together as it has? Did you see us having a world-class audio and video set up? I must admit...I didn't see the possibilities...I saw limits. The Lord did not. Nor did the leaders of this congregation.

Personally, I saw limits. How about you? Last year at this time, I didn't imagine that I would marry this year. I didn't imagine that I would have a new family. I didn't imagine that I would have a beautiful and loving Labrador Retriever living in my home. I didn't imagine that my former family would no longer be a part of my life. In fact, all of these things were quite a surprise. As you reflect on your circumstances of a year ago...if you can imagine as you think back...what were you thinking then? Where did you see yourself in a year? What has the Lord done for you in that time that

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

you never saw coming?

If I were to describe the 2014 journey of Barah Ministries in a word, the word I would use is SHAKEN. I never saw that coming. Hebrews, Chapter 12, Verse 27...

HEB 12:27

This expression, “Yet once more,” denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

This Hebrews, Chapter 12 passage, and the twenty-seventh verse from it, indicates the clarity of God’s plan...there are those things that can be shaken and those things that cannot be shaken...there are things that remain forever. One day the earth and the universe in which we are now living will be shaken. Those who have rejected a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in their lifetime will be shaken, and those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ in their lifetime will remain.

Thinking back to this time last year, if you had asked me who would be missing from the empty seats which sit before us right now, I would have never seen the empty seats that are empty coming. God shook Barah Ministries, and those who were not of Barah Ministries fell out. Did you see that coming? I didn’t. My thinking was limited. First Corinthians, Chapter 11, Verses 18 and 19 say...

1CO 11:18

For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.

1CO 11:19

For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.

I can remember well coming into our church for the first lesson last year, knowing full well that there were divisions in the church. I could feel them. I didn’t know where they were exactly, but I did know they were there. I never expected how close to me they were. I didn’t enjoy coming into the tension that existed within the church. A year later, I don’t feel that tension.

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

I feel unity. It's a delight to come here. And if divisions exist now, and they may very well, you are doing a marvelous job of hiding them. You've got me fooled.

I can also say that I never expected to see some of the faces that are sitting here today...the people filling the seats...and this is a year, for me, where I became very aware that I am here for the people who want to be here, and not at all for the people who don't want to be here. I have never had success converting unbelief. Try as I might, I have not been good at coercing free will. I have given up the practice. I remain grateful for unbelief, but my focus is on empowering faith. Although I am still disgusted by unbelief when I see it. Perhaps this is the year when the Lord will engineer that malady out of my character. I see Him working on this in me.

This is the year I became aware that my focus as a Pastor is not to teach the word of God from my own viewpoint. Rather, it is to teach the Word of God from His viewpoint. I have given you the illustration of the Jesus statue in Rio De Janeiro. When we crawl up into the statue and look out at the world through Jesus' eyes, it's a radically different view. Seeing life and the Word of God from God's perspective has made my study easier...it has made my Christian walk easier...it has made my life easier. I hope it has done the same for you. When we can see life, when we can see ourselves, as the Lord sees us, life is so much clearer and so much more fulfilling than it is when we are holding ourselves to standards we could never achieve.

In 2008, Barah Ministries became a Christian Church with an ordained Pastor and an internet presence, and we began to proclaim our faith by preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world.

Barah is a Hebrew word. It means to produce something out of nothing...it means to speak something into being without the assistance of existing material...it is the materialization of a thought of God...it is the Word of God going forth as a command of His desire. We use Barah as a reference to God's creation of the soul...Genesis, Chapter 1, Verse 27...

GEN 1:27

And God created [barah] the soul of mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created [barah] him; male and female He created them.

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

By studying the Word of God, we are allowing the Lord Jesus Christ to make something of the nothingness our human lives would be without Him.

JOH 15:5

“I (the Lord Jesus Christ) am the vine, you (believers in Christ) are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Without Him, we would continue to be nomads, wandering aimlessly. Without Him, when we are shaken we would all shake out. Without Him, we would live life in our own viewpoint, rather than in His viewpoint, and that never has quite the result we intend. Take a five-minute break.

BREAK

*Be Glorified
Over the Rainbow*

Welcome back! “What kind of church is the Lord building here?” He’s building a church with the one who remain...the ones who are approved. The Lord does great things with willing hearts. The Lord honors dedicated service to one church. “What kind of church is the Lord building here?” The Lord is building a church that reflects His viewpoint to the world. The Lord is building a church that is settled, not nomadic. God is building the church that we want. Psalm 37, Verse 4...

PSA 37:4

Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart.

The promises of God are a guarantee.

