

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on November 12, 2017**

**"Transformed Living with
Loving Devotion to Each Other
(Romans 12:9-21) – Part 3
Expository Series Romans 12-15"**

[In today's sermon, "Transformed Living with Loving Devotion to Each Other (Romans 12:9-21) – Part 3 ", Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows that through God's love for us and in us, He is transforming us to love others.]

Notes

Introduction:

- This is a review of some of the information we went over last week.
- What is the most important thing that we can realize in life? It's salvation.
- We use the word "realize" because it's not that we obtain it, but rather Jesus has already given it to us.
- But when we realize what He has done for us, the Holy Spirit removes the scales from our eyes and brings us to that experience and understanding of salvation.

- Now, how do we define salvation? It's our relationship with God.
- Once we experience the salvation that Jesus gives us, we then live a life of transformation.
- And we can summarize Scripture in two words: it's belief and response.

This sermon series:

- Our topic today is "Transformed Living with Loving Devotion to Each Other."
- So we're going to see what Paul says about living out a life of loving devotion.
- As we said, this lifetime now is about being transformed because Paul told us that we are being conformed and becoming like Christ.
- And what we'll find out today is that God accomplishes that transformation in our lives through love.
- Paul is going to talk about first loving our fellow brothers and sisters, our fellow believers, and then loving our neighbors, whom we could call not-yet-believers.

Summary of Romans 12:

- Romans 12:1-2 summary – Paul encourages us to be living sacrifices and not be conformed to the world but having our minds transformed and renewed, thus proving the will of God.
 - When we enter into a life of transformation, we are proving the very will of God that He has for our lives.
 - So we are now living out a life of salvation which is a life of change and transformation that comes about by the love of God.

- It starts with our loving of God first and then loving our neighbors around us both our fellow brothers and sisters and those who Jesus is working with in this day and age.
 - Now we know that loving others isn't such an easy thing to do.
 - It's not easy because it's not natural – it doesn't come out of our humanity, it comes out of Jesus' divinity.
 - So we have to realize that loving God first and staying on that path of transformation is then what allows Jesus to work through us to show that love for others.
 - Now if we just love people out of our own humanity, we might take a few steps forward, but it's what God's love can accomplish through us.
- Romans 12:3-8 summary – Serving God and the body of Christ with spiritual gifts whom God has given to each of us.
 - God doesn't leave us on our own – He gives us our spiritual gifts.
 - So our Christian life is truly a practice – a practice exercising that ongoing love from God to others.
- Romans 12:9-21 summary – Christian living is being devoted to each other in love and unity.
 - Paul shows us in these 12 verses 24 specific ways to live out that loving devotion.
 - Now in earlier sermons, when we talking about and exploring the perichortie union, the hypostatic union, and the spiritual union, it was done to point out how God has accomplished our salvation.
 - We have to understand that the incarnation was an absolute game changer because Jesus united humanity to himself for one purpose – so that we would become like Him.

Pastor Craig's personal story to illustrate loving devotion:

- Pastor Craig wanted to share a personal story about this but came up empty.
- So he then prayed a prayer to God to help him remember a personal experience to illustrate God's loving devotion through him.
- Instantly after that prayer, he got a picture in his mind of a card, which he found.
- So here's what this card says:
 - To: Mr. and Mrs. "A".
- It has note on it to Roger Widmer, the store manager of the Egret Book Store on Ambassador College Campus, which says: Mr. Widmer, would you please pass on this card to the people who gave us the class rings. Thank you, David Panarelli.
- Now David and Marti Panarelli were close friends of pastor Craig and his wife when they attended Ambassador College.
- David was the Married Students' Coordinator.
- In the spring of their senior year, both Craig and David were in the Student Center where the vendor who was selling class rings had a display there.
- As they were looking at the rings, Craig asked David, if he was going to buy one.
- David said that he didn't have the money to buy rings for himself and his wife.

- Pastor Craig then went to work on campus typing info at a terminal when the thought suddenly struck him that he should buy both David and Marti class rings, but do it anonymously.
- Craig felt that if they knew who bought the rings for them, it might change his friendship with them in some way.
- After his wife Nan agreed with Craig's idea, he went to Roger Widmer and asked him to invite David and Marti to select class rings and tell them this is a gift from God because He put this idea on the anonymous couple's hearts to do that.
- Here is what David wrote to Roger:

We use the word wonderful so much, that sometimes it doesn't mean what it should. We should have it for the best parts of life for the special people who bring us true happiness, whose warmth and kindness make them stand out from all the rest, for wonderful people like you.

At first I felt uncomfortable accepting such a generous gift. But then I realized he must have thought it out and really wanted to give such a wonderful blessing. I quickly learned a valuable lesson that what you were doing was pure give. There was no way of you looking for a return since you wanted to stay anonymous.

