

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical: 12:1-15:33** (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

In Romans, Paul has emphasized that the righteousness of God is acquired by faith and faith alone.

Slide # 2

Romans 4:5 (NKJV)

5 But to him who does **not work** but **believes** on Him who justifies the ungodly, his **faith** is accounted for righteousness,

However, once we are saved by faith alone, we are then to live for God. It is the mercies (kindnesses) of God that have brought us to salvation. And on the basis of those mercies Paul appeals to the believer to present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice. This, as the will of God, is our reasonable service and involves being transformed by the renewing of our minds, which affects all the relationships of life.

Slide # 3

Faith → Changed Lives

Rom. 12:1-2 Love for God

Rom. 12:3-16 Love for the body of Christ

Rom. 12:17-21 Love for our enemies

In the middle of Paul's exhortations to believers on how they should love one another, we have Romans 12:14, which anticipates how Christians should respond to those who hate them – that is, their enemies.

Slide # 4

Romans 12:14 (NKJV)

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Building on this, the concluding verses of Romans 12 give four resounding negative imperatives.

Slide # 5

- v. 14 do not curse
- v. 17 repay no one evil for evil
- v. 19 do not avenge yourselves
- v. 21 Do not be overcome by evil

If you are going to live for God you are going to have enemies. Jesus had enemies and you will too. It just goes with the turf. The world will hate you simply for loving Jesus (2 Tim. 3:12).

Slide # 6

John 15:18–19 (NKJV)

18 “If **the world hates you**, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore **the world hates you**.

How should we respond to the world's hate? Well, retaliation or revenge is absolutely forbidden to the followers of Christ. Jesus never retaliated against His enemies, and neither should we. Instead, we are called to imitate Jesus in all the relationships of life, including how we respond to our enemies.

In Romans 12:17-21 Paul instructs us how we should respond to those who mistreat us. There are various points that intersect with what Christ taught in His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7.

Romans 12:17–21 (NKJV)

17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

The most natural thing in the world is to respond in kind to someone who treats you wrongly. We naturally want “payback” – to get even. In fact, when bad comes down on someone who has been perpetrating evil the world celebrates this as “karma”. We like it when the bully gets his “comeuppance”. There is something fleshly satisfying about it.

Paul Harvey....

Our "For What It's Worth Department" hears from Hershey, Pennsylvania — where the woman in the Mercedes has been waiting patiently for a parking place to open up. The shopping mall was crowded.

The woman in the Mercedes zigzagged between rows — then up ahead she saw a man with a load of packages head for his car. She drove up and parked behind him and waited while he opened his trunk and loaded it with packages.

Finally he got in his car and backed out of the stall. But before the woman in the Mercedes could drive into the parking space A young man in a shiny new Corvette zipped past and around her and HE pulled into the empty space and got out and started walking away.

"Hey!" shouted the woman in the Mercedes, "I've been waiting for that parking place!" The college-ager responded, "Sorry, lady; that's how it is when you're young and quick."

At that instant she put her Mercedes in gear, floorboarded it, and crashed into and crushed the right rear fender and corner panel of the flashy new Corvette. Now the young man is jumping up and down shouting, "You can't do that!"

The lady in the Mercedes said, "That's how it is when you're old and rich!"

And that, my friends, is the way of the world. You do me and I will do you back! In fact, the world has a saying that says: “Do me once, shame on you, do me twice, shame on me.” The world’s way is to repay evil with evil. You hit me, and I will hit you back – harder. The world’s way is, “Do unto others exactly as they have done unto you – if not WORSE!”

How different is the teaching of Jesus.

Slide # 7**Matthew 5:39 (NKJV)**

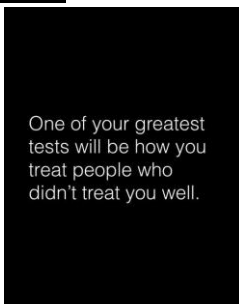
39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

Slide # 8

Good for evil: Godlike

Evil for evil: Man-like

Evil for good: Devil-like

Slide # 9**Slide # 10****1 Thessalonians 5:15 (NKJV)**

15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

We are to be God-like in responding to evil.

