

Tuesday Evening Bible Study at Tokyo Baptist Church
Paul's Letter to the Romans – Chapter 13, Verses 11-14
Notes from Tuesday April 19, 2011
Last Revised on April 25, 2011

Songs

Opening Prayer

Introduction

This evening we continue our study of the Letter of Paul to the Romans.

Last week we began **Chapter 13**.

Tonight we will **finish** Chapter 13.

First I will briefly **review** what we have read before now.

Review

As we have repeatedly reminded ourselves,

the **overall** theme of Paul's letter to the Romans is the **gospel**.

The gospel is set forth briefly in the **first four (4) chapters** of this letter.

In the **next** four chapters (i.e. Chapters 5 - 8), Paul examines some of the **implications** of the gospel, for those of us who are being **saved** by it.

In the third major section of this letter, consisting of **Chapters 9 through 11**, Paul examines the **sad** situation of the Jews who have **rejected** the gospel.

However Paul ends Chapter 11 with an outpouring of **praise** and **worship**, because **he** has understood (and helped **us** to understand), that all of God's ways are **gracious** and **merciful**.

It is on the basis of the "***mercies of God***" set forth in the first **11** chapters, that Paul calls for proper Christian **behavior**, in **Chapters 12 through 14 and the first part of Chapter 15**, which together constitute the next major section of this letter: the one we are presently studying in this class.

In Chapter 12 Paul asks his readers to stop being **conformed** to this world, but **instead** to allow God to **transform** them, and he goes on to **describe** the transformed person:

Without thinking highly of **himself**, the transformed person uses whatever **gifts** that God has given him in **servicing** others, and in this way serving **Christ**, from a heart filled with **genuine** love.

This is a love that is **unselfish**, **brotherly**, **humble**, **empathetic**, and seeks to **bless** even those who persecute us, thereby promoting **peace** and **harmony** within the **church** and in the **world**.

This love is **never** vengeful. It seeks always and everywhere to overcome evil, with good!

This love is **not**, in other words, **confrontational**, **adversarial**, or **rebellious**,

which leads naturally into the first paragraph of **Chapter 13**

which is about **submission** to governing authorities.

Please **turn** with me now to **Chapter 13**,

and follow along with me as I review what we read and discussed last week.

Paul says, “**Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.**” (13:1a)

I think that this is just a **particular application** of what has gone before.

We do not contend with other **men**, not even those who persecute us.

This is also true when these other men **are**, or represent, **governing authorities**.

Paul does not say, and can not mean to imply, that believers should always **obey** the governing authorities, any more than he meant to say that we should always follow the instructions of evil men.

But he **does** require that we be just as docile in the face of persecution by **governing authorities** as we are called to be in the face of persecution by evil men.

This means that we must obey governing authorities insofar as we are **able** to do so without sinning against **God**.

The reason for this is clear, Paul says: it is because governing authorities, like everything else in all creation, have been instituted **by** God and, therefore, obeying **them** is, generally speaking, obedience **to God**,

It is also true as Paul points out, in Versed 3 -5, that law abiding behavior is generally conducive to the sort of peace and harmony that Christians are called to cultivate in this life,

and the governing authorities instituted by God, however often they may sin and go astray, **are** nevertheless generally conducive to the sort of peace and harmony that is genuinely good and necessary in this world.

That's why, Paul says in Verses 6 and 7, that we must pay all of the taxes and other obligations that lawfully pertain to us.

To be a good Christian is to be a good and law abiding **citizen**, an honest, hard-working **businessmen**, a diligent **scholar**, a good **student**, and whatever other honorable behaviors we are capable of while we remain in this world.

We must fulfill **every** obligation to God and man, and hold **nothing** back for ourselves.

We must not rebel against or resist **anything** except evil,

and we must resist evil, not with **more** evil from our side, but with **good**.

Questions? Comments?

