

“LOVE”

Romans 12:9-21

REV. D. LARGENT

- High school – Could identify Christians because they carried bibles.
- **John 13:35** ³⁵ *By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*”
- Is that what people in Atkinson and Geneseo think of Us?
- My prayer is that our love for each other would be so real and pronounced that our faith would be identified by it.
- At SonRise I want us to out love others. Love you. Love you more!
- Last week we learned to be transformed by the renewing of our mind.
- This new mind is in stark contrast to the world’s thinking and we see it here in Romans 12:9-21.

Romans 12:9-21 ⁹ *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.* ¹⁰ *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.* ¹¹ *Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.* ¹² *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.* ¹³ *Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

- This first section- How we as Christians should love each other.
- ⁹ *Love must be sincere.* Roman merchants selling jars, would fill cracks with wax to fool buyers. Buyers started figuring this out. Honest merchants would stamp “Sincerus” “without wax” on their wares. Don’t try to deceive people into thinking you love them when you don’t.

- If honest, I don’t always feel like doing the loving thing, but will still do it. Is this insincere? Saying you love and not acting that way would be insincere.

Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. This is talking about people. The things people do are evil, but the person is good (God created the person) **God hates evil but loves people and so should we.**

- Hate the evil in a person but don’t hate the person because of the evil.
- Insincere love sees and hates evil and then rejects that which is good, the person. I don’t like what you do, so I hate you. This is all over in the church too. It is insincere love when you reject a person because of evil.
- BUT- It is also insincere or hypocritical to condone sin in loving someone.

¹⁰ *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.*

- Why do I love you? Cuz’ you’re nice? Cuz’ you’re good looking? Cuz’ you’re an above average dancer? NO. I love you because you are my brother.

Honor one another above yourselves. – Promote your brothers and sisters above yourself. Don’t look for credit. Talk up your church family members.

¹¹ *Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.* Love stays zealous, spiritually hot even when things go wrong. How do you keep your fervor up? Remember, the battle is the Lord’s.

¹² *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

- Joyful in hope. Sometimes, I don’t have a lot to be joyful for I and I don’t see anything to be hopeful about. How do I do this?
- The answer is in the next two. *patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*
- I’m faithful in prayer, so I don’t fall apart and run when affliction or trouble comes. Instead, I’m waiting for God in joyful hope for whatever it is He is planning to do with this trial or affliction knowing it is good.
- The world faces affliction or resistance and says, “If you can’t beat em’ join em’” **The world gives up. God’s people stand patiently with joyful hope.**

¹³ *Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

- The worldly way is “Look out for #1 and try not to step in #2”. Christian love looks out for his brothers and sister.
- “Hospitality” – Greek word means literally, “love for strangers”.
- “Practice” here means to pursue people with hospitality. Have people over to your house. Doesn’t have to be a meal. Cake, Coffee.
- Now there is a shift to how to love people outside of the church but verse 14 could be both inside and outside.

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

- Jesus said in Matthew 5:46 *“For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?”*
- I’m gonna mess up your day here. What is “Bless” Is “Bless” is speaking bad about someone blessing them?
- This is hard to do. **If someone is badmouthing you, undermining you, talking behind your back, causing you trouble, being negative toward you, don’t speak bad about them. Bless them.**
- So now. How do you love people outside of the church. Here’s how.

¹⁵ *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*

- When someone is hurting, the loving thing to do is hurt with them. I hurt because you hurt.
- But the harder might be to rejoice with those who rejoice. **Insincere love wishes others don’t succeed** so they look better or envy the others success.

¹⁶ *Live in harmony with one another.* So, the goal is harmony with each other. In your neighborhood, you want harmony with the neighbors. At work, in your family. What’s the causes disharmony? 1 is Pride.

Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Ever see someone and say, “I don’t even want to associate with that person. I’m a little higher on the them. I don’t like them because I take care of my yard and they live like Sanford and Son over there. I’m better than them. That’s called pride. It’s called being conceited. It’s not loving.

¹⁷ *Do not repay anyone evil for evil.*

- Ray Stedman tells the story of some officers renting a house during the Korean war and hiring a Korean houseboy to work for them.
- Played tricks. Nailed shoes to the floor, rigged water to fall on his head when entering a room. Felt ashamed because he didn't retaliate and sat him down. "We will never do again" "You not nail shoes to floor? You no more water over door." Me not more spit in soup!"

Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. Obviously, I can't do what is right in everyone's eyes, because some people believe what is wrong is actually right and vice versa. But if I can, want to do right by you.

¹⁸ *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* Sometimes it won't be possible because sometimes it doesn't depend on you.

- I love you by trying to be at peace with you. It also provides opportunity to share Jesus. People listen more to friends than to enemies.

¹⁹ *Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*

- Why shouldn't I take revenge? Paul explains it by quoting Deut. 32:35 *"It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*

- It says to leave room for God's wrath. Repaying people for their evil is God's job and only He knows what the right repayment amount for that person's evil should be.

- If you try to avenge, you will do a couple of things:

- Do it incorrectly or disproportionately.
- Move you and the other person further from ¹⁶ *Live in harmony with one another.* and ¹⁸ *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

- Well if I can't punch you back or badmouth you back am I supposed to just sit here like a bump on a log. Nope. Verse 20

²⁰ *On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.*

- I believe the church would be way more effective and impactful if this is how we dealt with those opposed to us. Watch what happens. *In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."*
- In this time- no matches. If I needed fire I'd bring a jar to my neighbor and ask them for some burning coals. A good neighbor would fill jar with coals and you would carry that jar with a bit of padding home on his head.
- Became a metaphor for responding so generously that your neighbor felt ashamed for his bad attitude toward you.
- Evil can't defeat the Christian by doing harm or even killing him. It can only defeat you by getting to you do evil yourself. So, Paul concludes.

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