

Epistle of Romans XXVII (Chapters 12:18-13:14) Vengeance Belongs to God

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Romans 12:18: “If possible, as much as is your part, be at peace with all men.” Sometimes that’s very difficult to do. Sometimes you’re just up against some cantankerous people; you’re up against evil people; you’re up against those who just don’t want to be at peace. So, the best thing that you can do with people like that is just avoid them. Sometimes you have to, there’s no other way around it.

If you really have a terrible problem which needs to be taken care of, v 19: “Beloved, do not be avenging yourselves...” That’s awfully hard to resist. If something happens to you, what is the first thing you want to do? Jesus said, ‘If someone hits you on the right cheek, turn to him the left cheek also.’ Then some add to it: when that is over, then hit them. That isn’t what Jesus said, but many times you feel like it. Sometimes people come upon you in such a way that you just feel like there is something you’ve got to do. Sometimes, when you’re dealing in business, in the realm of legal things in the world, sometimes there are things that you have to do. Sometimes, because of the situation, you have to take the course that is available to you, which follows in Rom. 13: ‘be subject to the higher powers.’ If you use the legal system in a right way, in this world, then that is fine.

As we saw in 1-Cor. 6, you don’t want to use the legal system in ‘brother against brother.’ Still, you’re not avenging yourself. If it comes to a situation where you have to go to court, then let the judge do the avenging. He’s the one who has been put there to do the avenging, but don’t avenge yourself. You’ve seen how many times that people go ahead and take it to themselves, and it’s so easy to do in this society. Especially when you have corrupt judges letting off pedophiles and homosexuals who have seduced children, killed children or kidnapped children.

There have been cases of parents who took it in their hands to kill the one who did so, which in the Old Testament time would have been perfectly legal. But we are not under that legal system today. In some cases, the jury—seeing the trauma that the parents went through—completely let them off. However, in some cases that’s not so.

That why, v 19: “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves; rather, leave *this* to *God’s* wrath... [step

aside from it] ...for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine! I will recompense,” says *the* Lord.” If you put it in God’s hands, He is going to do it in a way that you may not figure it’s going to be done.

Notice the attitude, v 20: “Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for in doing this you will be heaping coals of fire on his head.... [meaning that he has nothing coming back upon you] ...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (vs 20-21).

That’s precisely and exactly what Christ did. Even when He was being beaten and scourge and crucified, He said, ‘Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.’ Was God’s vengeance for that, in destroying Jerusalem and sending the Jews into captivity, better and more than Jesus could do as a human being while this was going on? *Yes, it was!* Furthermore, they had a greater witness down through the years—for 40 years—until the city was destroyed. Then God sent the Roman armies in there to take care of it.

Let’s look at the case of Esther. Here is a wonderful book on how God gives vengeance *in His way and in His time*. Sometimes we would like to see vengeance executed *instantly!* But that’s not always the case. The book of Esther is quite a good book, excellent in showing this example, and also it shows that sometimes before God executes His vengeance He let’s the one who’s your enemy be exalted even more. Sometimes that happens. You sit back and you wonder why God hasn’t executed vengeance. *It’s not time!*

You know the situation with King Ahsuerus; he put away his first wife Vashti and Esther was made queen after that. This is all part of the story of how God avenged.

Esther 3:1: “After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite...” One of the sons of Edom, who was one that God said that he would have war in every generation; so here is one of the antagonists of God.

“...and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes who *were* with him. And all the king’s servants in the king’s gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman... [think of him as the pope of Persia] ...for the king had so commanded

concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow down nor prostrate himself before him” (vs 1-2). That would be committing idolatry, and things were made miserable for Mordecai because of it.

Verse 3: “And the king’s servants in the king’s gate said to Mordecai, ‘Why do you transgress the king’s command?’ Now it came to pass when they spoke daily to him, and he did not hearken to them, they told Haman, to see if Mordecai’s words would stand. For he had told them that he *was* a Jew. And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not kneel down nor pay honor to him, then Haman was full of wrath” (vs 3-5). How dare you, I’m so important!

Verse 6: “But it seemed contemptible to lay hands only on Mordecai, for they had revealed to him the people of Mordecai. So, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews...” Now we’re up against a problem that it looks like there’s no way to solve it.

“...throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai. In the first month, that *is*, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur... [this is why the Jews have the Feast of Purim; Pur is the casting of lots] ...that is the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, the month Adar” (vs 6-7).

So, they went through a whole year saying, ‘Ok, when are we going to do this? Let’s roll out the lot and let’s see what day we’re going to do this.

Verse 8: “And Haman said to King Ahasuerus, ‘There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people, in all the provinces of your kingdom. And their laws *are* different from those of all *other* people...”

First thing you do when you don’t want Truth, you cast aspersion upon the person. That’s the very first tactic that the evil people do. They’re not looking for truth; they’re not looking for righteousness; but they cast aspersion upon the people.