Paul's Letter to the Romans, Chapter 13, Verses 8-10

Will someone please read Romans, Chapter 13, Verses 8-14, in Japanese.

Thank you . Now will someone please read those same verses in English.

8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Thank you.

Verse 8 reads:

(Verse 8)

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

There is no vengeance that we, as Christians, are permitted to owe.

If we do owe anyone anything: e.g. taxes or other payments to governments, or other organizations or individuals, then we, as Christians, are obligated to pay them, all! We may hold nothing back.

The only thing remaining is the genuine love that we owe, to God and to other men.

This we must continue to owe, because we we will never be able to pay it in full.

If we love God, the we obey him.

We can not obey him, unless we love men.

And we cannot love men unless we love God.

Love and obedience are the same. Verse 9 reads:

(Verse 9)

For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

This means not so much, I think, that we should love others just as much as we love ourselves.

Rather it means that we should love others **rather than** ourselves.

That is, we should put the interests of others **before** our own.

Or even that we should care **only** about the interests of others, and **nothing** of our own interests.

And if we can do **that**, then adultery, murder, theft, covetousness, and any other commandment of God will automatically and without thinking be obeyed.

Verse 10 reads

(Verse 10)

Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Such love to a neighbor is, and can only be, an expression of **God's** love.

Ours for **Him** and, above all, **His** for us.

It is an over-flowing of God's love **in us**.

And now Paul adds another thought.

Verse 11 begins

(Verse 11a)

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep.

Q. Besides **what**?

A. The **immediately** preceding thought was about the **debt of love and obedience** that we own to God and Man.

A. **The whole of Chapter 12, and Chapter 13 to this point**, is generally speaking of turning **away from the world** and of the **transformation** which we should allow God to work in us.

In addition to that, Paul now adds some observations regarding "time"

He says that, in addition to all that has been said to this point, "***you know the time,***"

The word here translated “**time**” is **not** *chronos*, the simple word for time,

but ***kairos*** which means the “the appointed time”

this could be referring to the ***kairos*** of the second coming of Christ,

although Christ himself said that, **nobody**, not even the Son, could know that.

It almost certainly does refer to the fact that Christ already **has** come, including the fact that he will come again, **someday**.

One of the implications of this is that we are living in a special time within human history, the end time, when it behoves God’s children to be “**awake**” rather than “**asleep**.”

Of course Paul does not mean to say literally that the Christians in Rome are getting too much **sleep**.

This is a **metaphor**” One that is common and fairly easy to understand.

To be “**asleep**” is to be “not paying attention,” and therefore unaware of what is really happening in the world around us.

To be “**awake**” is to be alert and fully aware of what is actually happening --- things such as Paul has been writing about in this letter --- the **gospel** and all that it implies!

And one of the things that the gospel implies is that ...

(Verse 11b)

[For] salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

The Bible consistently teaches that it is **when** we first believed that our **salvation** was assured.

Q. So what does Paul mean when he says that salvation is **nearer** to us now than when we first believed?

A. Believers are saved for an eternal life with Christ which is not fully **realized** here and now.

A. Each hour that passes brings us **nearer** to that goal, closer to that time when we will finally stand before Christ and be made new, along with all of creation.

Each man's journey is like a journey out of the darkness and into the light,

out of the night and into the day,

out of sleep and into wakefulness.

Now that God has spoken,

now that Christ has come,

now that we have heard and believed and professed our faith,

now that we have persevered in faith beyond yesterday, until today

as we continue to press onward toward the goal,

this translation, this pilgrimage, is nearly finished.

Soon enough we will be standing before Christ Himself.

and then the sun will be full up!

Verse 12 begins

(Verse 12a)

The night is far gone; the day is at hand.

It is because we stand already so near to the approaching glory, that we must...

(Verse 12b)

[So then let us] **cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.**

There is no more time for us to play in the darkness!

All darkness is nearly ready to disappear forever!