Your gift produced an unusual reaction in us – we were thankful to everybody we met not knowing which person gave us these rings. So, we realized that it came from God and He used you to give it.

We pray that He will bless you one hundred fold for your excellent example of recognizing two individuals who can sometimes feel lost in the crowd. But your gift made us feel very special.

We wanted to wait to send this card, so we could receive the rings first and then send you our feelings about them. Every time I look at this ring, it gives me two different feelings. One of accomplishment, knowing that I have been given a unique opportunity to go through Ambassador College and receive special ice cream.

Secondly, it shows me what standard I'm required to live up to. Lastly, it reminds me of how to give purely out of love and not expecting anything in return. Thank you for your loving consideration. It gave us the boost we needed to finish these last difficult months of college. And I look forward in thanking you face to face in God's kingdom.

- Now, the beautiful part of this story is that pastor Craig met David again in 2002 at a ministerial conference in Dallas.
- While they were in college together, David once commented that friendships between guys are different than friendships between girls.
- He said that girls need to be constantly working on their relationship and to be constantly in touch with each other.
- But guys are different. We could go for 10 years without seeing each other and all of sudden meet up and it's just like we pick up where we left off.

- And that's exactly what happened. Pastor Craig and David meet each other after about a 10 year lapse.
- They met at the conference and during one of their conversations, pastor Craig pulled out that card and set it in front of him.
- At first, he didn't know how to react – he just looked at me and asked if Roger had lost it somehow.
- And then he got it.
- After that, they had a great conversation together.
- So, when we love one another, and more importantly, when we let God love through us, which means when we yield and surrender ourselves to Father, Son and Spirit, some amazing, amazing things happen.
- Our lives and their lives are transformed.
- As a result, pastor Craig's relationship with David and Marti was transformed.
- David's life was also transformed.
- When the Holy Spirit prompts us with thoughts, our role is to simply respond.
- And sometimes responding takes some sacrifice.

Romans 12: 9-21 introduction:

- Now let's look at what Paul had to say about living out our love with his 24 points.
- These can't be done by own efforts, they have to come out of our relationship with father, Son and Spirit.
- That's why we say, love God first, because He first loved us, and then that love can flow through us in these 24 specific ways.
- What Paul is going to show us are simple but they are not easy to do.
- They are simple because all we need to know is that when we live a life yielded to the Father, Son and Spirit, then Jesus Christ through us makes these things happen.
- But the not-easy-part is doing the yielding and placing ourselves on that path of grace so that His Spirit works through us and then that transformation happens.

Romans 12:9 (NASB), Let love be without hypocrisy.

- There was some research done by Group Publishers entitled "Why Nobody Goes to Church Anymore."
- In interviewing thousands of people, they found four main reasons:
 1. I feel judged.
 2. I don't like to be lectured to.
 3. Church members are just a bunch of hypocrites.
 4. Your God is irrelevant to my life, but I'd like to believe there is a God and that He cares for me.
- Now the word "hypocrisy" simply means that we are living without being in harmony with our values.
- It could also mean that we are living lacking "integrity" which means that our values and our actions aren't integrated.
- And so, when we love with hypocrisy, it means we either have a hidden agenda or we're putting on a show because we know that our natural human nature cannot live up to the values that we know we are being called to.

- The reason for this is that we are trying to act and love on our own.
- We have to realize that it's Jesus who lives through us and that we have to let Him love through us.
- When we do that, our actions and words are no longer hypocrisy.
- Now, Paul wouldn't tell us to do these things if God isn't providing the means for us to be able to do them.
- It's the Holy Spirit that changes us and transforms us and when we yield to Him, He can do some amazing things through us.
- Jesus promised us that we would live an "abundant life." He meant a life of spiritual abundance that would be supernatural.
- There is no reason we can't live a life that was promised by Jesus Christ if we do it the right way, which is the "Jesus way."

9b) Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

- When we "cling to what is good," when we're engaged in a flourishing relationship with Jesus, when we're living out that life that He promised us, it's kind of hard to cling to evil at the same time.
- When we're walking "in the Spirit" as Paul encouraged us to do, it's hard to walk in the flesh.
- So when we fill ourselves up with the Spirit, the Spirit does His thing.
- But if we don't do that first, then, it's easy to walk in the flesh, because it is everywhere around us.

10) Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

- The Greek word translated "devotion" applies to a family type of love and devotion.
- So, Paul is saying that when we are devoted in love to one another, it's like we are truly loving our "brothers and sisters."
- This obviously takes faith, first.

