

Romans 12 (17~21)

Paul has been speaking to the church, concerning some specific ways we are to live our lives that as a result, bring *honor and glory* to God. The kind of things that describe what it means to be light in the midst of this dark world. I can't imagine a greater degree of difference than that which is described by these two terms...*light & dark*. Light is the absence of dark, and dark is the absence of light. The two are complete opposites, they have nothing in common. The same is true with believers and non-believers. We who follow Christ have nothing in common with the unbelievers of this world.

- We serve God...they serve self...
- We walk by faith...they walk by sight...(here and now)
- We love righteousness...they love unrighteousness...
- We abhor sin...they cleave to sin...

Speaking of relationships, Paul asked, *what communion does light have with darkness?* Nothing...

We the church, ought to be justified by the fact we do not live like this world...

While this world ought to recognize its condemnation by not living like the church...

Here in this section, Paul has been giving instruction to the church, in practical ways that sets us apart from this world, causing us to shine as lights in a dark world. Here he gives an instruction that greatly sets us apart from this world, by the way we respond to our enemies. According to Christ, loving our enemies is one of the characteristics that define us as His children.

(Mt. 5) ⁴³*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shall love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. ⁴⁴But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; ⁴⁵**That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven**: for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if ye love them, which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? ⁴⁷And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? ⁴⁸Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect.*

Loving our enemy separates us from the rest of this world... Jesus points out, that even the ungodly and wicked love those who love them. The world loves its own! To simply love those who love us, to simply love our own, is to manifest the same love that the world manifest! If we are to show the world Christ, we must love our enemies! By loving our enemies, we manifest the love of God! He shows His love to the just and the unjust, the good and the evil.

Here in Romans, Paul continues in that same principle...

(Vs 17~18) ¹⁷*Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.*

We've all heard the expression, "Two wrongs don't make a right." An expression that contains a lot of truth. To return wrong for wrong is never right! It might make you feel better at the time, but still yet, it doesn't make it right. Paul says, when men do you wrong, do not seek to "Pay them back." Do not render evil for evil, but rather always "do what is right" regardless of what men do to you.

Paul tells us, that we are to do *everything we can*, to live in peace with all men. Now we can't control what others do, but we do have the power over our own lives. And that's Paul's call, is that we do everything "within our power" to live in peace with all men.

(Vs 19) ¹⁹*Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.***

Paul reveals a very important truth we need to fully grasp here. He says, do not seek revenge, avenge not yourselves... In other words, don't *take matters into your own hands*, but rather, he says, "Give place" to wrath.

"...give **place** unto wrath..."

The reason its wrong to (**repay**) evil for evil is the fact that it is not our place!



That's God's place! ...*but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

Vengeance is not ours to give, it belongs to God...By seeking vengeance on our enemies, we have stepped outside our bounds. It is not our place *to pay back wrongdoers, to issue justice to those who do wrong...that's God's place.*



Bottom line is... It's not Right to treat others Wrong... (No matter what) Ours is the responsibility to do good to others, even those who do us wrong. Wrong is wrong whatever the reason! If we return wrong to someone because they wronged us...we still are in the wrong.

(Vs 20) ²⁰*Therefore*... Knowing what the scripture says, "Vengeance belongs to the Lord," knowing that it is God's place to deal with wrongdoers, we need to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. We must get vengeance out of our mind, and replace it with returning good for evil.

When our enemies "do us wrong..." we are to respond by doing "Good."
...if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink:

When you really think about how God wants us to respond to our enemies, its almost unbelievable... Actually doing that is hard to comprehend...but that's just the point. This world does not respond to its enemies by returning good for evil. This world returns evil for evil, and that's why it's so dark. As followers of Christ, we are to respond *totally opposite* than this world, by rendering *good* for evil. It's not "our place" to pay back others for what they do to us, that's God's place. Our place is to show love to our enemies regardless how they treat us. By doing so...as a result of rendering good for evil, we conqueror the evildoer.

(Vs 20b) *...for in so doing thou shall heap coals of fire on his head*...Paul is referring to an old ancient Egyptian custom, where a person who wanted to show public contrition, carried a pan of burning coals upon their head. The coals represented the burning pain of his shame and guilt. Paul says, that by showing "Love to our enemies," by rendering good for evil, it brings shame and reproach upon them.

In essence...Paul tells us to "Love the fire out of them..."

The point of all this is, we are to live Godly in this world, we must do so by showing mercy and grace to our enemies... Because that is exactly what God has done towards us in Christ! We were the enemies of God; it was while we were yet sinners, in the midst of evil, that Christ died for us. The Love of God manifested towards us on the cross, is what led to our lives being changed. It was His goodness towards me that changed my life...

(Titus 3:1~8) ¹Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, ²To **speaking evil of no man**, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. ³For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts

and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. ⁴But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; ⁶Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; ⁷That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ⁸*This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

Here Paul reminds us that it was through the “*kindness and love of God*” that we were saved! We weren’t saved because we were such good people, we were just as evil and wicked as all the rest of the world. But through the kindness and love of God seen in the cross, Jesus has changed our lives...

Here Paul declares that we are to follow that same pattern, that if we are to “*win this world*” it will be through showing kindness and grace to our enemies, those who do us wrong.

It may take a “Crucified Church” to bring a “Crucified Christ” before the eyes of this world.

Paul closes out with a caution or warning, however you want to see it.

(Vs 21) ²¹*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Being done wrong by someone, and then turn around and respond in love is very difficult to do. The natural response is to return evil for evil. Knowing this, Paul exhorts us not to allow the “*flesh*” to rise up and *reign* within us, by retaliating. To do so, makes us no different than them. We must deny the lust of the flesh, and walk in the spirit, the spirit of love.

Beloved, we will never convince this world of its sin, of its evil, if we too do what is evil. By responding in evil for evil, we simply manifest *their same evil ways*. And as a result, they become *just in their ways*, because *we do the same thing!* It is for that reason we must return good for evil, so that they who walk in darkness, those who walk in error, might see the wickedness of their ways.

Light conquers Darkness... There is no way that *Darkness* can stand in the presence of *Light*...

Truth conquers Lies... There is no way that *Lies* can stand in the presence of *Truth*...

Good conquers Evil... There is no way *Evil* can stand in the presence of *Good*...

It is by the love of God, manifested on the cross, that conquers the evil ways of man... The love that God showed toward me, while I was yet his enemy, has changed my life. The goodness of God towards me, heaped coals of fire on my head, His love brought shame and reproach upon me, I became remorseful for my ways, and cried out to God to forgive me. I am a prime example of this truth in this passage... Evil is truly overcome with Good...for I was conquered by God’s love. My wickedness was not match for His love.