And when the darkness is gone, all works of darkness will be impossible

And no one who does works of darkness can possibly remain.

So let's get ready and (a) cast off our works of darkness and (b) put on the armor of light.

Q. So what **are** the works of darkness that we must cast off?

A. **Sin**. Yes.

A. Which we understand from what Paul has just written would be everything that is **not** consistent with sincere love. We must express sincere love to God and man, and **stop** doing everything else.

Because in the world to **come**, only expressions of sincere love will be **possible**.

Q. And what is the “*armor of light*” which we are to put on?

A. Here maybe it is the **absence of “works of darkness”** --- i.e. **sinless behavior**

A. We have already understood that **sinless** behavior is a manifestation of sincere **love**, of putting everyone else ahead of yourself.

A. Maybe the armor of light **is** such love.

Verses 13 and 14 provide additional insight.

Verse 13 begins

(Verse 13a)

Let us walk properly as in the daytime,

to “*walk properly as in the daytime*” might simply refer to the kinds of behavior which most men consider proper and honorable and which we are, therefore, willing to let others see us do openly.

Of course Paul does **not** mean to say that we should behave properly **only** in the daytime, but that we should behave properly at all times, as most men will do only while people are watching.

Paul proceeds to give us some **examples** of things we should never do...

(Verse 13a)

[not in] **orgies and drunkenness,**

There have not been many times or places where **sober, daylight** orgies abounded.

This is because most men have understood that such things are **shameful** and should therefore be **hidden** --- from other men and even from themselves, which is where the drunkenness come in.

Q. But why would orgies **ever** take place, even in the dark and among those who have had too much to drink? ... If indeed men commonly understand such behavior to be so shameful?

A. Because there is something in human character that finds them **exciting** and **enjoyable**.

People **sin**, in other words, because we **like** to sin. Because it is our **nature** to sin. Paul has made this very clear, from the very beginning of this Letter to the Romans. We are **all** totally depraved.

Our sense of shame may keep most of us from spending too much time in drunken orgies, but it does not keep many of us from sexual immorality and sensuality.

(Verse 13b)

[not in]sexual immorality and sensuality,

Q. What **is** sexual immorality?

A. Indulging physically and/or mentally in sexual act which is **sinful**.

Such would include **imagining** and actually **having** sex outside of marriage. I suppose nearly 100% of all human beings are guilty of this.

But **sexual** immorality is, I think, just one instance of a more general category of sin: "**sensuality**"

Q. What is **sensuality**?

A. Immoderate (and selfish) indulgences of our five **senses**.

In addition to sexual immorality, we have all kinds of obsessive, compulsive, and addictive behaviors which are all "works of darkness" that Paul would have us put off.

But the physical sins (sensual pleasures) are far from the worst sins that there are, or so it seems to me. Next Paul mentions two that are worse:

(Verse 13c)

[not in] quarreling and jealousy.

When two men **quarrel**, **both** exhibit the **opposite** of the genuine love which is required of us.

Q. And **why** do two men quarrel?

A. Because **both** have **already** sinned by putting their self **before** the other! (i.e. jealousy)

Q. And who among us is **not** jealous and does **not** quarrel?

A. We all do.

And when we do not quarrel **openly**, we remain silently **bitter** and **resentful**, even **hateful**.

This is how we human beings **are**!

Q. So what are we to do about this? Verse 14 answers:

(Verse 14)

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

We all **have** desires which should **never** be gratified.

Among other things, this means arranging our lives so that we have as few **opportunities** as possible to gratify our desires.

That is, by making no **provision** for the flesh.

But no matter how we try to avoid temptation and stop sinning (and we must try) we will fail,

unless and until we are **transformed** by God Himself,

which is how I understand the “**putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ**.”

We accept **his** righteousness as our own.

We yield ourselves to the leading of **his** Spirit within us.

We seek to obey **his** teaching.

Questions? Comments?

Closing Prayer