“...neither do they keep the king’s laws....” (v 8). The king’s law was absolute; had to be obeyed! That’s why the king’s first wife was put away.

“...Therefore, it is not in the king’s interest to allow them to live. If it please the king, let it be written ...” (vs 8-9).

Here’s another thing that always works in politics: Who is the one that does the ‘dirty work’? *The advisor!* The advisor brings in the scheme. Does

this sound familiar with some things you’ve read about conspiracies? *Yes, indeed!* So, we have it right here:

“...let it be written that they may be destroyed. And I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the business, to bring *it* into the king’s treasuries” (v 9). Look, king, you won’t even have to pay a dime to the soldiers, I’ll do this for you.

Verse 10: “And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it to Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews’ enemy. And the king said to Haman, ‘The silver *is* given to you, the people also, to do with them as seems good to you.’ Then the king’s scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded to the king’s lieutenants, and to the governors *who were* over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province, according to the writing of it, and to every people according to their language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king’s ring” (vs 9-12). *Sweeping authority*—right?

Verse 13: “And the letters were sent by postal riders into all the king’s provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to plunder their goods. A copy of the writing—as a command to be given in every province—was published to all people, that they should be ready for that day. The posts went out, being hurried by the king’s command, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed” (vs 13-15).

- How are you going to get out of this?
- What scheme would you think of to get out of this problem?

Then you know what happened:

Esther 5:1: “Now, it came to pass on the third day, Esther put on royal *clothing*, and stood in the inner court of the king’s palace...” She had to wait there until the king said to come in. If any of you women feel oppressed, think of that.

“...across from the king’s hall. And the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal hall, facing the entrance of the hall. And it was so that when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she received favor *in* his sight. And the king held out to Esther the golden scepter in his hand. And Esther

drew near and touched the top of the scepter. And the king said to her, 'What do you *desire*, Queen Esther? And what *is* your wish? It shall be given to you even to half of the kingdom.' And Esther answered, 'If *it is* good to the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet which I have prepared for him.' And the king said, 'Cause Haman to hurry so that he may do as Esther has said.' And the king and Haman came to the banquet, which Esther had prepared. And the king said to Esther at the banquet of wine, 'What *is* your petition, that it shall be granted to you? And what *is* your request? It shall be performed even to half of the kingdom' (vs 1-6). She must have been some woman for him to say that!

Verse 7: "And Esther answered and said, 'As to my petition and my request, if I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I shall prepare for them, and I will do tomorrow as the king has said'" (vs 7-8).

She took two steps in this: she had a banquet of wine first, and said, 'This is really not the real thing, king; you and Haman come again tomorrow.'

Verse 9: "And Haman went forth that day joyful and with a glad heart. But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he did not stand up nor move for him, he was full of fury against Mordecai. But Haman refrained himself. And when he came home, he sent and called *for* his friends and Zeresh his wife. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and his many children, and all things to which the king had promoted him..." (vs 9-11).

Sometimes God let's the enemy get all exalted in vanity; get all puffed up with their performance and all the things that they have.

"...and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. And Haman said, 'Yea, Esther the queen let *no other man* but me come in with the king to the banquet that she had prepared. And also tomorrow I am invited to *her banquet*, with the king. Yet, all this fails to satisfy me as long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.' And Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, 'Make a gallows, fifty cubits high, and tomorrow speak to the king that Mordecai may be hanged on it. Then go in merrily with the king to the banquet.' And the thing pleased Haman, and he caused the wooden gallows to be made" (vs 11-14).

God has a way of intervening, Esther 6:1: "On that night the king could not sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the

chronicles. And they were read before the king.... [that's like saying to bring me the Sunday paper] ...And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers, the guards of the door who sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. And the king said, 'What honor and dignity has been done to Mordecai for this?' And the king's servants who served him said, 'Nothing has been done for him.' And the king said, 'Who *is* in the court?' And Haman had come into the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows which he had prepared for him" (vs 1-4). Right down to the last minute!

Verse 5: "And the king's servants said to him, 'Behold, Haman stands in the court.' And the king said, 'Let him come in.' So, Haman came in. And the king said to him, 'What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?' And Haman thought in his heart, 'To whom would the king delight to do honor more than to myself?' And Haman answered the king, 'For the man whom the king delights to honor, let the royal clothing be brought, which the king wears, and the horse that the king rides upon, and the royal crown, which is set upon his head. And let this clothing and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes so that they may dress the man whom the king delights to honor, and bring him on horseback through the streets of the city, and proclaim before him, "This is what shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."' And the king said to Haman, 'Make haste! Take the clothing and the horse, as you have said, and do so even to Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not fail to do any of all the things you have spoken" (vs 5-10). Here's how God avenged!