11) not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12) rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

- All of these things take a life-time to perfect.
- The life living like Christ is called the "Christian practice."
- The word "practice" means we're not going to get it right the first, second, or third time we try, but we don't give up.
- Just like a doctor, a banker, an accountant or a lawyer practices what he/she does by doing it, we need to do the same.
- Now neuroscientists tell us that when we create new habits or create new thoughts, this creates new neuro pathways in our brains that weren't there before.
- So, we need to continue with our new way of thinking, even though the results we want may not be immediate.
- Paul also tells us to "persevere in tribulation" which means that God doesn't keep us from Tribulation, but He takes us through it.

- So, when we are in the midst of that trial or tribulation, we shouldn't give up on the Father, because He loves us and that He's working things out in us.
- We should have that universal hope that what He's doing is in fact a good thing in the end.
- Now "devoted to prayer" comes easy to some, while it may not be easy for others.
- Pastor Craig admitted that he has to work on this, because it doesn't come naturally to him. He likes to live in the present moment, being spontaneous rather than planning things out.
- So he's been praying to God that he would become more devoted to prayer and that prayer would flow more naturally out of him.
- After again making this prayer to God yesterday, the picture of this little paperback book about prayer that sits on his bookshelf came to mind.
- So pastor Craig picked up the book and found something interesting in it about "flash prayers."
- "Flash prayers" means as you are living out your day and when things come at you, you simply offer up flash prayers to God for help and guidance.
- Pastor Craig then had the thought that he should be praying for some of the sales clerks that he frequently sees. But then he realized that he didn't even know their names.
- So when he went to the laundry shop where they do his shirts, he asked the sales lady her name.
- She said, "Dianne." And pastor Craig told her, "Dianne, I'll be praying for you today." And she said, "Why? What's going on?"
- He answered her, "No reason. I'm just sharing God's love."
- And then she said, "Every day I pray for my customers."
- God's answer to pastor Craig's prayer, literally transformed that day.
- It would be wonderful for those of you who get to church early to gather up a group and head over to the corner and pray about the things that are needed for each other, our church and our community.

13) contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. 14) Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

- These things are not easy to do, because they're not natural to us.
- But, Jesus in us will do those things, because that's how Jesus lived his life while here on earth.
- When we fill our hearts with the Father's love, love can't help but come out of us.

15) Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16) Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

- We should be humble in the way we respond to others.
- We need to hold everyone higher than ourselves because Jesus is in that person just like He is in us.

17) Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men and women.

- We should live in peace with everyone – and not to respond in kind.

19) Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.

- Before, pastor Craig had a different attitude about that. To him, Godly wrath and being revengeful meant that God had this two-by-four and was going to clean house with it.
- But you know that God’s vengefulness, God’s wrath is poured out in a loving way.
- That’s because God loves even the vilest of sinners and will ultimately bring them to the reality of what they did.
- God will carry out His vengefulness and wrath in a totally different way than we could ever imagine. He does it with compassion.

20) “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.” 21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- This passage is saying that our love for others will burn through and change who they are.
- And when we say “enemies” that’s how they might treat us, but we are not to respond in like kind. A wrong in return for a wrong, doesn’t make it right.
- We are to “overcome evil with good.”

11 Habits of Ridiculously Likable People:

- CNBC article by Dr. Travis Bradbury who wrote the book, “Emotional Intelligence (EQ) 2.0”.
- It’s interesting to note that those with a higher emotional intelligence make on the average \$29,000 more per year than those who don’t have a high emotional intelligence.
 1. They are genuine
 2. They don’t pass judgment
 3. They don’t seek attention
 4. They are consistent
 5. They use positive body language
 6. They leave strong first impressions
 7. They greet people by name
 8. They smile
 9. They know who to touch and touch them. (it’s appropriate touching.)
 10. They balance passion and fun
 11. They bring it all together
- This article from the business world backs up what Paul is saying.
- We can wrap up what Paul is saying with this phrase: “Unloving people aren’t loved lovingly”

- Now we all liked to be loved.
- And when we express that love and live out that love, love naturally comes back in return.
- When we smile at others, we're going to get some smiles back. And that's a wonderful thing.
- So, if we extend love to others, we're going to love in return.

Conclusion:

- What does pastor Craig want us to walk away with from this sermon?
- What Paul is showing us is that our job is to love God first, then love others.
- We do that without fear, shame, guilt or doubt.

- God's job is to transform us and others.
- We can't do that ourselves.
- Our role is to be loving and let God's love flow through us by placing our lives on the path of grace, by exercising spiritual acts and disciplines, and then the Spirit flows out of us.
- That's why it's called the "fruits of the Spirit" because they aren't the fruits of the flesh or humanity.

- The positive correlation to the phrase, "Unloving people aren't loved lovingly" is "Loved People Love."
- The three words that sum up what Paul had to say here in these verses is – loved people love.
- When God's love flows out of us, we will do the right thing at the right time and it will be Jesus Christ who does it through us.

Closing Prayer