

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

In The Grip of God's Grace

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

Romans 12:14-21 - "The Manifestation of Love (Pt. 2)"

When we are moved by the mercies of God to present our bodies, and when our minds have been renewed to grasp his will, all our relationships become transformed.

- not only do we offer our bodies to God (vs. 1-2)
- we develop a sober self-image (vs. 3-8)
- and love one another in the church (vs. 9-13)

But now we also love and serve our enemies

Romans 12:14-21, *"Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."*

Paul makes it very clear, in this final paragraph of Romans 12, that in our relationship with our enemies, we are:

1. not to curse (vs. 14)
2. not to repay evil for evil (vs. 17)
3. not to take revenge (vs. 19)
4. not to be overcome by evil (vs. 21)

All four prohibitions say the same thing in different words: retaliation and revenge are absolutely forbidden to the followers of Jesus Christ.

Jesus himself said, *"...Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."* (Luke 6:27-28)

Today we will look at six ways god's love is manifested in our relationship with the world:

1. Love speaks well of its persecutors (vs. 14)

Romans 12:14, *"Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not."*

Notice first, that Christians will be persecuted.

Why?

Because, we don't belong in this world and, we are identified with Christ.

How are we to respond to persecution?

- A. Bless them – the word bless is a compound word made up of two words: 'well' and 'word'. It means to speak a good word. We get our English word 'eulogy' from it.

"When a soldier asked General Robert E. Lee what he thought about a subordinate who had been particularly critical of the general, Lee replied that he thought the man was a good soldier. When asked if he knew what the officer has been saying about him and if that would change his opinion, General Lee replied, "You asked me what I thought of him, not what he thought of me."

- B. Do not curse – it's a command

Illustrations:

Driving

Jesus on the cross – 1 Peter 2:21-23, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:"

- C. Jesus also said to pray for them

He did!

Do you?

2. Love adjusts to other people's moods (vs. 15)

Romans 12:15, *"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."*

True love never stands aloof from other people's joys or pains. It's sympathetic; it sings and suffers with them.

Love enters deeply into their sorrows and success.

Illustrations:

Jesus at the wedding of Cana - John 2:1-11

Jesus at the grave of Lazarus – John 11

When others are honored and blessed do you truly rejoice? (vs. 10)

3. Love does not show partiality (vs. 16)

Romans 12:16, *“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.”*

A. *“Be of the same mind one toward another...”*

Literally, ‘think the same things towards one another’ – so, live in harmony.

I want you to have what, if I were in your position, I would want myself to have.

Jesus said, *“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”* Luke 6:31

B. Live in Humility (vs. 16b) – *“...Be not wise in your own conceits.”*

‘don’t be proud but willing to associate with people of low position, do not be conceited.’

Remember verse 3, *“...not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”*

Proverbs 3:7, *“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.”*

John R.W. Stott – “Few kinds of pride are worse than snobbery. Snobs are obsessed with questions of status, with the stratification of society into ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ (where you live – Jesus was from Nazareth) classes, or its division into distinctions of tribe and caste, and so with the company they keep. They forget that Jesus fraternized freely and naturally with social rejects, and calls his followers to do the same with equal freedom and naturalness. As JB (Phillips) puts it, ‘Never be condescending, but make real friends with the poor.’”

Illustrations:

Jesus

- born in a manger

- subject to his parents
- baptized by John
- touched the lepers
- stopped for blind beggars
- fed hungry people
- friend of harlots and tax collectors
- took time for children
- chose humble fishermen

Zacchaeus came down

The lame man stood up

4. Love lives thoughtfully in society (vs. 17)

Romans 12:17, *"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men."*

JB Phillips – *"see that your public behavior is above criticism."*

It's being thoughtful of your behavior as to how it effects others.

Illustration:

Romans 14:13-21, *"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."*

Will it stumble?

William Barclay – "our conduct should be fair for all to see."

5. Love seeks to live at peace with everyone (vs. 18)

Romans 12:18, *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."*

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone (in the church)

1. Do your part
2. You're not responsible for how people treat you, but you are responsible for how you respond.
3. Not peace at any price – purity before peace

Romans 12:9, "...Abhor (hate) that which is evil;..."

6. Love does not try to get even (vs. 19-21)

Romans 12:19-21, *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."*

A. It's hard – Jesus said, turn the other cheek

Matthew 5:38-42, *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."*

- when you're driving
- in your marriage

B. Leave it for God – put it in His hands!

Vengeance is God's prerogative. He will repay at the right time and in the right way.

R. C. H. Lenski – "God has long ago settled the whole matter about exacting justice from wrongdoers. Not one of them will escape. Perfect justice will be done in every case and will be done perfectly. If any of us interfered, it would be the height of presumption."

C. Christianity goes beyond non-resistance to active benevolence. It does not destroy its enemies by violence but converts them by love. (vs. 20)

Ray Stedman – "One day I read a story about a boy who was in the army. He was a Christian and had formed the habit of praying beside his bed before he went to sleep. He kept up this practice in the army, but he became an object of mockery and ridicule to the entire barracks. One night he knelt to pray after a long, weary march. As he was praying, one of his tormentors took off his muddy boots and threw them at the boy, one at a time, hitting him on each side of his head. Saying nothing about it, the Christian just took the boots and put them beside his bed and continued to pray. But the next morning, when the other man woke up, he found his boots sitting beside his bed, all shined and polished. It so

broke his heart that he came to the boy and asked him for forgiveness. That led, after a time, to the man becoming a Christian.”

D. Romans 12:21a, *“Be not overcome of evil,…”*

George Washington Carver – “I will never let another man ruin my life by making me hate him.”

Illustration – the danger of anger, hatred & inforgiveness

E. Romans 12:21b, *“...but overcome evil with good.”*

How?

1. Remember how God has treated you
2. Remember Jesus, our example
3. Remember to be filled with the Holy Spirit

Luke 6:35, *“...ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”*