

Romans 12:10~16

Here Paul is writing to give instruction as to how we (the church) are to live in this world... Which is extremely important, because the way we live plays a major part reaching this world for Christ. All the instruction that Paul gives here comes out of the statement he made in the latter part of verse 2...

²*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, **that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.***

We the Church (*God's children*) are to live in this dark, sinful world, in a way that would set the example of how God would have every man to live. By "*presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to God,*" to walk in His Will and ways, we show the rest of the world of what God requires *of every man*.

In Matthew 5, Jesus described God's people as the *salt of the earth*, and the *light of the world*. Both of which refer to INFLUENCE. Our lives are to be a "*influence of godliness*" in the midst of an "*ungodly world*." In Christ day, since there was no refrigeration, salt was used as a preservative, to keep food from spoiling. Light needs little explanation, it simply illuminates the dark.

The world needs *salt* because it is *corrupt*...and it needs *light* because it is *dark*.

He makes this *assertion*, based on the people he just described in... (Mt. 5:3~12)

Here, Jesus points to the children of God, the humble, the meek, the peacemakers, the merciful, the pure in heart, etc, and declares the influence and the importance of that influence in this world. He declares that *just the presence* of God's children *greatly influences* the condition of this world.

I don't think any of us would argue of the degrading spiritual condition of our day, but can you imagine how bad it would be, if there were no presence of the church? It's hard for me to imagine some of the things going on today, but can you imagine the "*ungodliness*" that would develop if there were no presence of the church?

(Vs 13) Notice what Jesus says there...¹³*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

If the "*Salt*" loses its effectiveness, what good is it? NOTHING... It serves no purpose, and men will simply cast it aside. Which, beloved, I'm very concerned is exactly what is happening! The Church today has become so much like the world, that it has lost much of its influence. If the world is becoming more and more corrupt...we need to understand, the problem is not with the world. The problem is, it needs more salt, and the world can't salt itself. If the world is getting darker, the problem is not with the darkness, but with the light. Henry Balckaby said, the problem is not with the darkness, it is only acting like its nature, the problem is with the light. I'm convinced that as a result of the church becoming more and more like the world, it has lost much of its influence.

Here in Romans 12, beginning in verse 9, Paul gives instruction as how to be *salt and light*... He does so by declaring that the church is *to be a shining example* of Love...

⁹*Let love be without dissimulation...* "**Dissimulation**" is another word for *hypocrisy*. Paul says we are to walk in this world, in a spirit of genuine, sincere Love. This world should be able to know what *real love* is, by looking to the church. God forbid we be characterized by "*hypocrisy*."

Following that statement, Paul gives several brief descriptions of ways that we manifest *love without hypocrisy*. The first we covered last week, that of "*abhorring that which is evil, and cleaving to that which is good*."

In the midst of this dark, sinful world, the church is to be a shining example of *truth* and *righteousness*. **Abhor** and **Cleave** are totally opposite words...just as are *evil* and *good*. It is our love for good, our love for truth and righteousness that makes us stand out from the world. God forbid that the church of GOD be associated with evil! Found loving and supporting what God deems evil, what God considers wrong.

God's people should be characterized by a deep LOVE of TRUTH & RIGHTEOUSNESS, along with a *deep hatred of what is evil and wrong*...

That alone would set us apart a great distance from this world... Tragically, many churches today are "conforming this world" by permitting and accommodating what God clearly declares to be sinful and wrong. Beloved, if we were going to save this world, we've got to be different! Jesus described the church as being the total opposite of the world, as being "light" in the midst of "darkness!" Just as "Good & Right" are the opposites of "Evil & Wrong," so should be the church and the world. What communion does light have with darkness? What do they have in common?

May God help us...it's becoming more and more difficult to tell the two apart!

(Vs 10) Next Paul says, our lives are to manifest "*Genuine, sincere love*" for one another.
¹⁰Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;

This refers to the *spiritual affection* we express towards each other, *the attitude* we express to each other, while in verse 15, he speaks to the *physical expression* of our love. We are to be "*Kindly affectionate*" towards one another, which means we are to love each other very "*tenderly*." Combined with "*brotherly love*," it means we are to "*Cherish*" one another as we would our own family members. We are to love each other as "*Brothers & Sisters*." This world should look on us and see the love of a family, whose father is God.

