

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon
Wednesday, April 3, 2024

Romans 12:17–21

¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

¹⁹Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*” says the Lord. ²⁰Therefore

“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.”

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

How to Treat Everybody

Main idea: Beyond their mutual love unto one another in the Lord, believers are to treat all other men well for the Lord.

Introduction: The church is not only to be inward-looking with how we treat one another, but outward-looking with how we treat all men, because we are upward-looking, doing all things for the Lord’s sake.

1. Good to all: live peaceably, v17–18.

1. If believers will persecute you, others will certainly do you evil. Be prepared for it, so that you don’t suffer the worst harm (yourself doing evil). No “he started it”!
2. Always do things with a view toward ultimate good, but especially in front of “all men” — who likely don’t even know what “good” is (cf. v2).
3. Let them feel the difference between them and you in the maintaining of the peace, v18

2. Good to your enemies: overcome evil, v19–21

1. There will be those whose evil against you is out of enmity, and whom the civil magistrate will neglect to punish. In such a case, you must still not take matters into your own hands. Leave room for the proper agent of wrath (namely/especially the Lord!).
2. Doing good overcomes the evil.
 1. Whether by burning coals of shame used to convert.

2. Or by burning coals of wrath which will be all the more increased

Conclusion: in all your relationships and all your interactions, conduct yourself out of regard for the Lord!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Romans 12 17-21 these are God's words. Repay. No one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

If it is possible. As much as depends on you. Live peaceably with all men. Bluffed, do not avenge yourselves. But rather give place to wrath. For it is written. Vengeance is mine? I will repay. Says the Lord. 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. Do not be overcome by evil. But to overcome evil. With.

Amen, that since this reading of God, Inspired. And Aaron tort Well, we've heard much in the last couple of weeks about Loving one another in the church. As a response to God's mercy to us as an expression. Of our being made like Jesus. This is what Jesus has done.

He has loved the And given himself for her and ordered everything that happens in all of creation throughout all of history. For her good. And so it is right and good that even as we have been hearing from The letter first John as well. That one of the chief things in the Christian Life is to love one another as Christ has loved us.

That we find ourselves. Enjoying and expressing our fellowship with God. By our fellowship with one another, the shared life of Believers and that God himself has intentionally assembled us arranged us as a body. No, part of which can function properly without the others. So that we might enjoy this Fellowship with one another and express this fellowship with one, another and truly.

As the Apostle John says, in the first chapter of first, John. Our fellowship is. With the Lord, Jesus Christ, with our heavenly father, and his son Jesus Christ. But as we come now to verses 17 through 21 in Romans chapter 12, We find that the church is not only to be inward looking.

Thinking much of how we love one another well. But the church also ought to be outward-looking seeking to love all men. Well seeking to love our neighbor well and even seeking to love our enemy. Well, In part. Because as we love our neighbor, well, we show. What is good?

Because it is God's will that Good and pleasing and perfect as we heard earlier in this chapter, but our neighbor, the all men who are out there and not part of the body, not part of the one another, they do not know. What God's word says. They have the law of God written upon their

hearts, but they do not have examples of what is good and furthermore they call good evil and evil, good.

And so we honor our Lord. By valuing, what is good in the sight of our Brethren. And, We'll consider that. What You're honoring.

We honor our Lord by doing what is good in the sight of our neighbor. And we'll consider that in verses 17 through 18, what to do with all men, do good to all men and especially live peaceably. But then the special case versus 19-21 of our enemies. What to do with our enemies?

Well, do good to your enemies as well. And the particular case, the example, then or the theme overcome evil. So do good to all by living peaceably. Do good to your enemies. By overcoming evil. Now, when he was still talking about a relationships within the church, he said, in verse 14, bless those who persecute you, Bless and do not curse.

Preparing us ahead of time. Uh, if Uh Believers are going to persecute us, then we want to be prepared for it by the word of God. So we're not surprised. And even more than just not, then just even more than not being surprised. Uh, we want to be ready to bless them.

As soon as we are persecuted rather than curse well, if Believers are going to persecute you, then certainly these all men that we hear about. Verse 17, the sight of all men. Verse 18, look peaceably with all men. If Believers are going to persecute us, then certainly others will do us evil.