Instead of repaying evil for evil the Bible says we should, “***Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.***” The LSB says, “***respecting what is good in the sight of all men***”. The ESV says, “***Do what is honorable in the sight of all.***” Good things are things that are proper and ethically right as generally understood (cf. Prov. 3:4).

This is telling us that the world is watching how we will respond to mistreatment. To have regard for good things means honorable things. It is to respond in a way that even the world recognizes as intrinsically morally good.

It is funny that, on one level, even the world knows how a Christian should behave. Human beings are moral beings made in the image of God. Even the lost have a moral consciousness (Rom. 2:15). And they are watching for how we respond. Will we retaliate in the flesh (like they would do), or will we take the higher GOOD ground?

We had a man in our church years ago and he worked in an office where they hated him for being a Christian.

One day, one of the people who had been mean to him was walking ahead of him in the parking lot, and a car was backing out and was about to hit her, and she didn't see it. He immediately cried out to her and she stepped out of the way. He said she noticed that he had not repaid evil with evil, but rather in a good way for her good.

Slide # 11

Matthew 5:16 (NKJV)

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

A certain judge was constantly annoyed by the sneering remarks and abusive language of an attorney. Instead of cracking down on the lawyer and silencing him, the judge would only smile and chew on his pencil. People wondered how he could be so patient.

At a dinner party someone asked him, "Why don't you do something about that wise-guy lawyer?" The judge laid down his fork, and resting his chin on his hands said, "Up in our town there lives a widow who has a dog. Whenever there is a full moon, that dog barks and barks all night."

Then the judge quietly resumed his eating. One person asked, "But Judge, what about the dog and the moon?"

He replied, "Well, the moon just keeps right on shining!"

- ***Our Daily Bread***

And when we are being mistreated that is what we should do – just keep right on shining for the Lord!

It is said that the world will not judge us by our doctrine but by our practice.

Slide # 12

There are five Gospels:
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
and the Christian. Most people
will never read the first four.

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As is often said, “*The Christian is the only Bible some people ever read*”. And what are we telling them by how we live? That is the great issue.

Christian conduct should be recognizably commendable before non-Christians (2 Cor. 8:21; 1 Thess. 5:15). – **Alan Johnson**

Footnote: I do think there is a place for self-defense. Retaliation or vengeance is always wrong (cf. Mt. 5:39) but that is different than defending yourself. Earlier in their ministry Jesus sent His disciples out without essentially anything except wonder working powers. However, Luke 22:36 marks a transition where Jesus now says...

Slide # 13

Luke 22:36 (NKJV)

36 Then He said to them, “But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and **he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.**

Jesus told His disciples that now they should secure a sword. For what? Well, I would assume for protection. I think the spirit of the NT is that harming someone is the last resort, but there is a place for protection and self-defense. Even the laws of the land generally recognize this to be true. LIFE is a very high priority in the Bible. The midwives protection of the babies is commended (not their lying per se, but their motives to protect life). Rahab's protection of the spies was commendable. We are under human government as ordained by God, and the government certainly recognizes the place of proper self-defense. Even the spirit of “if anyone does not provide for his own” in 1 Tim. 5:8 would indicate that there is a place for self-defense.

So in the matter of “Repay no one evil for evil” we are talking vengeance NOT a matter of proper self-defense.

18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

“***If it is possible***” suggests that sometimes this may not be possible. To really live at peace takes two. One person can wreck a relationship! And sad to say, even Christians too often don't properly keep the peace. We, too, have the flesh, and if there is an outbreak of the flesh, it is always ugly.

Slide # 14**Galatians 5:15 (NKJV)**

15 But if you **bite and devour** one another, beware lest you be **consumed** by one another!

How sad it is that Christians need to be instructed not to bite and devour one another! This is the exact opposite of what we are to be about. But sometimes, for whatever carnal reason, it is not possible to live peaceably with someone – because they insist on being at war with you.