Verse 11: "And Haman took the clothing and the horse and dressed Mordecai... [Can you imagine him dressing up Mordecai, the one he hated?] ...and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, 'This is what shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!'.... [I don't think he spoke this very loudly] ... And Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house mourning, and having *his* head covered" (vs 11-12). Shame and disgrace!

So, he told everything to his wife. Then when Ahasuerus found out that he was tricked into the decree and killing all the Jews, then he sent out another decree that all of those that were to kill them should be killed and hung on the gallows. So, God took care of Haman—the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha—and he was hung on the gallows that

he built for Mordecai.

That's a good example of the vengeance of God. We can take the same thing and apply it in our life; sometimes we just have to wait on God. In waiting on God it's going to take a little time and it will work out differently than you suppose.

Several years ago there was an independent minister who associated with us at the Feast of Tabernacles for a couple of years. He proceeded to take the mailing list from us. I talked to him about it and confronted him about it, but he couldn't see that he had done anything wrong in it. I could see that he was not willing to change at all, so I just let the matter go, left in peace. He thought everything was just fine. I saw that the only correction he would have would be in God's hands. Now, right at this day, his correction and vengeance is that he's going off the deep end with false doctrines and prophecy, which is a more fit and better punishment than anything that could be done otherwise.

You can look in your own life and see different things like that. Let God intervene and do it. Sometimes you just have to back away. There are many other Scriptures you can put in here, let me just list them:

- Psa. 58—how God will fight for you; God will do it in a way that you least expect. Sometimes those who are the worst enemies against you, it'll just be turned upside down.
- Prov. 25:21-22
- 2-Pet. 2:19-20

The truth of the matter is this: Even if they kill you, you have overcome the devil. Jesus said, 'Yes, the hour is coming when they that kill you think that they are doing service for God.' That's why you let God take vengeance, because He's able to do it better than you. There are times when you have to do some things yourself. But when it becomes an overwhelming problem you just put it in God's hands and let Him take care of it.

Romans 13:1: "Let everyone be subject to the higher authorities because there is no authority except from God; and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God... [Gen. 9] ... so then, the one who sets himself against the authority..." (vs 1-2).

It's one thing if you have to legally, through the courts, go through them. But if you set yourself against the authority, like the Freemen and so forth—which they have done.

"...is resisting the ordinance of God; and

those who resist shall receive judgment to themselves" (v 2). Did not the Freemen up in Montana receive judgment to themselves? *Yes, they did! Up to 40 years!*

Verse 3: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil *works*...." Sometimes you have abuse of power by the police. That's another different case involved, too. In that you have to trust God to help you out of that in the same way. I tell you, if you're up against a corrupt policeman or a corrupt judge, and you try and resist, know that it's going to get worse, no question about it!

"...Do you desire not to be afraid of the authority?... [Is that what you want?] ...*Then practice good, and you will have praise from it; for he is a servant of God to you for good...*" (vs 3-4). That's why! Think what this society would be like if God did not give the higher authorities to rule the land if it were total anarchy. Nothing could be accomplished.

"...But if you are practicing evil, have fear! For he does not wear the sword in vain because he is a servant of God... [says it twice] ...an avenger for wrath to the one... [back away from wrath; let God take care of it] ...who is practicing evil. Consequently, *it is* necessary to be subject *to authority*, not only because of wrath, but also because of conscience"(vs 4-5).

Let's go back and see where God established this authority. God gave this authority as the *administration of death* in all the societies of the world this side of the Flood. That's what is given in Gen. 9, and this is the covenant that was made. After Noah came out of the ark, he offered the offering; then God made a covenant that was for all nations.

We need to also understand something here very important in relationship to the difference before the Flood and after the Flood. Before the Flood God was the One Who personally administered things. He administered His punishment to Adam and Eve and to Cain. Abel and Enoch walked with God; Noah walked with God. After the Flood, we have a different situation entirely. This is the covenant that He made; a perpetual covenant for all nations. Here's where the authority has been given:

Genesis 9:1: "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and He said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon all that moves on the earth, and upon all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving

thing that lives shall be food for you, even as the green herb I have given you all things. But you shall not eat of flesh with the life in it—*which is its blood*” (vs 1-4). That is we’re not to eat flesh with the blood in it.

Verse 5: “And surely the blood of your lives will I require.... [here’s where He’s giving the authority]: ...At the hand of every animal will I require it, and at the hand of man. At the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoever sheds man’s blood, his blood shall be shed by man—for He made man in the image of God” (vs 5-6).

He’s saying, ‘I’m giving you the authority to execute judgment against the evil doers up to death, and you are responsible for taking care of the evil doers.

Verse 7: ““And you, be fruitful and multiply. Bring forth abundantly in the earth, and increase in it.’ And God spoke to Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, ‘Behold I, even I establish My covenant with you, and with your seed after you”” (vs 7-9).

This is all the sons of Noah, meaning all the descendants of the earth from that time forward.

