

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Studies in Romans Series 6

No 31

The Debt and Duty of Christian Living

Scripture Reading: Romans 13:8-14

Paul here corrects two irregularities that were current in the Church in Rome. They were not extending the grace of true Christian love toward each other; and they were not living the pure life of practical holiness toward the Lord which one might expect of someone who has accepted God's great gift of salvation in Christ.

The Debt of Christian Love

The word 'debt' or 'owe' is the same in the previous verse; an obligation, what is due. Here is a transition from legal obligation to the moral.

Kenneth Wuest tells us that this word 'owe' in v8 is in a form which says, 'Stop owing to anyone even one thing.' That is, Paul wanted them to stop, to cease neglecting their love-debt to other believers.

Christians are brothers in Christ and we have a debt to others in the family that can never be paid, just as in our natural family we never get to the point where we no longer have an obligation to the others. Someone said, 'The debt can never be paid off, but we should keep the interest paid up. This is a love-debt.

It is the payment of a debt that can never be reduced. It is not a credit toward righteousness, for that has been credited on account of the death of Jesus Christ by God's grace. It is credited toward the enrichment of our inheritance, that crown reserved in Heaven for us. See Matthew 6:19&20, 10:42, 2 Timothy 4:8.

Just as we were justified by God by being declared to be righteous when we trusted Jesus Christ and His

substitutionary death at Calvary, so now being clothed with His righteousness, we are filled by the Spirit of God in order that Jesus might live His holy life in us. It is summarised in his words:

For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. Romans 5:10.

John put it this way:

This is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us 1 John 3:23.

Those who are born in the likeness of His Son are:

Love Motivated: We do not do what we do because love proscribes some things and prescribes others. We live in the interests of others because love is the environment of Godly living.

Spirit Led: Love rushes to fill the vacuum left by other's sin and suffering's need. How can we as individuals meet the all need in a world overwhelmed by need? The Spirit of God is the One in control.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Romans 8:14

We are not machines, nor are we the master of our own fate. We are fully functional individuals living in a faith based partnership with God

through His Spirit who is in us. Gospel Equipped: Along with a personal resource and a holy purpose, we have the privilege and responsibility of offer to those in such desperate need the same good news of God which we heard and love to which we responded:

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." Romans 1:16&17

Do these qualities characterise our lives? This is the way Paul expected the Christian's in Rome to live, as the natural result of the gospel he expounded in his letter. Dare we offer our Lord anything less?

The Duty of Christian Holiness

The other thing Paul wants us to stop doing is deferring experiencing the great deliverance that God has provided for us in Christ.

'Understanding the present time' as it is in the NIV is well put, but would have been even better to have continued on, 'that the hour has come'. It means 'we being able to interpret our situation'.

Salvation in the New Testament has a range of meanings depending on the context. It can mean, a national or personal, physical or spiritual, present or future, partial or complete

state of well being, deliverance or preservation. In this text it refers to our experiencing all of what Paul has been teaching.

It is time that we were entering into that state of deliverance and well being in the Lord which comes from our justification and sanctification. The time of theory is over. It is time to put the armour on and enter the fray. The defeat of sin of chapter 7 is past. Day is dawning.

The things of the night that drag us down are the sins of the flesh which we cannot shake off v13 (Gentile) and the sins of self righteousness which we cannot achieve by obeying the law v9 (Jewish)

The time has come to act on what we have been taught; to work out in our experience that which Paul has explained and illustrated. No one can do it for us. We must act for ourselves. It works. God has not set before us an unachievable goal. There is perfection, mistakes and disappointments are inevitable, but practical holiness is at our fingertips.

All of this in One Verse

If you could condense all the teaching of Paul in this important topic to a simple statement, how would it look.

Well, Paul has done it for you:

Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Romans 13:14.

Bible quotations in this study are from the NIV, unless otherwise acknowledged.

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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