

Simplicity of the Simple Life
Simple But Not Natural (Wk 18)

Romans 12:9-13 NKJV

*⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; ¹³ distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. ¹⁴ **Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.***

Review of Doug Logan's teaching last week.

Disclaimer: This morning, I will churn the water and only you can know when and how to apply the directive of our Lord and Savior, Jesus of Nazareth.

“Bless” in the Greek in this passage means to invoke blessings upon one

“Persecute” in the Greek in this passage means in any way whatever to harass, trouble, or annoy, disturb with hostile intent

J.B. Phillips NT *¹⁴ And as for those who try to make your life a misery, bless them. Don't curse, bless.*

Eugene Peterson *Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath.*

Pause long with silence.....

How deep does your love grow?

We are not talking about religiosity but rather a growing, deepening, abiding relationship with the God of Heaven.

We cannot walk in the simplicity of these simple things if we don't have a genuine faith relationship with Jesus through His grace and forgiveness.

How deep does your love grow?

Are you allowing God's love for you to grow in your life so that you can learn to love out of the overflow of a deeply sincere love?

How do you naturally respond to animosity, mistreatment, and hostility?

This verse challenges our natural responses to personal attacks.

We cannot take up our cross and follow Jesus in our own strength.

Jesus must be our Savior and He must also be our Lord. We must learn to follow His example of love, forgiveness, and mercy.

When we are weak, He is strong on our behalf.....especially when we allow Him

2 Corinthians 12:9-11 NIV ⁹ *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Paul's simple challenge to these Roman Christians is a reflection of the Upside Down Kingdom teaching that Jesus delivered to a huge group of people gathered on a mountain side as recorded in Matthew 5:44 (NLT) *But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!*

Peter continues the teachings of Jesus in 1 Peter 3:9 (NLT) *Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing.*

Honest confession.....I don't like this simple directive.

This response is not within my DNA. This is hard stuff.

What I have realized is that these types of simple directives make me evaluate my heart and my motives.

Jesus teaching that we refer to as the Sermon on the Mount was all about addressing empty religiosity and evaluating why we do what we do.

We have to take a painfully honest deep dive into our hearts, minds, and souls.

The difficulty is how does this flush out in our daily lives because it creates a friction point!

Does this teaching mean that we don't stand up for ourselves?

Are we supposed to condone spousal abuse or sexual abuse of children? NO

Does this override the way that God has called a man to provide and protect? NO

Should we abstain from serving in the military? NO

Is it wrong to own a knife, pistol, shotgun, or rifle? NO

Is it wrong to defend ourselves or our loved ones? NO

Does this simple directive take precedent over all other teachings in the Bible? NO

We need to do the hard work of searching the scripture to learn the whole counsel of God.

This is not a position of weakness or powerlessness.

This is not playing the victim or being a doormat.

What this is an incredible extension of relational love.

This is the process of extending love past natural human boundaries.

Why would we be willing to do something that seems farfetched and unnatural?????

The love of A Father who sent His only Son to show love, forgiveness, grace, and mercy to anyone who would believe.

As we were reminded last week, Jesus paid the full purchase price for broken, damaged goods.....Us.

This is all about experiencing the love and forgiveness of Father God.....salvation

This is all about identity as sons and daughters of our King

This is all about incredible strength that only comes through the Holy Spirit

This is all about kingdom mission as our eyes are opened through the Holy Scripture

This is about the good news of the gospel that burns in our hearts through prayer

We must learn to lean into our Lord and Savior's ways and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This is not an easy directive for most of us but we need to do the deep work of evaluation as this process purifies our faith.

Only truly strong people in Christ can *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*

Faith, Hope, and Love are not nice words on a wall hanging but rather a desperate response to the hard challenges of life.

Persecuted church video (57:55 seconds in length)

Conclusion