Verse 10: ““And with every living creature that *is* with you—of the birds, of the livestock, and of every animal of the earth with you—from all that go out from the ark, to every animal of the earth. And I will establish My covenant with you. Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood. Neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.’ And God said, ‘This *is* the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature with you, for everlasting generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be *the* sign of *the* covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud. And I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh”” (vs 7-15).

So, this was the everlasting covenant; that’s when the authority was given. God established it. It’s just like with the kings of Israel and with the judges of Israel. God established them, but when they were evil it caused a lot of problems with the people. That’s why the people have to be responsible to take care of these things themselves, and sooner or later evil catches up with everyone.

Let’s see what else, how we are also to look at the authorities that be, and how we are to consider them. We’re to pray for them. I always loved the one

from *Fiddler on the Roof*—a man came up to the rabbi and said, ‘Rabbi, is there a blessing for the czar?’ That is the emperor of Russia. And the rabbi had this perplexed look on his face and he answered back, ‘Yes! May God bless him and keep him far away from us!’ Sometimes it has to be that way! When you drive down the highway, may the highway patrol do their job—always on the other side of the road!

1-Timothy 2:1: “I exhort, therefore, first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men; for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all Godliness and respectability.... [it’s almost like the prayer of the rabbi, keep them far away from us] ...For this *is* good and acceptable before God our Savior” (vs 1-3).

Let’s see what Peter says about this, 1-Peter 2:13: “Therefore, submit yourselves to every human institution... [I don’t know what the Freeman are going to do with this verse] ...for the Lord’s sake; whether to *the* king, as supreme, or to governors, as sent by him to execute vengeance *against* evil doers, and to praise those who do well. For so is the will of God, that *by* doing well yourselves, you may put to silence the ignorance of senseless men; as free, and not using *your* freedom as a cover for evil, but as bondslaves of God. Show honor to everyone. Love the brotherhood, revere God *and* honor the king” (vs 13-17). There it is, right there.

1-Peter 4:12: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you *which is* taking place to test you, as if some strange thing *were* happening to you.”

Part of the problem with the ‘Christianity’ of the world is, because they don’t know God, they preach a happy, goody-goody ‘religion’ where everything should be fine and good. Listen, if you’re really going to serve God, you may have a lot of trials. When you go through them, you don’t like them. I know that I don’t, and they’re difficult, and it causes you anxiety and trouble and fretting and all this sort of thing. You wonder why. Sometimes they happen. Sometimes they come just to test us whether we’re going to look to God and have Him work it out, or what we’re going to do. So, it’s going to come.

Verse 13: “But to the degree that you have a share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice...” I don’t think any of us have arrived at that point of rejoicing in it.

“...so that at the revelation of His glory, you

also may rejoice exceedingly. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, *you are* blessed because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God is resting upon you; on their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. Assuredly, let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or as an overlording busybody in other people's lives. Yet, if anyone *is suffering* as a Christian, he should not be ashamed; but let him glorify God because of this" (vs 13-16).

If you suffer for your own mistakes and your own problems and your own difficulties, then that's another case. You still yield to the authorities, and you still do what they say.

Romans 13:2: "So then, the one who sets himself against the authority is resisting the ordinance of God... [*because God decreed it to be so*, that's why] ...and those who resist shall receive judgment to themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil *works*.... [let's hope that they get them] ...Do you desire not to be afraid of the authority? *Then* practice good, and you will have praise from it; for he is a servant of God to you for good. But if you are practicing evil, have fear!...." (vs 2-4).

Verse 6: "For this cause, you are also obligated to pay tribute..."—taxes; we all hate taxes. I hate taxes! Everybody hates taxes! I try and pay as little as I *legally* can pay, but we still pay it.

"...for they are servants of God, continually engaged in this very thing" (v 16). That's why we have all the bureaucracies. When I go down to pay my property tax bill I think of that. Wouldn't it be nice if we didn't have property tax to pay? But then, on the other hand, think of how terrible it would be if there weren't any schools, roads, sewers, police; if there weren't any of the things that are here. Granted, it's an evil world. God left it over to man to be however man works it out. But nevertheless, it is there. I would like to say, 'Hey! I would rather not pay the property tax.' But if I don't pay it, they have the legal authority to come and confiscate your house after five years. So, there it is.

When I go down and I see the bureaucrats there; bureaucrats love stamps and paper. They've got to have rubber stamps that have the ink on it. They put a machine and put a date on it and they stamp it. They have to have a form. That's part of their business. Myself, I could not do that. I'm not of that kind of mentality. But there are some people who enjoy the job, who do a good job on it, and it has to be done! Things have to be done legally and in order. Even in the world? *Yes!* So, when you go

stand in line, keep that in mind, that they are continually engaged in that very thing!

