

Series: Romans
Title: Bless Our Enemies
Text: Rom 12: 14-21
Date: November 17, 2019
Place: SGBJ, NJ

Romans 12: 1: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*

The whole burnt offerings were thank offerings wholly devoted to the Lord—God teaches us to wholly devote ourselves to the Lord as a living sacrifice. And considering what God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ has done for us this is “*reasonable service.*”

Romans 12: 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.*

Verses 3-13 is God’s will for us toward our fellow brethren. Verses 14-21 is God’s will for us toward our enemies, who hate our Redeemer and our gospel.

Romans 12: 14: Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not [Bless Your Enemies]. 15: Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 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. 17: Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18: If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 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. 20: Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21: Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

When I preach from a text like this I want to do three things:

One, I want you to know that doing these things is not how we are made righteous and holy. No sinner can make himself righteous or holy. These things are written for those to whom God has given a new heart. To have a heart to do these things is *the fruit* of Christ *already* making us righteous and holy.

Two, I want you to know that Christ is our perfection in these things. Christ did these things to his enemies in perfect righteousness on behalf of his people. Christ took all the sins of his people, for our not doing these things to our enemies, and paid our debt in full. So before God in Christ every believer has done these things in perfect righteousness without sin from a perfectly holy heart. Christ is our Righteousness and Holiness in these things

Three, I want you to know that as the children of God who God has given a new heart, who walk by faith in Christ, our motive/constraint is Christ’s love for us. We should endeavor to do these things out of love to Christ, not from legal motives. *Not to earn a righteousness but because* Christ has earned a righteousness for us and is our righteousness. Not to be made holy but because Christ has made us holy and is our holiness. Not to simply impress people with how we treat our enemies but because this is how Christ treated us when we were his enemies.

You and I have already broken all these precepts. And we will fail many times in the future. But if we are born of God it will be our hearts desire to walk in these commands of our Redeemer.

Proposition: Our constraint to treat our enemies with kindness is remembering how Christ treated us when we were his enemies.

WE PERSECUTED, CHRIST BLESSED

Romans 12: 14: Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

In our sinful flesh, we were the enemies of Christ. Everyone our Lord Jesus encountered on this earth persecuted him—harassed, troubled, mistreated him. Holy God took flesh dwelt among God-hating sinners where there is none righteous and none that seeketh after God. Every spiritually dead sinner he encountered hated him and he knew their hearts. You and I don’t know men’s hearts. We encounter some during the day who we think like us. But Christ knew the hearts of all men. He knew the hatred toward him in every heart he encountered.

Now, remember, Christ only came into this world to save God’s elect. No one else. He came to save “as many as the Father gave to him.” He said, “I lay down my life for the sheep.” Christ died for God’s elect and for them alone. He knew those that were his and those that were not.

Yet, carnal man was never treated as by any other man as by our righteous GodMan, Mediator. Christ never did anything but good to his enemies. No enemy ever had cause to persecute Christ. In verse 15, our text says, “*Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*” Christ blessed and persecuted not, he rejoiced with them that rejoiced (wedding in Cana), he wept with them that wept (Lazarus tomb).

Think how you and I persecuted those Christ sent to us. Not a one of us received the gospel at first. In our hearts, if not in our words and actions, we pushed away those who preached to us. Doing so we persecuted Christ. Christ said for as much as you have done it to one of his people we have done it unto him. But Christ would not take no for an answer from us. He blessed us though we persecuted him and his brethren and through his gospel he saved us.

As the church of our Lord Jesus, he has left us in this earth to preach the gospel in search of his lost sheep. Our glorified Redeemer shall call out each and every lost sheep that he redeemed—justice demands it. And he shall only call out those he redeemed. But we do not know who they are.

Therefore, our enemies should be left thinking, that we treated them better than any man ever treated *them* “*Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.*” We never know, a stranger may come in this place next week and in time we may find out he is God’s elect. That co-worker or fellow student that is an enemy now, may end up coming to hear the gospel and proved to be God’s elect.

