

The Kindness of God's People

Rom 12:13-5 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

This is a dog eat dog world. You've got to take care of number 1 no one else will. Heard statements like that before? These are common phrases in the unsaved world aren't they? But such statements should be foreign to the saints of God.

Paul in this passage gives us great instruction on how we can be a bright shining light in a dog eat dog world. We can do this by caring for one another, by distributing to the needs of the saints, by being given to hospitality, by weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice. Clearly these are ways by which we as Christians can let our light shine in a darkened sin cursed world, for without a doubt this will set us apart from the world around us.

These verses 13 through 17 can be easily divided into a two part sermon. First we shall note that it speaks of our kindness toward one another, and secondly our kindness toward the unsaved world around us. This morning we shall consider our duty as God's people how we are to act toward one another. Then the Lord willing next Sunday we shall see how we are to act toward those outside of faith.

A. The Christians' kindness toward one another.

1. Providing for the needs of the saints.
 - a. It is important to note that our first responsibility is to **God's elect**.
 - b. We are not required to provide for the needs of all mankind.
 - c. Not our duty to provide for the unsaved world.
2. It is not practicing some kind of communal living - It is not "all things in common".
 - a. Christians in the book of Acts retained control of their goods, but made sure no one went without.
 - b. Ananias - was it not yours to do with as you purposed
3. It is providing for the "**necessities**" of saints in particular need.
 - a. Why we have the office of the deacon in the church.
 - b. Where there is need the church responds.
 - (1) Not convinced that "food pantries" or "soup kitchens" are the proper work of the church.
 - (2) Need to make sure it is a real need. - *If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat* (2 Thes 3:10-11)

1 Thess 4:11-12 "work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing."

4. This is not a suggestion, it is a requirement.
 - a. If a brother or sister has a real need, it is our responsibility as God's family to help one another.
 - b. It must be more than mere lip service.

James 2:15-16 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

- c. Common practice in the early New Testament Church.

1 Cor 16:1-3 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

- 5. Our homes are to open to visitors - *given to hospitality*
 - a. No hotels in that day.
 - (1) When fellow believers passed by - common to open ones home to them.
 - (2) Home missions committee here in our area, or visitation from Garner church.
 - b. When we have a guest worshipping with us and you invite them to your home for a dinner
 - (1) Most excellent way of showing yourself as one who cares
 - (2) Most excellent means - explaining the importance of this church
- 6. Finally it is a deep and sincere care. - *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*
 - a. We literally feel the pain and joy of others.
 - b. Includes both empathy and sympathy
 - c. We grieve with those who suffer
 - d. We rejoice when others are blessed even it is above ourselves.
- 7. It is a glorious witness to the world.
 - a. The natural man envies when another is blessed.
 - b. The natural man enjoys when others fall into grief or suffering.
 - c. The natural man faults the one who has a need.
 - d. The believer searches it out and if it from a providential cause, the church out of love responds.
 - e. The world will see this and realize that we have been with Jesus.
 - f. This is a part of being light and salt before the world.

CONCLUSION: Christian kindness to one another identifies us with Christ.

It is being Christ-like - being a Christ follower.

Caring for others is a definite witness before the world that we have been changed by the power of God.

It will shine as a light before them
Result may only blind them
Or it may make it possible for them to see

It is a means of encouraging each other.
When we help one another
When we understand one another's pain or joy

It is the glorious purpose of the church in behalf of God's chosen people
It is the glorious purpose of the church before the world
It shows our thankful love to Christ