Someone cannot even be buried in the ground unless they have a copy of the death certificate. So it's legal! Even if you're born, if you don't have a birth certificate you don't exist, even if you stand in front of the judge and say, 'I'm here.' You legally don't exist. ***Before God you do!*** They're continually given to this business, aren't you glad. That way no one can come and take your house. No one can come and do things. Think what it is when someone steals your identity. They do that, so guard all of your bills, after I saw a TV show on how they steal your identity and get credit cards and run up thousand and thousands of dollars. There was a woman who had almost a \$100,000 in bills that were run up. It took her about seven years to finally get things straightened out.

I went out and got a shredder. I shred every bill. I don't leave them around. That's how they get it. For example, if you have healthcare or Medicare, you read it; it's got your social security number on it and BINGO! That's all they need is your social security number and you are dead meat as far as stealing an identity.

Verse 7: "Therefore, render to all their dues... [we're going to see that Christ did] ... tribute to whom tribute; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." Christ set us an example (Matt. 15); I would like to do this. This would be great if we could do this to pay our taxes; just go on a fishing expedition and squeeze all the fish and pay our taxes.

(go to the next track)

Matthew 22:15: "Then the Pharisees went and took counsel *as to* how they might entrap Him in *His* speech. And they sent their disciples *along* with the Herodians... [those who worked for Herod] ...to Him, saying, 'Master, we know that You are true, and *that You* teach the way of God in Truth, and *that You* are not concerned about *pleasing* anyone; for You do not respect *the* persons of men. Therefore, tell us, what do You think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?'.... [one of these sneaky, trick questions] ...But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, 'Why do you tempt Me, *you* hypocrites? Show Me the tribute coin.' And they brought to Him a silver coin. And He said to them, 'Whose image and inscription *is on* this?' They said to Him, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render then the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God.'.... [there's a clear command from Christ to pay taxes, *no question*]... And when they heard *this*, they were amazed; and *they* left Him *and*

went *their way*” (vs 15-21).

Then there’s the other account where Peter came and asked, ‘Do we pay tribute?’ Christ said, ‘Go fish.’ He got the fish, there was a coin in it, and He said, ‘Pay tribute.’ That’s the one that I referenced that we could go fishing and squeeze all the coins out and pay our taxes. But that’s not so.

Romans 13:8: “Do not be indebted to anyone for anything... [in relationship to tribute or custom or honor, or fear] ...unless *it is* to love one another. For the one who loves another has fulfilled *the law*.” The Protestants go here and say that all you need to do is love. We’ve done enough on the *Love of God* series for you to know that all the Law and the Prophets hang on loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. It’s all together in a package.

Verse 9: “Because *it says*, ‘You shall not commit adultery. You shall not commit murder. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. You shall not lust.’ And if *there be* any other commandment... [which is a sweeping statement that includes *all* the commandments] ...it is summed up in this saying, *even by this standard*: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

- You don’t want anyone stealing from you—do you?
- You don’t want anyone to commit adultery with your husband or wife—do you?
- You don’t want anyone lusting and taking your property—do you?
- You don’t want anyone lying to you—do you?

Let’s see how Christ summed up the whole Sermon on the Mount. When you really get in and study the whole Bible and put it all together, it all fits, it all applies, and it all comes together.

Matthew 7:12: “Therefore, everything that you would have men do to you, so also do to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.” The whole basis of what God has done is based upon the love of God. That’s why it is *by this standard*.

Romans 13:10: “Love does not do any wrong to *its* neighbor; therefore, love *is* the full expression of *God’s Law*.” What do we mean by that. The *King James* did not translate that correctly. It brings fullness to the law. How does it do it? Let’s see how it brings fullness to the Law. When you do things—motivated with the love of God and the Spirit of God, from the heart—it makes things entirely different on how they come across. That is a high, lifetime standard that we all need to work

toward. We all fall short of that, and our carnality gets involved. We don’t do the things that we want to do, as Paul said,

1-John 5:2: “By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments.... [love is the thing which comes first] ...For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (vs 2-3). No they’re not; they’re:

- good
- fine
- Holy
- spiritual
- righteous

—but, love comes from the Spirit of God and notice, love first. We love God *and* keep His commandments. Jesus said, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments.’ Let’s see what happens when you don’t have love; and that’s the whole story of Judaism. ***Law without love is deadly***, because it is applied with just the unscrupulous letter of the Law, which kills.

Romans 2:25: “For on the one hand, circumcision profits if you are observing *the Law*; on the other hand, if you are a transgressor of *the Law*, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if the uncircumcised is keeping the requirements of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?: And shall not the uncircumcised, who by nature is fulfilling the Law, judge you, who, with *the letter* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of *the Law*?” (vs 25-27).

So, it works out this way: if you try to just keep the letter of the Law punctiliously, you box yourself into a corner and you end up being hypocritical and sinful, because *you don’t have the love of God first*. That’s what happens. That’s why he shows here, concerning circumcision:

Verse 28: “For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, neither *is* that circumcision which is external in *the flesh*; rather, he *is a Jew who is one* inwardly, and circumcision *is of the heart*, in *the spirit and* not in *the letter*; whose praise *is* not from men but from God” (vs 28-29).

