

Jan 28th 2007: Romans 12: 13-21: Conquering With Love

This morning...final section Rom 12....

To verses that remind me.....

terrible time that the church.....in AD 57....was beginning to enter:

A time of persecution.....that God in the end used to establish...

A time when His children.....chose to follow Him whatever the cost
and to practice such teaching....as we find here in v14—21...

Many of these Christians....went on to pay the ultimate price for their belief

They were thrown out of their houses and beaten

Their children were taken.....sold into slavery

.... many were thrown to the wild beasts.....or killed by gladiators in the arenas

Made a public spectacle of... because of their faith

→**and those** who destroyed their bodies.....testified to their faith in the face of death
and to their graciousness.....and forgiveness...towards their persecutors

**There are Christians in our world today...who are facing that same level of
persecution**

**And we need to understand....that they are truly practicing.....these instructions
and I know...that I feel quite humble about that**

• **But these instructions are also for us**

And indeed their original aim.....**was to** promote Christlikeness.....
in fellowships just like ours

In fact Romans 12 ...shows us that the Body of Christ...is to impact our world for Jesus
(v9-13) **By having the Love of Jesus in us--→ LOVE MUST BE GENUINE**

But also.....as v14-21 points out.....By Reacting to others as Christ Did
And thereby **CONQUERING EVIL WITH GOOD.**

This is what the last verse of the chapter says.....and stands as the theme verse
DO NOT BE OVERCOME BY EVIL, BUT OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.

Overcome.....in the Greek....means to have the victory:.....**To Conquer**
It's a reminder...we are in a battle.....And the fellowship of believers...battleground

- **So How does Paul suggest....seek to Conquer Evil with Good ??**

He gives us in these verses.....8 Directions.....Put into 3 main groups

SCREEN.....These are the 8....found in verses 14-20

- **THE FIRST GROUP I HAVE LABELED AS →DON'T HOLD GRUDGES**

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse
Do not repay anyone evil for evil
Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath*

I believe that we see an escalation in bad behaviour here

It begins with the person who you feel.....is persecuting you
A greek word.....comes from the idea of pursuing.....chasing after
Someone who you feel is constantly getting at you.....attacking you with words/acts

- **You now have a choice**
You can curse them.....Means to wish...or call down evil upon them
- **Or bless**.....Comes from two Greek words.....**Good**.....**To speak**
Speak good words to themor about them

Now there is no doubt...the person who persecutes.....is in the wrong
The world's way is to retaliate in kind
But the way of Christ.....is to do the opposite.....To bless with your words....Acts

- **If you give** in to the old nature.....You soon will progress
To repaying evil with evil
Talking about them in a bad way...**Looking** to do the nasty things to them...did to you
And justifying yourself.....because....They started it

And then so quickly.....Move to the point where you want vengeance
You want them to suffer for what they are putting you through
And this is where GRUDGE BEARING takes hold of your life

What Paul says here....according to the Greek....is quite beautiful

He calls them....**Beloved**:::....**Lets** them know how much he loves them in the Lord
How beloved they are to God

He sees the super sensitive ones.....The ones who get so easily upset.....
He sees the ones prone to bitterness of heart
And he sees those who suffer so much....from the constant attacks

And he says....I love youand God loves you

- **And because I love you**.....I'm saying.....**Don't** avenge yourselves
But give place to God's wrath.....
In other words.....Hand it over to Him.....He is the Just God.....Let Him deal

- **Instead says Paul**.....Be proactive in being nice to your enemy
When they are in real need.....Hungry....Thirsty.....
Look to be the person .. who is there for them.

And the heaping.....is not having a sense of.....getting your own back
But of God using your kindness.....to make them aware of their sin....repentance

*(In the days when armies used canons.....cannonballs around with them
.....surprised to learn.....stalking them with a cannonball in your pocket)*

- **THE SECOND SECTION**.....**BE FIRST TO REACH OUT**

*Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep
Do not be conceited
Do right in the eyes of everybody*

- **The previous group**.....was about avoiding the negative
This group.....all about pursuing the good things.....that build community

If you are truly seeking to do the first.....Then the other two automatically follow

- **I love the way it comes across in the Greek text**.....It calls us all to →
Rejoice with the rejoicing ones and to weep with the weeping ones

It doesn't tell us to throw a party for those who are joyful....but to notice their joy
And to share it with them

Neither does it tell us to fix the problems of the sorrowful
To make everything ok for them.....**But to** note their sorrow and to sit with them in it

- **If that is our aim**.....then being conceited is less of a danger for us

A word that means.....thinking of ourselves as above the other....
because of what they are going through.....

See their joy as foolishness ----as over the top

Their sorrow as childish.....should just shake themselves...get over it

- **The doing right in the eyes of everybody**.....literally means
Providing the good that the joyful...or the sorrowful person needs
And to do it as an expression of Christ.....**As the** right that He would do

Christ was always the first to reach out to others.....To the outcast.....Zachaeus

To the leper.....who he reached and touched.....

To the bridegroom and bride.....Whose joy he shared.....and safeguarded when....

The Third Group -> MAKE PEACE YOUR PRIORITY

Live in harmony(Don't be stuck up and proud)

If possible live at peace with all

This is the section....where the hard work is needed

The devil loves to create disunity amongst believers.....To take peace away

Living in harmony with fellow believers esp

Can only happenwhen we refuse to see ourselves as superior.....but go out of our way.....to associate with those that others might despise

There is also a sense here.....of not despising even the most menial of tasks

- **Of course living at peace** with those....who just want to make war.....can be imposed. **All the Lord expects of us**.....Is that we do as much as we can.....Leave the rest to Him

- **Conquering Evil with Good**.....Is a challenge for us as we continue into 2007
The Example for this is Jesus.....

He calls His people to persevere in doing good
In sharing about His love
In standing firm when under attack

For One day He will return.....And Good will be seen.....To finally overcome...
For ever.