Years ago, we had a lady in the church and she told me at another Bible teaching church she had attended earlier in life that a woman she had known for years one day came up to her and said, “***Would you do me a favor?***” to which the lady in our church said, “***Well of course***”. The woman then said, “***Well, then don’t ever talk to me again.***” The lady in our church had no idea where that came from or why. She didn’t know what to do, so she went and talked to the pastor at her former church, and he said, “***If that is her wish, then you should honor it.***” I don’t know if that was good counsel or not, but as far as I know, they NEVER talked again. They are both dead now and it is a pretty good assumption that fellowship has resumed in heaven. But how sad it is when Christians can’t get along.

“To live above, with saints we love, that will be glory.
To live below, with the saints we know, that’s quite a different story!”

But here is the deal, “***as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.***” “All men” means everyone both saved and lost. We can’t help what other people do, but we are responsible for what we do! We are responsible to keep the peace as much as depends on us! Our calling is to be peacemakers.

Slide # 15**Matthew 5:9 (NKJV)**

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

We should never be the troublemaker. We should never be the instigator of the problem.

For illustrations sake: Let's suppose I have a snowball with hard ice in the core of it and another person also has the same. I can choose not to throw my harmful snowball, but I can't control what the other person does. The disturbance of the peace should never be initiated by the Christian. The believer should never be the one to break the peace (cf. Rom. 14:19; 2 Tim. 2:22; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 3:11). We are to be peace-loving people. We want to live in peace if at all possible.

If at all possible, our goal is to get along with everyone in a peaceful fashion.

Now that does have boundaries. We are not going to pursue peace at all costs in the sense of compromising the truth. This is part of what Paul means when he says, "***If it is possible***". Sometimes it is not possible because someone holds your faith against you and hates you for that very reason. In such a case, that is not your problem! It is what it is. That is on them and not on you (cf. Mt. 10:34-36).

In the downgrade controversy that Charles Spurgeon was involved in, the Baptist Union accused Spurgeon of not being peaceable as many wanted peace through compromise. Spurgeon responded by saying, "***The wisdom from above is FIRST pure***" – and that is right – that is what the Bible says.

Slide # 16

James 3:17–18 (NKJV)

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

In California, we had a collie that was a good dog, except that whenever the neighbor drove by in his truck or the UPS truck went by, this dog would go into a frenzy of barking. It must have really bugged our neighbor, because one morning when our daughter Christa, who was about 12, went out to feed the dog, the neighbor came outside and started yelling at her, with a lot of profanity, to keep our dog quiet.

I was inside and could hear what was going on and it made me mad that he would use such foul language on my sweet daughter.

So I went outside and yelled back at him to keep his filthy mouth shut around my kids. He yelled back at me and I went back inside.

This was *Sunday* morning and I had to preach God's Word in a few minutes! God was convicting me about my angry exchange with my neighbor. The church was only about a quarter mile away, so I walked to church. As I came out of the house with my tie on and briefcase in hand, the neighbor and his daughter's live-in boyfriend drove by. The dog was going crazy. I raised my hand to signal my neighbor to stop. He and the boyfriend looked like they were ready to pile out of the truck for a fight. Before they did, I said to the neighbor, *"I'm really sorry that I yelled at you as I did, and I'm sorry about our dog. I ask your forgiveness. I don't know how to get him to stop barking at your truck."*

His countenance changed instantly. He apologized for yelling at our daughter. And from then on, we always exchanged a friendly wave whenever we crossed paths. I never got to share the gospel with him, but I'm sure that he knew I was a pastor. At least he knew that I wasn't a religious hypocrite. – **Pastor Steven Cole**

As much as depends on you live peaceably with all men!

When it comes to being a peace-loving person, there are a couple of things that will take you a long way here.

Number one: When things are tending to escalate use your library voice.