So, if you have the love first, love then brings fullness to the Law. That gives you the understanding of the *spirit of the Law*, not just the *letter*. That’s where the Pharisees and Sadducees got way off base. That’s where all of these carnal religions end up being. They end up in trouble because they don’t have the love of God.

Romans 13:11—he changes the whole subject here now: “Now *consider* this, knowing the time, that *it is* already *the hour that* we should be roused out of sleep; because our salvation *is* nearer now than when we first believed.”

Stop and think back when you first believed. That’s quite a while ago! Salvation is closer, but in some ways it seems a little further away; *but it is closer*. It’s so easy to slack up and let off when everything is nice and smooth. If you’re sick or if you have problems, you have troubles, you go pray to God right away. When everything is nice and smooth, what happens? *It’s so easy to just let up and put things off*, because there’s no pressure on you. That’s why we have trials that come along. It gives us the stimulus to understand that there are things we need to do.

“...because our salvation *is* nearer now than when we first believed. The night is almost over...” (vs 11-12).

For that whole first century, with the preaching of Paul and everything was building to a crescendo. One phase of the night was almost over, and that was the preaching of the Gospel and the writing of the New Testament.

“...and the day is drawing near; therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness and **put on the armor of Light**” (v 12). Much more so for us today, because we are exposed to so many things today. The whole world is out there. It’s almost like you’re walking in a fog; it just surrounds you so completely, even though you wouldn’t view it as a fog. “...**put on the armor of Light**...” means the strength of God, which comes from God, and Christ is the Light.

Verse 13: “Let us walk decently, as in *the* day: not in reveling and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and emulation. But *let us* put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not make any allowance for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” (vs 13-14).

I think this applies to us more today. Was this not only written to the Romans then, but do you suppose that this is a prophecy for us ‘on whom the ends of the earth have come’? *I think so!*

Ephesians 5:8: “For you were once darkness... [out in the world, deceived by Satan the devil] ...but now *you are* light in *the* Lord. Walk as children of light... [this gives us responsibility today] ...(because the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and Truth); proving what is well pleasing to the Lord; and have no

fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*” (vs 8-11). That’s why some of these things need to be exposed.

What if you know someone who’s partially walking in the darkness—that you knew in the past; maybe another church affiliation—should we have nothing to do with them? *No!* I think we should encourage them to come out of the darkness that they are in. But we should not join them; we should set an example so they can see what they need to do to overcome and change. But sometimes if you’re talking to someone who is sleepwalking, all the talking in the world won’t do any good until they stumble and fall. Then maybe that will wake them up. I think that is what God is doing with the Church right now; to wake a lot of people up. It’s a terrible situation that we’re facing—*expose them!*

That’s why when there’s false doctrine; it needs to be exposed. That’s why when there’s someone who is preaching heresy, it needs to be discussed, so that other people won’t fall into the trap. Now ultimately, if they fall into the trap after they know it’s a trap, then it’s their fault. But if we know and we don’t say, then we’re held accountable (Ezek. 3). We need to expose it!

Verse 12: “For it is shameful even to mention the things being done by them in secret.” Yet, today it comes out over the television news. You have X-rated news. If you have little kids, you have to put on the mute.

Verse 13: “But all of these things being exposed by the light are openly revealed.” What we need to do is expose and reprove those doctrines:

- that are contrary to the Word of God *those practices and teachings that abuse the brethren*
- that hold people back from salvation
- that hold them back from the relationship with God they ought to have

And we do it by the Light, which is the Word of Truth! The ‘commandment is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my eyes.’ Christ said, ‘I am the Light of the world.’ As long as you have the Light, walk in the Light. That’s what we need to do with these things.

Verse 14: “Therefore, He says, ‘*You* who are sleeping—wake up...’”

I don’t know about you, but when I’m in a deep sleep. I remember the other day I was in a deep sleep and when I woke up I didn’t even know where I was. I was sleeping so deeply, not even a dream. If you sleep that good, that’s great! But spiritually

speaking we have the same thing. When some people are awakened up out of their sleep and we send them a care package it is kind of like: HUH?! I've gotten many letters to attest to that. I talked to a man the other day. He said, 'When I listen to the studies and things, I've got to go over it no less than two times! I'm not used to this. I'm used to going to church where they have ten or twelve Scriptures. I hear things here that are so deep that I have to go back and listen to them again and again.'

That's what happens. He's been in a sleep. He's coming out of a fog. It's going to take two years of pretty much intensive study for people to just get their heads up out of the water. If you haven't studied through the sermon series' *Grace of God and Love of God*, you don't have a clue where we're coming from.