Barah Ministries is not, nor will it likely be a mega church. That remains to be seen. Barah Ministries is not, nor will it likely be a pop culture church following the latest marketing fad in Christianity. Barah Ministries is not, nor will it likely be a church built on the charismatic personality of the Pastor for obvious reasons.

Barah Ministries will be built on a set of constants, from which we will not deviate...

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

Relationship with Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is God and He is the center of this ministry

The Heart of a Servant

Obedience to the Word of God is our aim

Ministries

We look to serve others through active involvement

A reminder, by the way, that we will visit the vets today at 1:45PM. Please join us if you haven't ever done it. It's amazing and fun.

As we test ourselves, we must ask ourselves the tough questions, both as a church and as individuals...

TEST YOURSELVES TO SEE IF YOU ARE IN THE FAITH

As a church, are we reflecting the character and nature of our God?

Is the truth of the Word of God being spoken from the pulpit?

Is the truth we are hearing feeding us in such a way that we can apply it directly to the tribulations in our lives?

TEST YOURSELVES TO SEE IF YOU ARE IN THE FAITH

Are our leaders exercising leadership?

Do our leaders have a vision?

Are we growing as a church?

TEST YOURSELVES TO SEE IF YOU ARE IN THE FAITH

Are we changing?

Are we evangelizing?

Do we strive for God's excellence in everything we do?

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

TEST YOURSELVES TO SEE IF YOU ARE IN THE FAITH

Does the congregation get along?

Does the congregation give generously?

Does the congregation welcome others with open arms?

Do we love each other unconditionally?

You can ask yourselves these questions as well...

TEST YOURSELVES TO SEE IF YOU ARE IN THE FAITH

As a person, are you reflecting the character and nature of your God?

Is the truth of the Word of God a guiding force in your life?

As you learn the Word of God are you using God's power to conquer the tribulations of your life?

TEST YOURSELVES TO SEE IF YOU ARE IN THE FAITH

Are you exercising personal leadership?

Do you have a vision as a human being?

Are you growing?

TEST YOURSELVES TO SEE IF YOU ARE IN THE FAITH

Are you changing?

Are you evangelizing?

Do you strive for God's excellence in everything you do?

TEST YOURSELVES TO SEE IF YOU ARE IN THE FAITH

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

Do you get along with family members?

Do you do your part as a teammate?

Do you promote unity in every situation you are in?

Do you love unconditionally?

We can certainly close the year with the question that opened the year...

Are you limited in your thinking?

If in any area of your life, your thinking is limited, I want you to know that those limited thoughts are not from the Lord.

“What kind of church is the Lord building here?” Ephesians, Chapter 3, Verse 20...a church beyond our wildest dreams, because of...

EPH 3:20

...Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us...

Ephesians, Chapter 1, Verse 3...a church powered by and blessed by...

EPH 1:3

...the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...

“What kind of church is the Lord building here?” The Lord is building and entity that is a much different entity than the world system we live in daily... an entity that is WAY above the world...unrecognizable to the world...turn to Ephesians, Chapter 4, Verse 11...

EPH 4:11

And the Lord gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers...

EPH 4:12

...for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

the body of Christ...

EPH 4:13

...until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

EPH 4:14

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming...

EPH 4:15

...but speaking the truth in unconditional love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ...

EPH 4:16

...from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in unconditional love.

“What kind of church is the Lord building here?” The Lord is building a church that reflects Him in every way. The Lord is building a church that operates this way...Hebrews, Chapter 10, verse 23 to 25...

HEB 10:23-25

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to unconditional love and to good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

If I had my way, which I don't, I would have you remember how encouraging you can be to someone else...how encouraging a church is for others. Bring your friends here. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to be your Pastor...for putting up with my growing pains...for all the things you do to edify me with your contributions, with your work, and with your friendship. Happy New Year!

ROMANS
Lesson 155–December 28, 2014

The Promises of the Lord Jesus Christ

When God makes a promise...
it's a guarantee!

ACT 16:31

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and everyone in your household who also believes.”

JOH 14:6

Jesus said to doubting Thomas, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through believing in Me.

JOH 3:36

He who believes in the Son has eternal life (the ZOE life); but he who does not obey the (command to believe in the) Son will not see (the Zoe) life, but instead the wrath of God the Father abides on him.”

CLOSING SONG

All Because You Wanted To

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

THANKS - INTERCESSION - PETITION

And we pray that You continue to shape the messages from this pulpit that are an accurate reflection of Your unconditional love, Your glorious Person, Your lucid thinking, Your impeccable work, and Your magnificent essence...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit, in Christ's name, Amen.

Thanks for coming...for watching...for listening!

www.barahministries.com