In several churches, I have seen this. There were believers who had co-workers who hated the gospel. But those believers kept being kind and kept giving them the gospel of Christ, they kept coming to hear the gospel preached. Now, those co-workers who were once enemies are sitting by their side rejoicing in the gospel of Christ through faith.

NO RESPECT OF PERSONS

Romans 12: 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.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ was of the same mind toward every sinner. Christ was not impressed by “*high things, but condescended to men of low estate.*”

Brethren, aren’t we thankful Christ condescended to men of low estate! We were of the lowest estate: no righteousness, only the curse of the law; no holiness, only a carnal, God-hating heart; without hope, without Christ, without God in this world.

Yet, the mighty God condescended to be made a man like us, his lowly brethren. He condescended to take the body of flesh prepared for him in the womb of a virgin. He condescended to take the form of a servant to serve God for his people because we couldn’t. He condescended even lower when he bore the sins of his lowly elect. He condescended lower when he bore the fierce wrath of God in our place. He condescended lower when he died and was buried in a tomb.

Now, from his throne in glory—with all power over heaven and earth—he continues to condescend to our low estate as he uses the unimpressive and crosses our path with the gospel and regenerates us to life and faith in him.

1 Corinthians 1: 26: For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: 27: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28: And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30: But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Knowing our low estate, knowing how Christ condescended to us, as sinners saved by grace we should be the last people on earth to mind high things—to be impressed by the outward. Let us condescend to men of low estate. Let us “*Be not wise in our own [conceited estimation of ourselves.]*”

James 2: 1: My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. 2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 4: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? 5: Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

NOT EVIL FOR EVIL, GRACE FOR GRACE

Romans 12: 17: *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18: If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 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. 20: Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21: Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

In our flesh, we are the evil before holy God. Speaking to believers, Christ said, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children” (Lu 11: 13). We did nothing but evil to God all our days of rebellion. As born-again believers we still do evil toward our God. But has the God of all grace ever recompensed evil for evil to his sinful elect? Never! Even in the things that were painful and caused us to sorrow it was for our good.

Romans 8: 28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Rather than recompense evil, did God provide things honest for us? He sent his only begotten Son who is Honesty and Truth. When Christ walked this earth, when we did evil, charging him falsely and hanging him on the cursed tree—“he opened not his mouth.”

1 Peter 2: 22: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: 24: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto Righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 25: For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Christ said *I restored that I took not away!* We did evil toward God, he made mercy and justice meet in harmony for us; we did evil toward Christ, he recompensed grace; we sinned, God recompensed righteousness to us.

Do you realize, believer, that on the cross, God has already taken vengeance on us, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” Christ said through Isaiah that he came, “To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn” (Is 61:2). How would declaring the day of vengeance comfort mourning sinners? It is because on the cross, God took vengeance on his elect for all our sins against him by pouring out justice on Christ. There is coming a day when God shall take vengeance on all who meet him outside of Christ. But for those Christ represented, when he was made sin for us, God took vengeance on us in Christ.

Therefore, Christ comes comforting us, declaring to us the year of jubilee. He sets his redeemed slaves free. He clears us of all our debts. He restores to us double over all we lost in Adam. In the end there will be no vengeance from God to one for whom Christ died!

Now, seeing the evil I did to God and seeing how God did not recompense evil for evil toward me, shall I take vengeance on my enemy, not knowing that they may be one of God’s elect who God already took vengeance on in Christ? “*Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*”

Beloved, we were starving of righteousness, Christ fed us the Bread from heaven. We were dying of thirst, Christ freely gave us the Water of Life. We were strangers out in the bitter cold of winter, our gracious Coalheaver warmed us with coals of fire. We were overcome of evil, but he overcame our evil with good.

Our purpose for being in this earth to preach Christ crucified. These precepts are so that we do nothing to distract sinners from hearing the gospel. You never know that that one who appears our enemy, may attend services here next week. So for each of us who are saved by grace, made righteous by Christ, and constrained and motivated by Christ’s love to us, listen to Christ our Redeemer:

Luke 6: 27: But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, 28: Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. 29: And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not *to take thy* coat also. 30: Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask *them* not again. 31: And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32: For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. 33: And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. 34: And if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35: But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to* the evil. 36: Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

Amen!