

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

In The Grip of God's Grace

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

Romans 13:8-10 - "The Debt of Love"

Romans 13:8-10, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Jesus said in:

John 13:34-35, "*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*"

This commandment of Jesus is:

First: challenging

Second: Promising

In Romans 13:8, Paul comes back to the subject of love he introduced in:

Romans 12:9, "*Let love be without dissimulation (hypocrisy)....*"

Romans 12:20, "*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.*" - Love your enemy

Turning from our relationship to the state, he now speaks about our treatment of the people, or citizens of the state.

How are we to treat other people?

Romans 13:9, "*...Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*"

The mark of the Christian is love.

Three aspects:

I. Love's Debt (vs. 8)

Romans 13:8. *"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."*

Paul has already spoken several times, in Romans, about the believers debts:

- Romans 1:14 – We are in debt to the unbelieving world to share the gospel.
- Romans 8:12 – We are in debt to the Holy Spirit to live a holy life.
- Romans 13:6-7 – We are in debt to the state to pay taxes.

We now come to Romans 13:8 – Let no debt remain outstanding except the continuing debt to love one another.

Romans 13:8. *"Owe no man any thing,..."*

What does it mean?

- It's not – saying you can't borrow money or buy something on time.
- It is saying – if you do borrow, pay it back. It's literally, "Let no debt remain outstanding."

Not just money, it can be something you may have borrowed to use, like a tool.

Christians should pay people what they owe.

Don't go into debt over your head.

Steps to getting out of debt:

1. Recognize it's a spiritual problem

Philippians 4:19, *"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*

2. Stop buying on time
3. Live within your income
4. Sell assets to reduce your current debt.

Even so, there is a debt which you can never pay off – it's your debt of love.

Love is an unpaid debt (vs. 8) *"...but to love one another:..."*

Origen – The debt of love remains with us permanently and never leaves us; this is a debt which we both discharge every day, and forever owe.

We can never say, "I have done all the loving I need too: I quit!"

Love is the great need in the world today:

- no divorce
- no crime
- no war

We need to remember that every person we meet we owe them love.

II. Love's Duty (vs. 9)

Romans 13:9, *"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."*

We see here that love is the fulfillment of the law.

Illustration – Jesus asked what the greatest commandment is:

Matthew 22:36-40, *"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (cf. Deuteronomy 6:4, 5 and Leviticus 19:18)

In Exodus 20 we find that the Law is divided into two divisions (Vertical – towards God & Horizontal – towards mankind)

Paul quotes five prohibitions (in the Authorized Version: KJV) from the second table of the Law to explain how love fulfills the law:

1. Thou shalt not commit adultery (7th Commandment)

The 1631 Edition of the King James Bible was referred to as, 'The Wicked Bible' because it left out the word "not" in this commandment.

- Sex is for the sacredness of marriage
- Sex outside of marriage is sin (Illustration: Joseph)
Adultery, fornication, lust

If you are married, be on guard!

Suggestions for avoiding committing adultery:

- Center your life on Jesus Christ and His word.
- Follow the Bible teaching for your marriage
- Make your spouse a priority
- Meet your mates sexual needs (Read 1 Corinthians 7)
- Avoid relationships that might tempt you.

It's not love, its lust!

2. Thou shalt not kill (6th Commandment)

It's murder, not killing – If love will not harm another person, it surely will not murder them.

3. Thou shalt not steal (8th Commandment)

There are many ways we can steal:

- From an employer when we do not give him or her the best work. which we are capable of.
- We steal if we overextend our coffee breaks or leave work early.
- We steal if we waste the products with which we are working with.
- We steal if we borrow and do not repay.

4. Thou shalt not bear false witness (9th Commandment)

It's in the Authorized Version – but omitted in others because only a few manuscripts include it.

5. Thou shalt not covet (10th Commandment)

Exodus 20:17 – your neighbors house, wife, servants, ox, donky, or anything that is your neighbors.

Its 'an inward craving for more' – money, things, status, people

It leads us to break other commandments.

Illustration: David & Bathsheba

Covetousness destroys us.

Illustration: Achan - ...called also Achar / Meaning: one who troubles.

This man was named in in remembrance of his crime (1 Chr. 2:7), which brought upon him an awful destruction (Josh. 7:1). When Jericho fell, he seized, contrary to the divine command, an ingot of gold, a quantity of silver, and a costly Babylonian garment, which he hid in his tent.

Joshua was convinced that the defeat which the Israelites sustained afterwards at Ai was evidence of God's judgment of some crime. He at once cast lots to discover the criminal. It was then found that Achan was guilty, and he was stoned to death in the valley of Achor. He and all that belonged to him were then consumed by fire, and a heap of stones was raised over the ashes.

<http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/achan.html>

1 Timothy 6:6-10 (Today's N.I.V.), *"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."*

In light of the context here in Romans 13, covetousness makes us unloving and insensitive to the needs of others.

Notice verse 9, *if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

What does this mean?

- its not – a call to love self
- its – a call to love others as self

John R.W. Stott – It is sometimes claimed that the command to love our neighbors as ourselves is implicitly a requirement to love ourselves as well as our neighbours. But this is not so. One can say this with assurance, partly because

Jesus spoke of the first and second commandment, without mentioning a third; partly because agape is selfless love which cannot be turned in on the self; and partly because according to Scripture self-love is the essence of sin. Instead, we are to affirm all of ourselves which stems from the fall. What the second commandment requires is that we love our neighbors as much as we do in fact (sinners as we are) love ourselves. This means that we will love them with a love 'as real and sincere as our sinful self-love, about the reality and sincerity of which there is no shadow of doubt.' If then we truly love our neighbors, we will seek their good, not their harm, and we will thereby fulfill the law, even though we will never completely discharge our debt.

Who is your neighbor?

Illustration: The Good Samaritan

III. Love's Desire (vs. 10)

Romans 13:10, *"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."*

Paul explains how this neighbour love fulfils the law.

The answer – love does no harm to its neighbour.

Love's desire is for the well-being of men and the well-pleasing of God.

John R.W. Stott – Certainly the last five sins forbidden in the Ten Commandments harm people. Murder robs them of their life, adultery of their home and honour, theft of their property, and false witness of their good name, while covetousness robs society of the ideals of simplicity and contentment. All these do harm (kakos, evil) to the neighbour, whereas it is the essence of love to seek and to serve our neighbour's highest good. That is why *love is the fulfillment of the law* (10b).

Love fulfils the law not only out of debt and duty but also out of desire.

Love's desire is seen in some positive ways (not just the "thou shalt not's")

1. By listening to one another
2. By sharing with one another
3. By forgiving one another
4. By serving one another

John 13:35, *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*