Slide # 17

Proverbs 15:1 (NKJV)

1 A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

Years ago I read a story about a woman who was on a job where she had to deal with customers who were very angry for whatever reason. She was so successful in de-escalating those situations that the higher-ups in the company called her in and wanted to know what her secret was. She said it was very simple: ***"The angrier and the louder the person gets the quieter and softer she gets"***. That response carried her a long way in being able to consistently reach a peaceable conclusion.

Number two: Be a big forgiver. In the body, there are always people who say or do things that are hurtful or unwise. Frankly, we all do or say stupid things on a pretty regular basis – me included. This is why the Bible says love forgives. We all need to be forgiven. We all need to forgive. It is often stated: “He who refuses to forgive breaks the bridge down that he himself must cross over.”

Slide # 18

1 Peter 4:8 (NKJV)

8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”

True love forgives! Keeping the peace means being a big forgiver and it means being willing to apologize and ask forgiveness when we are out of line. The Bible says, “**Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.**” (Ja. 5:16).

“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

To “avenge” means to get revenge. It means to get even for a wrong done to you. Often we speak of people seeking to get “their pound of flesh”. The motto of Scotland historically has been: “No one treads on me unpunished!” I have heard people say, “I don’t get mad – I get even.” In my BC days I had a friend who would say, “When you least expect it – expect it” meaning he was going to get even in a surprise fashion.

But that is not to be our attitude as Christ’s followers!

What do we call it when someone does us wrong, and we choose not to move in revenge? It is called MERCY! Mercy is the withholding of judgment upon those who deserve it.

God is a very merciful God. If it was not for God’s mercy the whole world would go straight to HELL immediately! Jesus repeatedly told the religious leaders (the Pharisees) to learn about MERCY. They were all about legalism and lawish rules but they knew nothing of MERCY.

Slide # 19

Hosea 6:6 (NKJV)

6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Matthew 9:13 (NKJV)

13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Matthew 12:7 (NKJV)

7 But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

God wants us to be merciful people, and that involves not avenging ourselves – not taking matters into our own hands – not paying them back according to what they have coming.

Now someone says, "What about eye for eye or tooth for tooth as seen in the OT. We are getting a little ahead of ourselves, but even in the OT they were not to personally take matters into their own hands but rather to work with the organized theocratic governance that God had put in place. Even so today God has ordained the governing authorities to exact retribution because God has ordained government as "an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil." (Rom. 13:4)

So, while we should never seek personal vengeance, there is a place to get legal authorities involved in the case of criminal activity. And in the case of a sinning brother there is a place for church discipline as spelled out in the NT – not as a matter of vengeance but rather of correction. The issue here is personal vengeance. There is no place for this!

Rather we are to give this over to God and let Him deal with it. If wrath is ultimately called for give space for God to exact punishment according to His perfect ways.

We don't have to wonder what Paul is talking about because quoting from Deut. 32:35 he quotes God as saying, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord (cf. Heb. 10:30).

Slide # 20

Deuteronomy 32:35 (NKJV)

35 Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.'

Sometimes people who don't know the Bible very well say things like: "Well the God of the OT is a God of vengeance but the God of the NT is a God of love and grace." Hello! Romans 12:19 is a NT text and it quoting from the OT says God is a God of vengeance. The God of the OT is the God of the NT.

Payback is God's business! Note as seen even in the Deuteronomy text that God gives space for repentance. "Their foot shall slip in due time". In due time the judgment of God will fall on them. In the meantime, we are not to take matters into our own hands. Rather, we are to commit the situation to God and let Him handle it in His timing and on His terms, which are always perfect.

God's "vengeance" must require that infinite knowledge of conditions, of motives, of results upon others, which God, the just Judge, alone possesses. – **William Newell**

As someone has said, "God is much more angry at sin than we are and He is also much more longsuffering." God will ultimately straighten things out and He will do so in perfect accord with His holiness and love.