And so we need to be prepared for it. We know that our flesh will want to repay to give in kind. Repay. No one evil for evil even if they didn't mean it. Often we'll find ourselves in the reflex of our remaining sinfulness wishing to do them as they did to us so that they can see how bad it is.

They could see how offensive and think it's, we must not allow ourselves to respond in that fleshly manner. Repay. No one evil for evil. There's a horrible thing that I hear. Often younger voices say, He started it. He started it. Well, when we hear that from little voices in our house, we ask oh, And what if someone does you evil?

Are you supposed to repay evil for evil? And of course, We're asking right out of Romans 12 17, which says repay no one evil for evil. Not your enemy, as we're going to hear. And certainly not your brother or your sister as might be in your house or your neighbor repay.

No one. Evil for evil. No, he started it because if you repay them evil for evil, Then you harm yourself far more than they have harmed, you? It is much worse to sin. Than to be sinned against. The Matthew Henry quote that I Paraphrased and the Lord's dead morning sermon.

One of the things that he prayed in his Thanksgiving to God when he got home from being robbed, was that he had been robbed rather than robbing another Realizing that the same sinfulness out of which that other man had robbed him was in his own heart and yet how God had delivered him.

Bringing him forgiveness changing his nature. So restraining him that he was not a robber of others. Well, if you repay evil for evil, Then you will do worse to yourself by by sinning than anyone can do to you. By sinning against you. And so we mustn't repay, anyone evil for evil especially when we're thinking about all men because now that we've moved outside of the fellowship of the church or thinking about our brothers and sisters, who have the worship of God, and the word of God, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Uh, and membership in the church partake, partaking and tasting of the powers of the world to come and And the mercy and work of the Holy spirit and us, we have so much in the church. That our neighbors outside of the church, do not have. And so rather than repaying them evil for evil, we ought to be too preoccupied with having a regard for what is good in their sight.

Not what they think is good. Note is God, who determines? What is good? But our neighbors see us, and we have an effect on them and just like, we don't want to let them harm us to the extent of our becoming sinners in repaying them. Well, we also want to do them the good of showing them to be a blessing to them and showing them what God says is good.

And so, knowing that our neighbors, see us and especially in those situations where our neighbors will see us more. We must have regard for, what is good. We must. Do everything with a view to what is good since God has put us in front of our neighbors. Remember, he's the one.

Who has picked the lamp stand on which you are. And so he making you a lamp and he putting you on a stand, we do not have the option, you do not have the option, do you of not shining? You must shine where he has put you be what you are, where he has put you and especially now in Romans 12 17.

Do everything with. Of you to what is good, have regard for good. In the sight of all men. They do not lay, they do not acknowledge what good is, let them see you not only acknowledging it, but living it and let them feel it in their relationship with you.

When he says, if it is possible as much as depends on you he's recognizing, isn't he by implication or or implying to us and we should infer from it? That it's not it doesn't always depend on us. Always possible. When you're talking about your interaction with another, They may determine not to be at peace for.

Uh, and To an extent that you can't do anything about it. So he says, If it is possible as much as depends on you live peaceably with all men. Well, what are the all men on the other side of that doing? Well, they are discovering that you are a hard person to keep enmity with.

You are a hard person to maintain conflict with you just keep forgiving them. You just keep doing them. Good, you just keep not taking offense. When much has been given and you just keep not giving offense when you had opportunity to This Christian neighbor of mine this Christian co-worker of mine they are so hard to have a fight with to be upset at to sustain conflict with.

This is what they discover. This is what, our unbelieving neighbors should discover. When he has a Christian neighbor, a Christian Uh, business associate. A Christian. Employee or employer. If it is possible as much as depends on you, live peaceably. With all men. And so the first part about what we are to do with everyone in verses 17 through 18, do good to all and especially live peaceably.

With all men, as far as it depends on you. Well, now we have moved not just from the Brethren up through verse 16 where you're still one anothering to all men in verse 17 and all men in verse 18 but now in verses 19 through 21 Uh, we're dealing not just with a neighbor who has done us an evil, but a neighbor who is determined to do us evil because they are an enemy.