We're not building on the foundation of the old. We're building on the foundation of Christ and the Word of God. The foundation of old was corporate structure, hierarchy, command and control, letter of the Law; all of that is wiped away! **God wants a personal relationship with you!** That's why you need to wake up. It is so vastly important. I think the time is going to come when God is going to say, 'Look, you had how many years of peace and safety and security that I gave you, what were you doing?' They will use the Nazi excuse: 'Well, I just did what my minister said.' Trust me, that's not going to fly! We're going to see in Rom. 14 that everyone is going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. That's why it's important for us to realize.

Verse 14: "Therefore, He says, 'You who are sleeping—wake up, and arise from the dead!....'" Let it be a new direction; let it be a new person, that's what he's saying.

"...And Christ shall shine upon you" (v 14). That's what it has to be, and if you've been sleepwalking out there for a long time, it's a shock! It is amazing! It is truly eye-opening! What happens when you first wake up and turn on the light? *You can't see because the light is so bright!* That's what's happening to a lot of brethren. Hopefully, we can help them out of it.

It always happens, because human nature and the way human beings are, when things go nice and easy and smooth we relax and we say, 'Oh well!' and we procrastinate, put it off, and don't do things. It's so easy to do. 'I'll do it tomorrow.' Tomorrow comes and 'I still have more time.' I'll say this—true confession—I always pay my income tax on the 15th of April, because I don't want the government having my money any minute sooner than it's needed. However, please understand, there

is a *spiritual* April 15th coming. If you haven't done what you need to do, when the 16th arrives, *spiritually speaking*, you're going to be in difficulty. Maybe, through grace and mercy, you can get an extension, but sooner or later that extension is going to be cut off (Matt. 25—the parable of the ten virgins).

What we're doing is very profound and very important. God has called us to eternal life; He hasn't called us to some *form of* 'religion.' He's called us to the very purpose of the *why* we have been created.

1-Thessalonians 5:5: "*For* you are all children of *the* Light and children of *the* day; we are not of *the* night, nor of *the* darkness. So then, we should not sleep, as others *do*; but we should watch, and we should be sober. For those who are sleeping sleep in *the* night, and those who are drunken get drunk in *the* night" (vs 5-7).

That's what's happening to the Church of God today. When they go back and start keeping Sunday, they're going back and eating and drinking with the drunken and the gluttons. They are going back into darkness.

Verse 8: "But we who are of *the* day should be sober, having put on *the* breastplate of faith and love, and *for* a helmet *the* hope of salvation." When we get to Rom. 15, we're going to talk about hope, because ***our hope is in God!***

Verse 9: "Because God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ"—which is a true statement; but if you don't tend to the business of salvation, and tend to the things of salvation, then you will be appointed to wrath.

Verse 10: "Who died for us, so that whether we *remain* alive *until He comes* or we *fall* asleep *before that day*, together we may live *forever* with Him. Therefore, encourage one another, and edify one another, even as you are already doing" (vs 9-11). There are the things that we need to do. What is it that causes sleepiness? *What causes spiritual sleepiness is spiritual lethargy!*

Proverbs 6:9: "How long will you sleep, O sluggard?...." I suppose you could keep the Sabbath in the letter—not sinning in the letter—if you went to bed at sunset and stayed in bed until sunset. But what have you done? *Nothing!* Granted, you didn't sin, but you didn't do anything for righteousness. So, if we all slept from sunset Friday until sunset Saturday, we would truly be sleeping *the sleep of death!* *No question about it! It's laziness!*

“...When will you arise out of your sleep? Yet, a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest; so shall your poverty come as one who travels, and your want like an armed man” (vs 9-10). Sooner or later the spiritual consequences are going to catch up with you.

It's just like when you drive by a house that is run by a sluggard, and nothing is kept up and it's all run down. There was a house that was set on a slide fault-line, right under the house, and we drove by there one year and all of a sudden the dirt from underneath that house—it was kind of pretty steep side of the hill—was coming down. We'd go by and look at it, and every couple of months there was a little more dirt that would fall down. I would always comment, I wonder how long that house is going to be there? I wonder how long that thing is going to say there? They didn't do anything, and pretty soon that corner of the house was hanging down, it was dropping down. Then after some years, finally the guy woke up and got out his hammers and nails and wood and he finally propped it up. But the house was just deteriorating. The dirt kept falling down and finally—after I think it was 20 years—BAM! the house collapsed!

That's what happens. It's going to come upon you and all of a sudden one day BANG! it crashes! I often wondered when it had that corner hanging out, and it looked like one-third of the house was hanging out on that corner—had no props or anything under it—what would happen if two 300 lb. people got over in the corner of that house, what would happen to that house? Sometimes you think some of the silliest thoughts!

