Sermon Highlights

Overcoming Evil with Good: The Practical Life of a Believer in Romans 12

Summary:

Drawing from Romans 12:9-21, this sermon bridges the doctrinal foundations Paul established earlier in Romans with the practical demands of Christian living. Pastor Bruce Gordon emphasizes that sound doctrine must produce transformed behavior. Believers are called to express genuine, non-hypocritical love toward both fellow believers and unbelievers, to abhor evil while clinging tenaciously to what is good, and to maintain humility by refusing to seek personal preeminence. The sermon addresses how Christians are to respond to persecution, tribulation, and personal enemies not through retaliation or harboring wrath, but through forgiveness, blessing, and trust in God's justice. The overarching call is for believers to be Spirit-controlled rather than flesh-driven, overcoming evil not by matching it but by responding with consistent, deliberate goodness.

Key Points:

- Doctrine is foundational, but it must lead to practical, transformed living or it remains incomplete

- Love among believers must be genuine and not performed or forced, rooted in the love God has shown us

- Believers are called to abhor evil in one another's lives while doing so through relationship and compassion rather than criticism

- Humility is a discipline that must be actively cultivated, including resisting the desire for preeminence or preferential treatment

- Christians are to be fervent and spiritually hot, not cold or merely ritualistic in their worship and service

- Hope in the coming heavenly reality enables patience during earthly tribulation

- Believers are to bless those who persecute them, rejecting retaliation and trusting God as the rightful judge

- Forgiveness does not mean excusing wrongdoing or eliminating consequences; it means releasing hatred from the heart and placing judgment in God's hands

- Living peaceably with all people is the goal, while acknowledging that some situations make peace impossible

- The Spirit-filled life enables believers to make decisions for good that they could not make on their own, just as alcohol or drugs alter natural decision-making for harm

- Overcoming evil with good is the final and defining command of the passage

Scripture Reference:

- Romans 12:9-21, with the broader context of Romans 12 as the transition from doctrinal instruction to practical Christian living

Stories:

- Pastor Bruce Gordon described his personal practice of waiting at the end of the food line at church events as a deliberate discipline against pride and self-promotion

- He shared that when he finds himself quick to flash his bright lights at oncoming drivers, he takes it as a personal warning sign that something is spiritually out of order in his heart

- He referenced Erica Kirk's public forgiveness of the man who assassinated her husband as a real-world example of biblical forgiveness that neither excuses wrongdoing nor harbors hatred

- He referenced a humorous story about a preacher asked to say something good at the funeral of a notorious man, who ultimately said the best thing he could offer was that the deceased was not as bad as his brother

- He alluded to the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Corinthians reminding believers that they themselves were once living in the sins they now judge in others, summarizing the passage's point rather than quoting it directly