

One Another

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Romans 12.9-21 | October 8, 2017

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our series engaging the “one anothers” found throughout the Christian Scriptures, as we seek to go deeper into community. This week we explore the command “live in harmony with one another.”

II. Connecting with One Another

What comes to mind when you hear the word “harmony”?

III. Study the Text

- a. Before engaging this study, spend a few moments reflecting on last week’s command to “greet one another.”

How have you been greeted this week? How have you greeted others?

Have you noticed anything different about your week after engaging the importance of greeting?

- b. When we engaged parts of this text in April, we saw how “many scholars believe Paul wrote Romans while in Corinth during the early to mid 50’s. As such Paul’s encouragement to love one another (in Corinthians 13) may have arisen due to similar challenges in these two communities.”

Before engaging Romans, then, read 1st Corinthians 13. This text is often read at weddings, though Paul was writing this not to couples, but to the church, the Bride of Christ!

If a church is to live out this kind of love, not only warm and cozy feelings but deliberate actions are required. What particular actions come to mind as you read 1st Corinthians 13? In other words, how are these warm and cozy ideas embodied in real life? How would they affect a congregation’s life? Be as specific as you can:

- c. Turn to Romans 12.9-13.

These verses provide an opportunity for Paul to expound on the kind of love he describes in 1st Corinthians 13. As mentioned above, we engaged these verses in a

study guide earlier this year. If you missed it, click onto <http://gdshp.ch/Romans12StudyGuide>.

As you read these verses now, which of the following commands do you need to work on? Make a note to the right of each one, describing how you could embody it this week:

Being devoted to others

Honoring others above yourself

Keeping your spiritual fervor

Living joyfully

Patiently enduring affliction

Faithfully praying

Sharing with the Lord's people who are in need

Practicing hospitality

d. Read Romans 12.14-16.

While verses 9-13 deal primarily with the spiritual responsibilities of the Christian community, in verse 14 Paul shifts his attention to relationships with outsiders. First, he instructs Christians to "bless those who persecute you," praying God's blessing over persecutors, instead of a curse.

How is this connected to the opening statement in verse 9, to "love sincerely"?

This is integral to Christian faith, seen in Jesus' own teaching (Matthew 5.44, Luke 6.27-28), in his prayer on the cross (Luke 23.34), and that of the first Christian martyr, Stephen (Acts 7.60). Peter even writes, "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."

When have you been tempted to curse instead of bless?

e. Verse 15 inspires John Stott's assertion that "Love enters deeply into [people's] experiences and their emotions, their laughter and their tears, and feels solidarity with them, whatever their mood." (see also 1st Corinthians 12.26)

When has someone done that for you? How could you do that for another?

f. Verse 16, our focus for this week's message, uses the word "harmony" which literally means to "think the same thing." This word also occurs in Philippians 2.2, and recalls the "sound doctrine" described in 1st Timothy 1.10, 6.3, 2nd Timothy 1.13, 4.3, and Titus 1.9, 2.1.

But, one author writes, "This is certainly not demanding that everyone think the same things, but it is calling for a unity of heart and attitude." What's the difference?

g. Following the command to live in harmony, Paul gives further instruction required for harmony to exist. How are these later commands in verse 16 connected to living in harmony?

h. Read John 17.20-26

In one translation, the heading of this section is "Jesus Prays for All Believers." In a way, though, it's also a kind of benediction, a blessing, or a "good word" for his followers.

How is it a prayer? How is it a kind of benediction? Who else does Jesus mention in these verses? How are they connected to his followers?

i. Notice that Jesus prays not only for His disciples, but also for those who would *become* his disciples *through* His disciples!

Who are you praying for, that they might *become* a disciple *through* interaction with Jesus' disciples?

j. In verses 22-23, Jesus prays for the church's unity. What is the basis for this unity? *How* unified does Jesus want the church to be?

How do you understand this unity in light of the thousands of Christian denominations? How can we "live in harmony with" them!?

How are you being called to increasingly "live in harmony with" fellow members of Good Shepherd's family? How about with those who worship at other churches?

IV. Pray

a. Lift up this series, One Another, that through it we might accept the call to create authentic Christian community,

b. Pray for the times you feel tempted to curse instead of bless (be specific – and honest!), then ask God to give you His Spirit of love instead,

c. Ask God to bless the different Christian churches you know, by name – for their leaders, their community, that they would glorify God, and make disciples of Jesus Christ!