In the meantime we are to follow Christ's example:

Slide # 21

1 Peter 2:23 (NKJV)

23 who, when He was reviled, **did not revile in return**; when He suffered, He **did not threaten**, but **committed Himself to Him who judges righteously**;

This is exactly what we are to do. We are not to strike back or respond in kind but rather commit ourselves and the whole situation to God, Who is the righteous Judge. Don't play God. Vengeance is God's prerogative. Let God deal with it!

Slide # 22



A woman was bitten by a mad dog with rabies. She was informed that she might not survive and that she should make out her will. She wrote furiously for two hours. Those observing said, "That seems like a very long will regarding your last wishes." She snapped, "This is a list of people I'm going to bite."

Don't be that person! Don't be vengeful! Rather give it to God.

20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

This is a quote from Proverbs 25:21-22.

Slide # 23

Proverbs 25:21–22 (NKJV)

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;

22 For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, And the LORD will reward you.

The first part of this verse is clear. We are not to be vengeful when people mistreat us, but instead, we should be kind to them. "***If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink***". That is clear! Don't work for his demise; rather, be kind in meeting his needs.

But then he says, "***For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head***." This has been a source of all kinds of discussion and ideas.

To begin with virtually no one thinks this should be taken literally or normally.

Slide # 24

The Golden Rule of Bible Interpretation

If the plain sense makes good sense, seek no other sense.

Pouring hot coals on someone's head is a case where the plain literal sense makes no good sense. How does literally putting hot coals on someone's head possibly harmonize with the kindness of feeding them or giving them a drink? Talk about being counterproductive.

Clearly the writer is speaking metaphorically but still we are left with what is the idea being communicated? Scholars have two main ideas that are debated.

- 1) Some tie it back to the idea of God's vengeance in verse 19. This view says, "kill them with kindness" knowing that if they don't repent God will eventually punish them. An argument for this view is that in the OT the figure of "coals of fire" is consistently used in reference to God's judgment (cf. 2 Sam. 22:9; 22:13; Ps. 11:6; 18: 8, 13; 140:9-10; Prov. 25:21-22). So, this view says respond with kindness knowing that if they don't respond God will judge them all the more for it.

However, others argue that this turns the spirit of the text on its head because this would mean the motivating factor in view would still have a revengeful aim intended to potentially be for the enemy's ultimate harm as signified by heaping coals of fire on their head.

Slide # 25

Proverbs 24:17–18 (NKJV)

17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;

18 Lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, And He turn away His wrath from him.

The LORD does not want us to have a heart that is motivated by the fall of our enemy. This displeases the LORD.

- 2) So, the second view, the one MOST hold to, is that the kindness shown to an enemy results in coals of fire being heaped upon the head in the sense that this metaphorically **pictures burning conviction** that hopefully will bring them to repentance. That would seem to go well with the flow of thought as seen in the next verse, which says, ***"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."***

Yes, ultimately, God does bring WRATH down on those who refuse to repent. Vengeance ultimately belongs to God, but it is the last resort. God doesn't want to vengefully judge people. Rather He wants them to respond to conviction. He wants them to experience His mercy and His grace and this is to be our spirit as well.

In Ezekiel 33:11 God says, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked”. In the NT it says God “desires all men to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4) and again God is “not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). Any interpretation of Romans 12:20 should accommodate for these realities. We are not wanting to do anything that would further increase the punishment of our enemies. That is the opposite of what we should seek.

However, we do seek by our actions to see them come to repentance – which I think is preferable here. Through our kindness the desire is that this will bring about burning conviction that results in repentance and saving faith.

The course of action called for is consistent with verse 17 – instead of repaying evil for evil we respond in a good and honorable way. The intended goal is not to hurt but to help, not to alienate, but to win them. The goal in effect is to “shame them” which leads to repentance.

“Burning coals upon his head” does not refer to coals of judgment (hence a way of getting back at the other) but the fires of shame and remorse burning the conscience of the offender and hopefully bringing about repentance and reconciliation to the offended. – **Alan Johnson**

Our personal responsibility is to love and serve our enemy according to his needs, and genuinely to seek his highest good. – **John Stott**

The attitude of the Christian under the rule of love is to be one of MERCY and not that of retaliation or vengefulness.