Paul adds, that we are to do so... "*in honor preferring one another*." Which is a beautiful description of the love Paul is speaking of. It describes *the attitude of wanting the best for the other*. It's the attitude of giving *the place of preeminence* to another, rather than claiming it for our self. It is the pure expression of what genuine love is, by the absence of "*self*." In a world that lives for self, a world that seeks to serve and please self, this kind of love (*which is opposite the world*) will stand out and shine brightly.

(Vs 11~12) Next, our lives are to manifest a "*Genuine, sincere love*" for the Lord...
¹¹Not slothful in business; **fervent** in spirit; serving the Lord; ¹²Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

The word **fervent** carries the meaning of "**hot**." Which in this context refers to having a *very eager spirit*, in that we are ready and willing to do anything we can for the Lord. The word "*business*" literally translates *diligence*. Rather than be lazy or complacent in service to the Lord, we are to express a "*passionate zeal and love*" for our Lord...

Another way to put it might be, *rather than manifesting a Half-heartedness*, we are to love the Lord our God "*With ALL our heart!*" We need to remember that everything we do, we have God's glory is "*at stake*."

(Matthew 5) ¹⁶*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

(1Corinthians 10) ³¹*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

(Vs 13) Next, our lives are to manifest “*Genuine, sincere love*” by meeting needs of others.
¹³*Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*

We are to express genuine sincere love, by genuinely meeting needs. Real people have real needs, and *real love* meets those needs. James says, that if we see a sister or brother be naked and without food, and only pray for them, what good is that? “*Be ye warm and filled...*” We often say, “*I’ll pray for you...you know that God will take care of us...*” Listen, they don’t NEED scripture at this point, right now they need some clothes and some food! And according to God’s word, God says that whoever sees the need, needs to try and minister to that need. We are to live our lives in the recognition that we are but stewards of everything that God has given us, that all of it belongs to Him! And unlike this world, who hoards up stuff for themselves, while all these people walk by with nothing, we are to be characterized as those who help the needy.

It is by “*Meeting Needs*” that we truly express the Love of God...

1John 3... Love not in word...¹⁴*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death.* ¹⁵*Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.* ¹⁶*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* ¹⁷*But whoso hath this world’s good, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?* ¹⁸*My little children, let us **not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*** ¹⁹*And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.*

We are to manifest a genuine, sincere love by meeting the needs of each other, food, clothing, lodging... Love is one expression that uses no words, yet the message is clearly heard.

(Vs 14~15) ¹⁴*Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.* ¹⁵*Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*

Respond with love to those who treat you wrong... “*Bless and curse not*” seems to insinuate that he is referring to being badly talked about. The point seems to be that even though others use their mouths to curse, ours are to be used of blessing. ¹⁵*Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.* Show love and compassion to men...

(Vs 16) Next, our lives are to manifest a “*Genuine, sincere love*” by not showing partiality.
¹⁶*Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*

We are to “*be of the same mind,*” we are to “*think the same of each other.*” We are not to be “*conceited.*” Thinking of others in terms of being “*better or less*” than others. We are to think in terms of *equality*, not showing *partiality*. The “*Poor*” should feel just as welcome and loved as the “*Rich.*” We’re not to “*be like the world,*” and treat others differently based on the social status. Genuine, sincere love does not discriminate by the clothes a man wears or the money he has...

(Vs 17~21) Paul declares that our lives manifest a “*Genuine, sincere love*” by not seeking vengeance on our enemies. Which we will talk about next time, Lord willing...

Beloved, we must not only hear what Paul is saying... we must put them into action if we are ever going to reach this corrupt and dark world for the Lord. We the church are the only hope they have, if we do not show them the Love of God, that same Love that was manifested on the cross, that love that changed our lives and saved us from death... if they don’t SEE it, they will Die in their sin... We must never forget, this world does not believe in Christ, they do not live by “*faith,*” they live by “*Sight.*” May God help us to live in a way that will impact this world for Christ...