And there will be people who make themselves your enemy, even if you're obeying the command in verse 18. Now, we don't always obey the command in verse 18. We don't always obey it well but even if you are, as far as it depends on you living it peaceably with all men, you

will find that there are those who are determined to be at enmity with you to determined to be your enemy.

Will even find that the Civil magistrate. The one to whom God has given the power of the sword. As an Avenger of what is evil does not always do his job. In this world. There is often Injustice. There is often laziness and cowardice in places of authority and even hostility.

And And hatefulness themselves. And so he says, beloved do not avenge yourselves but rather give place to wrath, leave room for Wrath You know, sometimes we have too high in opinion of ourselves. And we think, Someone has done this evil to me or someone has done this evil to my neighbor.

And I'm not I'm not a civil magistrate. I haven't been given Authority. Over the matter. But I don't see anyone else doing it and if I don't do something about it, well, then it's gonna go unpunished. But no sin. Ever goes unpunished. Because God, As the ruler over all rulers.

And now not just God but there is a man. The God man. Jesus Christ. Who is the chief Magistrate over all of them? Even the greatest kings on Earth. Are lesser magistrates, they have a human Superior. Now who sits on the throne of Heaven. And try as they might in the psalm two-way, they can't stop from being made footstools for the Lord Jesus's feet.

And how proud and foolish we are as Believers. If We see someone not punishing evil who is over us the way he should and we think well then, I must avenge myself. Says no. Beloved Beloved, do not avenge yourselves. Notice how he addresses his readers. My dear ones. The ones that I love very much.

The ones whose injury. I am not overlooking. And whose offense I am not. Treating is a small thing because I love you. In fact, if we want to, if we want Vengeance to be done rightly, we must leave it to the Lord. Both providentially through the magistrate. And ultimately, as he will render all Justice in the end, he says leave room for Wrath.

Do not give in to that fleshly sinful thought in your heart. If you don't pay this back, then Justice will not be done. No justice. Will absolutely. Be done. So, leave room for ref. The Lord, says vengeance is mine. I will repay says the Lord. And see how foolish, see, how silly, the idea that we were the ones who had to repay the evil deed.

See how silly it sounds? When you remember, it belongs to God. It belongs to God to avenge, ultimately, God will repay. You can't punish someone with the punishment that their sin needs that their sin deserves. What does sin deserve children? And the answer is not swats. Swat is what God gives Christian parents to give their children along with the gospel because Jesus has taken what sin deserves sin deserves hell.

Jesus took it for us on the cross. And it's Jesus, who says he'll use the words of the scripture, the admin admonition of the Lord to bring us to Faith in him. And it's Jesus, who says that he will use the discipline of the Lord, in bringing a child to Faith in him.

Does not deserve swats and it doesn't deserve fines and it doesn't deserve imprisonment. And it doesn't even merely deserve physical death. God was not lying. When he told Adam in the day that you eat of it. You shall surely die. He died far more on the day that he sinned.

Then on the day that his soul left his body, Which returned to dust. On that day, he was saved. He was already converted. In fact, on the day that he was, he said the Lord brought him to Faith, making the promise and giving him to name, his wife Eve mother of the living out of that faith.

But oh, did he ever die? When he came under the wrath of God before he heard that gospel, and And he deserved God's Wrath. No, God says, venge is mine. I will repay. Who are you? To try to avenge yourself then. If God makes you an authority, if he makes you a daddy in a house.

You oversee Justice between the members of the household, or if God makes you an authority in the church and there's an irreconcilable dispute between church members or an accusation, It's one against the other Elders have to mediate, if it doesn't, if it doesn't work, we can't get bring everyone to repentance from the various sins.

There's Church discipline if God gives you Authority in the Civil sphere. The ability to find and imprison and execute even then you must under God exercise, whatever small avenging, whatever particular avenging in the particular sphere that God has given you that Authority. But Vengeance itself. Is something that no dad.

No. Elder Now magistrate can ultimately execute is it? Vengeance belongs to God. That is the wrath of God. And so we can't even avenge ourselves, really. If we wanted to, And so it's sinful and it's silly. To give in to that angst of heart, that, that irritation and hostility and bitterness and in which we turn, what could have been holy and righteous indignation and crying out to God even while we pray for our enemy.