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

This is Paul’s summary statement! If we curse those who abuse us, if we repay with evil, if we seek vengeance, then we ourselves are overcome by evil! We have then come down to their level. Evil has then had its way with us.

Instead we are to overcome evil with good! When we bless our persecutors, when we respond with kindness to those who mistreat us, we play the part of the victor and God can greatly use us.

To receive kindness, to see love when it seems uncalled for, can melt the hardest heart. - **Expositors**

In the end LOVE wins – never hate! Loving your enemy is a totally radical thing. It is a God thing. Remember Jesus died for His enemies not His friends. Christ died for us while “we were yet sinners” (Rom. 5:8). Romans 5:10 says, “while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son.”

Loving your enemy is supernatural living that really puts the power of God on display!

It’s good to love those who love you, but the real test of love is when people don’t love you back. To love them in spite of their actions is God’s kind of love. Only God’s kind of love dies for an enemy!

Slide # 26

Negative

v. 14 - Don’t curse
 vv. 17-18 Don’t retaliate
 vv. 19-20 Don’t take revenge
 v. 21 Don’t be overcome
 by evil

Positive

Bless
 Seek peace
 Give it to God/Be kind
 Overcome evil with good

President Abraham Lincoln had an enemy named Edwin Stanton. He treated Lincoln with contempt. He said it was foolish to go to Africa in search for a gorilla when one could be found in Springfield Illinois. However, later Lincoln appointed Stanton as his minister of war because he felt he was the most qualified. After Lincoln was shot and killed Stanton called Lincoln the greatest leader of men. Love had overcome.

One day someone tried to call out Lincoln for his gracious attitude towards his enemies saying, “Why do you try to make friends of them? You should try to destroy them.” Lincoln responded, “***Am I not destroying my enemies when I make them my friends.***” That is the profound. That is overcoming evil with good.

Slide # 27

Proverbs 16:7 (NKJV)

7 When a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Doctor Viktor Frankl was a Jew who was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II. He was naked and repeatedly tortured by Nazi doctors who performed a variety of inhumane experiments on his body. He experienced horrendous acts of anti-Semitism, persecution, brutality, physical abuse, malnutrition, and unthinkable humiliation. His dignity was stripped from him, he lost his wife, his parents and his brother.

Viktor came to the point where he said, ***“everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances”***.

Wow! That is really profound.

Chuck Swindoll says,

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think, say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it.

The text today in our study of Romans is speaking to Christians. The fruit of the Spirit is love and without the Spirit’s help we can’t live this way – we can’t really love as we are called to do without God’s help. 1 John 4:19 says, “We love Him because He first loved us.” Romans 5:8 says, “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

It all begins with FAITH. The Bible says, “without faith it is impossible to please Him”. The most important choice you will ever make (and that by grace) is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. In the OT Joshua told the people “choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve” (Josh. 24:15).

In Romans Paul speaks of the “obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5; 16:25-26). Hebrews 3:7-8 says the Holy Spirit says, “Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts”. The Bible says, “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor. 6:2)

What must you do? The Bible says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). Paul says, “With the heart one believes...and with the mouth confession is made” (Rom. 10:10).

As Savior Christ died for ALL your sins – that’s grace. As Lord over all He arose again the third day. Believe in Him as your Savior and your risen Lord and confess Him. The mouth tells on the heart. Have you believed and confessed? Now is the accepted time!

As Christians we have the Holy Spirit and by the grace of God our attitude in all the relationships of life is to be totally transformed. We are to live out God’s love as the fruit of our faith, even to the point where we love our enemies.

God help us to live out His love in all the relationships of our life.
This puts God on display.
It brings Him glory!

Indeed, may our lives be defined by: ***“To God be the glory.”***

It’s all about Him!