This is repeating it; exactly the same thing. If it's in there once, it's important. If it's in there twice, it's doubly important; Proverbs 24:33 “*Yet, a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to lie down, then your poverty comes stalking, and your wants like an armed man*” (vs 33-34). Just remember that *spiritually!*

- if you don't study
- if you don't pray
- if you're sleepwalking *spiritually*

don't be surprised if one day your house collapses, *because it will!*

You haven't done anything to build it. You haven't done anything to maintain it. I tell you what, the older the house gets the more maintenance is necessary. Since we've lived in our house many years, I can tell you that. What happens after about 15-20 years? *Well, faucets run out, toilets plug up, wood rots!* Our whole back deck we had to replace

two years ago. That was quite a proposition. If we didn't do it, it would just rot and fall down. It's the same thing here, how you build your spiritual house.

Let's see what we need to do on the other hand. We need to be diligent. Remember this: ***What you do today does not give you anything tomorrow.*** In other words, it's like if you were working and you say you earned \$100 today, but tomorrow what are you going to earn? If you earn nothing, does that not take away from what you did yesterday. And if you earn nothing the third day out, does that not even take away even further? ***Never count on what you do today as credit for tomorrow. And never count what you do today as makeup for yesterday.*** Now, perhaps it can be, therefore, you have to take each day and be diligent for each day.

Proverbs 10:4: “He who deals *with* a lazy hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.” You can tie that in with the Laodiceans. *They were dealing with a poor hand; they were sluggards!* But Jesus said, ‘Repent, and be zealous!’—which means *be diligent* and buy the true riches. So, there we have it right there.

Proverbs 21:5: “The plans of the diligent *tend* only to plenty, but everyone *who is* hasty, only to poverty.” You've seen that happen, too. It builds. Notice how it builds.

Proverbs 22:29: “Do you see a man diligent in his work? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before obscure *men.*” Think of this in relationship to eternal life. *See a person diligent in their spiritual life and they shall stand before Christ in honor and glory and eternal life and immortality!* The whole theme of Paul is to be diligent! Wake up, because the time is short!

Proverbs 12:24: “The hand of the diligent shall bear rule, but the lazy shall be under tribute.” You can see this function in the world. It's the same way spiritually.

Verse 27: “The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, but the substance of a diligent man is precious. In the way of righteousness *is* life, and in that pathway *there is* no death” (vs 27-28). All of these things are important for us to do.

Romans 13:14: “But *let us put on* the Lord Jesus Christ, and not make any allowance for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” *Put on*—that's an active, diligent job. What has been given us is a lifetime of things we need to do.

Galatians 3:26: “Because you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of *you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ”

(vs 26-27). That's what we need to *put on*. To *put on* you've also got to *put off*. In other words you have to overcome and put certain things out.

Colossians 3:8: "But now, you should also put off all *these* things: wrath, indignation, malice, blasphemy, *and* foul language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, *seeing that* you have put off the old man together with his deeds... [through baptism] ...and have put on the new man, who *is* being renewed in knowledge according to *the* image of Him Who created him" (vs 8-10). And this renewal is something that needs to be done *constantly! Constantly renewed! Constantly added to!*

Here's the most important thing that we need to understand, Colossians 1:27: "To whom God did will to make known what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**"

Here's how you put on Christ, Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love..." What he's doing is laying out the highest spiritual quality of character that we can attain to.

"...if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, fulfill my joy that you be of the same mind, having the same love... [notice his emphasis on that all the way through] ...being joined together in soul, minding the one thing.... [which is the Kingdom of God] ...*Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory... [through all the carnality and silliness] ...but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus**" (vs 1-5).

- that is how we *wake up*
- that is how we *become diligent*
- that is how we *put on Christ*

'Give no thought for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof.'

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 12:18-21
- 2) Esther 3:1-15
- 3) Esther 5:1-14
- 4) Esther 6:1-12
- 5) Romans 13:1-5
- 6) Genesis 9:1-15

- 7) 1 Timothy 2:1-3
- 8) 1 Peter 2:13-17
- 9) 1 Peter 4:12-16
- 10) Romans 13:2-4, 6-7
- 11) Mathew 22:15-21
- 12) Romans 13:8-9
- 13) Matthew 7:12
- 14) Romans 13:10
- 15) 1 John 5:2-3
- 16) Romans 2:25-29
- 17) Romans 13:11-14
- 18) Ephesians 5:8-14
- 19) 1 Thessalonians 5:5-11
- 20) Proverbs 6:9-10
- 21) Proverbs 24:33-34
- 22) Proverbs 10:4
- 23) Proverbs 21:5
- 24) Proverbs 22:29
- 25) Proverbs 12:24, 27-28
- 26) Romans 13:14
- 27) Galatians 3:26-27
- 28) Colossians 3:8-10
- 29) Colossians 1:27
- 30) Philippians 2:1-5

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 6
- Psalm 58
- Proverbs 25:21-22
- 2 Peter 2:19-20
- Ezekiel 3
- Matthew 25
- Romans 14; 15

Also Referenced Sermon Series:

- *Love of God*
- *Epistle to the Galatians*

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