It is the opposite of an imprecatory Psalm. To avenge ourselves. Then we're not crying out to God, to be the Avenger, we're making ourselves the Avenger And how then will you be able to pray for your enemy the way the psalmist does in Psalm 109? How will you do good to him and give him food when he's hungry and drink when he's thirsty?

If you have taken upon yourself. To be the Avenger. Leave room for the proper agent of Wrath. Both in that temporal avenging in the various institutions of the family and the church and the state As God has set them up, but leave room especially for that ultimate wrath. That only belongs to God himself.

We however, rather than avenging we get to participate under God, in overcoming evil, not just answering it. Not just paying it back, overcoming it. In fact, we can even be used to destroy enmity. Well, it is Jesus, who destroys the enmity, But many a Believer by feeding his enemy when he was hungry by giving to his enemy, a drink when he was thirsty.

Has heaped burning coals of one kind on his his enemy's head and that is the burning coals of Shame. If God is pleased to bring your enemy to Faith, you may be used in bringing him to Faith. By the way, all of his hatred and all of his attack and all of his Injustice against you, you keep repaying with good.

And God May afflict his conscience. And may he burning coals, he may feel the the hot fire of the shame of the difference between you and him. Until he just has to know an answer for the hope that is in you That's the context in which Uh, Peter by the spirit tells us to consecrate the Lord in our hearts and be ready.

Always to give an answer for the hope that is within us. He's talking about giving an answer to our persecutor our attacker. Our oppressor. Who can't figure out why we're still doing him. Good. Even after all of that. And of course, there's the other kind of burning coal, which is probably the main one here.

Even though we desire that our enemy would be destroyed by a new regenerate person, being put in his place as God brings him to Faith in Jesus Christ. In this context, immediately

following upon vengeance's mind, I will repay. He says you are not the Heaper of the burning coals.

From what about which verse 19 is speaking. You should be maybe a heaper of food, if he's hungry or drink, if he's thirsty. You figure out what he needs. He certainly needs prayer. Certainly needs the gospel. But it is God who who will execute wrath and the more good, you do, your enemy.

The more culpable, he will be. And as you do him that good and you realize the greatness of the wrath of God that mounts against him if the goodness and kindness of God does not lead him to repentance and the goodness and kindness of his Christian enemy does not lead him to repentance.

You remember, what chapter 2 says they're heaping up wrath against themselves and the day of Wrath. And it is that frightful realization. That would make us to pray, all the more earnestly and to plead more earnestly, more urgently, the gospel with our oppressor, with our attacker, he has no idea how soon and how great will be the wrath of God that falls upon him.

But we do Just like in verse 17 and 18. Our neighbor doesn't know and see the goodness of what God says is good. And so we are to always do everything with a view for what is good before the eyes of our our neighbor. So, also here, our enemy does not realize how great the wrath of God is Our enemy may even think especially if the Civil magistrate is not punishing him.

He might think he's getting away with it. But we know better. And so we want to do him good and we want to love him and we want to pray for him. Even as we leave room for God's Wrath. We're not trying to stop the Wrath from happening. The Wrath has either happened at the cross or it will happen forever.

There's wrath no matter what the Wrath is not bad. And we praise God for pouring it out in his righteousness and we pray that he will do. So, Even hoping that it will be swallowed up to the glory of Jesus. And Jesus's cross. So that one way or another.

Rather than being overcome by evil and being turned into greater Sinners ourselves by a response. We may instead overcome evil. With good. However, Or whichever part of the good. The Lord is pleased to bring through that and he'll be glorified. And so, whether it's all men, generally And bringing honor to the goodness of God's law and God's character.

Or whether it's enemies specifically. And bringing glory to God. Who alone is the Avenger and frees us. To do good to Our enemy. In all of our relationships and all of our interactions. We must conduct ourselves out of regard for the Lord. Sanctify. The Lord in your heart. So then the church, you love the Brethren.

As Christ has loved you. Out of your love for the Lord Jesus who has joined them to himself sanctify the Lord in your heart so that when it's with your neighbors, your co-workers wherever you are, you do you live peaceably with all men and do? What is good wherever they can see you?

Identify the Lord in your heart and honor him as the only great Avenger of sin and the one who has ordered, right? And proper Authority in the And do not be overcome by evil. But overcome evil. With good.