

Romans: Unashamed; the righteous shall live by faith

Romans 12:9–21 prt 35

MPS: Real love drops the mask

PRAYER TIME:

Psalm 28:6–7 (ESV) *6 Blessed be the LORD! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. 7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.*

Blessed be the Lord

What areas can you bless or praise the Lord – let's do that now

Lord I bless you for _____

The Lord is your strength and shield.

I need your help in _____

INTRO

Review:

- **Romans 12:1-2 is the foundation for the rest of the epistle**
- Romans 12:9-21 is not a picture of a privatized Christian life. It is life lived in community.
- We tend to read the Bible through individual lenses
- Partnership Experience coming up....it starts next Sunday!

OPEN

I saw a sign in Ephesus that read: "Genuine fake watches"

- Genuine *and* fake? That's impossible! A watch is either authentic, crafted with care and precision, or it's a knockoff, a cheap imitation pretending to be something it's not.
- In Romans 12:9, Paul cuts through the pretense with a powerful command: 'Let love be genuine.'
- Just like those watches in Ephesus couldn't be both genuine and fake, our love can't be a performance. It's either the real deal—rooted in God's truth and selflessness—or it's a hollow imitation, driven by selfish motives or a desire to look good.

Vs 9a *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.*

- "let love be genuine" is not just part of the list of Christian practices - Paul drops the canvas for what the rest of the chapter is painted on.
- Love is to be genuine not fake – it means without hypocrisy

- *Anypokritos* - The GK root word is the word for hypocrisy and it comes from ancient GK theater - It means to put on a mask.

Real love drops the mask

- Self- interest love vs agape love
- Love is hard, it is work and it is impossible without the renewing of your mind – it is impossible if you’ve not experienced the love of God. Without the love of God renewing your mind, everything you do is out of self-love and not true love.
- God is love (1Jn 4)
- God showed love (Rom 5)
- Therefore, to love is to sacrificially give for the benefit of another without expecting anything in return

Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

- Abhor = hate, disdain, be disgusted with –
- Cling = to me married, inseparable
- If Evil exists that means there must be a standard of good – like darkness doesn’t exist on its own, it’s the absence of light. If love is the canvas for all these Christian practices to be painted on, then evil is the black backdrop for the goodness of God to be contrasted with

9b *Outdo one another in showing honor.*

- If you are competitive – compete in showing honor
- The opposite is to shame – both to a person’s face and to their back

10 *Love one another with brotherly affection.*

- Now brotherly love really, in English at least, is a very vague and sentimental idea
- *Storge* exists between people who, if they had not found themselves in the same household or community, would have had nothing to do with each other
- He says *storge* exists between people who, if they had not found themselves in the same household or community, would have had nothing to do with each other.
- ‘Though she is not my sort of person, yet she’s really very good in her own way,’ you’ve crossed a frontier. It means you’re getting beyond your own idiosyncrasies.”
- He says *storge* is a deep sense of connection and bondedness that is there with people who are just given to you. People you wouldn’t have chosen and you don’t choose, yet you sense that connection

- “We’ve stopped selecting and we’ve stopped auditioning people like we do in every other area in life. We’ve stopped auditioning people. You don’t choose your brothers; you don’t choose your sisters. Thank God that because we’re all God’s children and we’re on the journey together.” Martin Lloyd Jones.

11 *Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.*

- Reject passivity (accept responsibility, lead courageously, invest eternally RALI)
- Serve the Lord by serving others

12a *Rejoice in hope,*

- He is our glorious hope who is coming back

12b *be patient in tribulation,*

- Assumes there will be tribulation – the word means pressure outside of normal life

12c *be constant in prayer.*

- This means “be constant in prayer”
- Think of the woman and the unjust judge
- It’s a posture of dependency

13 *Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.*

- Be generous, help others

Galatians 6:10 (ESV) **10** *So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

- When God opens our hearts we open our homes (Lydia)

14 *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.*

- He turns to the outsiders here – it shows others the gospel and the eternity that comes from trusting the truth of this gospel.

15 *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*

- It might be harder to rejoice with others than weep with them
- Showing up is most of the job, right? You do not need a great speech. Just be present with the hurting.

16a *Live in harmony with one another.*

Philippians 2:2 (ESV) **2** *complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.*

- Harmony is not uniformity – harmony is unity. Just like a quartet, there are different parts but when they come together its beautiful

16b *Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.*

- None of us are any better than anyone else.

16c *Never be wise in your own sight.*

- This goes back to dependency on the Lord over leaning on yourself

Prov 3:5-6

17 *Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.*

18 *If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*

- Do your part to live peaceable with all
- There are boundaries – especially if you are a leader, parent, husband, etc – so far as it depends on you...

19 *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*

- Every movie has this villain that needs the hero to take vengeance
- Jesus is the hero – not us.
- Everyone will be judged either via the cross or via the last day
- It's how Erika Kirk was able to confess she forgives her husband's murderer
- An important principle to keep in mind here is that if you do not believe in *the wrath of God*, you can never do this! You will always want to take vengeance into your own hands.

20 *To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."*

Paul is quoting Proverbs 25:21-22 here.

21 *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

This is great, preacher, but I'm too fearful to love because it may hurt too much.

"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell." CS Lewis

Conclusion

How do I love? Let the truth and message of the gospel, embodied in Christ, remind you who you are.

- Jesus loved us with a genuine love, with words and actions, not with religious pretense.
- Jesus hates what is evil, loves what's good, and died for evil people to make them good.
- Jesus loved the brothers and sisters with brotherly affection, as revealed in the Gospels.
- Jesus was dishonored that we may be honored.
- Jesus was a man of zeal. He took up the psalm, "Zeal for [God's] house will consume me" (John 2:17).
- Jesus rejoiced in hope, endured tribulation, and was constant in prayer.
- Jesus was generous; he became poor that we might be rich in him (2 Cor 8:9).
- Jesus has shown us hospitality; the friend of sinners dines with us and welcomes us.
- Jesus loved his enemies; he did not have a sword in his hand but nails in his hands, as he said, "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).
- Jesus rejoiced with those who rejoiced (Luke 10:17–24), and he wept with those who wept (John 11:35).
- Jesus unites people in harmony from every tribe and tongue (Rev 5:9).
- Jesus associates with the lowly. He even took a repentant thief to paradise with him (Luke 23:43)! And he has associated with us.
- Jesus was wise when He said and did only what the Father told him
- Jesus didn't give us what we deserve, repaying us for our evil, but instead took on Himself what we deserve
- Jesus lived peaceably with sinners, and to everyone except the religious crowd
- Jesus could have called a legion of angels to save him from the hands of sinners, yet he remained as a sacrifice for all who trust him and uttered the words, father forgive them they don't know what they are doing.
- We are born at enmity with God, yet Jesus, the bread of life, feeds us and as living water quenches our eternal thirst – it is Him who ultimately satisfies.
- Jesus overcame evil and death and hell by taking his goodness to the cross where he defeated the enemy, kicking in his teeth and disarming all his power.
- At the cross Christ loved his enemies. He has made us, former enemies, his friends

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. C.S. Lewis said loving others means risking hurt, but not loving makes our hearts hard. What's one way fear stops you from loving others fully (like blessing someone who's mean to you, Romans 12:14)? What step from Romans 12:9–21 (like helping others or being kind) can you try this week to love bravely?
2. Jesus showed real love by dropping all masks—loving even His enemies (Romans 12:20). Where do you find it hard to love like Jesus? How can remembering God's love for you (1 John 4:8) help you love others more sincerely?