

Romans 12:14-21
For the week of February 4, 2024

Reflection

1. What were some of the takeaways, for you, from Sunday's sermon?

2. Were there questions, comments, concerns...?

When we are moved by the mercies of God, 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 (1–2), and develop a sober self-image (3–8), and love one another in the Christian community (9–16), but now also we serve our enemies (17–21). These have already appeared in the guise of our persecutors (14) and are about to reappear as evildoers (17). In fact, the last five verses of Romans 12 handle the question how Christians should respond to evildoers. Good and evil are contrasted throughout the whole context (e.g. 9, 17, 21 and 13:3–4).

The most striking feature of this final paragraph, if we add verse 14 which anticipated it, is that it contains four resounding negative imperatives:

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

All four prohibitions say the same thing in different words. Retaliation and revenge are absolutely forbidden to the followers of Jesus.¹

Observation (vs. 14-15)

3. What is Paul saying in these verses?

Interpretation

4. How do these verses continue the theme of sincere love found in verse 9? (see also Matt 5:44, Luke 6:27-28)

¹ John R. W. Stott, [*The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World*](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 334.

Application

5. Is it easy for you to pray “blessing,” give acts of “blessing,” or show compassion to those who persecute you? Why or why not?

Observation (vs. 16)

6. What is Paul's message to the church in Rome in this verse?

Interpretation

7. Compare this verse with Romans 12:3 and 1 Peter 3:8. What are the comparisons? What is the call upon believers given in this verse?

8. Why does Paul say, “associate with the lowly”?

Application

9. What obstacles keep you from living in harmony/peace with one another? Why?

Observation (vs. 17-19)

10. Put these verses in your own words.

Interpretation

11. Why does Paul state, “so far as it depends on you”?

12. Why are believers not to avenge themselves? (see also Deut 32:35; Prov 20:22; Matt 5:39; rom 14:19)

Application

13. Are these verses easy to apply? Why or why not?

Observation (vs. 20-21)

14. What is Paul conveying in these verses? (see also Prov 25:21-22; Luke 6:27)

Interpretation

15. How do these verses speak to the lifestyle of a believer?

Application

16. Is there someone in your life with whom you are not at peace? What can you do to pursue peace with them?

17. Is there an "enemy" in your life that you have an opportunity to show kindness to? Will you? If yes, how and if no why?