

Sermon Title: Paying the Obligation of Love Fulfills the Law

Sermon Text: Romans 13:8-10

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to understand that the law of God experienced is the love of God expressed.

Sermon Proposition: There are 3 basic aspects of love that fulfills the law.

Introduction: In the context of community, church, and culture, there is always the possibility and reality of division, disharmony, and destruction of relationships, which affects the testimony and witness of Christians to a lost and dying world. In the context of Romans, Paul provides an antidote to the Roman Christian and Christians everywhere. The solution is to always be paying forward the debt and obligation of love towards our neighbor. Love must not just be a topic of conversation, but a duty that we perform, because it is a debt we forever owe.

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” – Isaac Watts

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most –
I sacrifice them to His blood.
See, from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

- I. The **declaration** of love in the fulfilling of the Law. V.8
- II. The **demonstration** of love in the fulfilling of the Law. V.9
- III. The **discipline** of love in the fulfilling of the Law. V.10

I. The **declaration** of love in the fulfilling of the Law. V.8

A. The declaration in light of the **debt** owed. V.8a

Love is a debt or obligation the true believer always owes and that can never be fully paid, no matter how much or often they pay. The declaration is that all Christians have a type of continual indebtedness. Christians have the constant obligation or debt to love others and one another.

Matthew 22:34-40; John 13:34-35; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28

Leviticus 19:18 `You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD.

Galatians 5:13-15 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **14** For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **15** But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

B. The declaration in light of the **duty** to be performed. V.8b

The song states, “We owed a debt we could not pay, He paid a debt He did not owe.” The Christians responsibility must be seen and interpreted in the context of what Jesus Christ has done for us (**Romans 5:1-11**) and therefore must be reflected in the believers relationship with others (**John 13:34-35**). The model of “agape” love demonstrated by Jesus Christ, declared by the Father, and delegated by the Spirit is the motivation of our obedience.

I John 2:10; 3:23; 4:7; 4:21

Hebrews 6:10 For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

This duty to love others also pertains to unbelievers, forgiveness and love go hand in hand.

Colossians 3:12-14 Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; **13** bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. **14** But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

It does not focus on those who are only likeable and friendly. (**Romans 12:14, 20**)

Matthew 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

The character trait of “agape” love is the chief virtue of righteousness, godliness, and holiness, but even more important, it fulfills the law of God, when we love our neighbor.

(**1 Corinthians 13**)

1. This love finds its **source** in our new character. (**2 Corinthians 5:17**)

2 Corinthians 6:6-7 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, **7** by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

Ephesians 4:17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,

2. This love finds its **freedom** in not living for the flesh. (**Romans 14:21**)

Galatians 5:13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

1 Corinthians 13:6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

1 Peter 4:8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

3. This love finds its **motivation** for forgiveness at the cross.

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Matthew 6:14-15 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

II. The **demonstration** of love in the fulfilling of the Law. V.9

For the commandments,

“You shall not commit adultery,” v.9a

Godly love does not commit adultery or fornication, sexual immorality, because such sinful defilement of a person male or female shows disregard and disrespect for another’s purity. Godly love highly values the virtuous purity of the object of such love and will not choose to morally defile a person.

“You shall not murder,” v.9b

Godly love does not rob someone or family members of their lives.

“You shall not steal,” v.9c

Deuteronomy 5:17-19 `You shall not murder. **18** `You shall not commit adultery. **19** `You shall not steal.

Exodus 20:13-15 "You shall not murder. **14** "You shall not commit adultery. **15** "You shall not steal.

Godly love does not robe people of their property.

“You shall not bear false witness,” v.9d

Godly love does not lie to gain an advantage, or to mead out punish unjustly toward someone.

“You shall not covet,” v.9e

Deuteronomy 5:21 `You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that *is* your neighbor's.'

Exodus 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor's."

Godly love does not desire to have that which belongs to someone else. Covetousness can be inward or outward in its manifestation. Contentment is the solution for a coveting heart.

Namely,

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” **Leviticus 19:18**

After declaring that love fulfills the law (v.8b), the apostle establishes his point by quoting five specific Old Testament laws. The Christian who loves with God’s love does not need to be concerned about habitually breaking any of God’s commandments. When we are truly loving with the love provided by the Spirit [**Galatians 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,] we will not want to do anyone any harm.

Matthew 22:37-39 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' **38** "This is *the* first and great commandment. **39** "And *the* second *is* like it: `You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

Philippians 2:3-4 *Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. **4** Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Your neighbor is anyone with whom we have contact with, or a need we can meet.

III. The discipline of love in the fulfilling of the Law. V.10

Love does no harm to a neighbor;

Contrary to what many people think, living by love and living by the law are not mutually exclusive. They love and the law, are truly inseparably linked together. The love of God, and love for God is the motivation for loving our neighbor, thus it is the ultimate fulfillment of the law. Jesus love for the Father was the true motivation for His obedience to the righteous demands of the Father.

James 2:8 If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;

Matthew 5:17-19 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. **18** "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. **19** "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Conclusion: “Little chad was a shy, quiet young fella. One day he came home and told his mother, he’d like to make a valentine for everyone in his class. Her heart sank. She thought, ‘I wish he wouldn’t do that!’ because she had watched the children when they walked home from school. Her Chad was always behind them. They laughed and hung on to each other and talked to each other. But Chad was never included. Nevertheless, she decided she would go along with her son. So she purchased the paper and glue and crayons. For three whole weeks, night after night, Chad painstakingly made thirty-five valentines.

Valentines Day dawned and Chad was beside himself with excitement! He carefully stacked them up, put them in a bag, and bolted out the door. His mom decided to bake him his favorite cookies and serve them up warm and nice with a cool glass of milk when he came home from school. She just knew he’d be disappointed; maybe that would ease the pain a little. It hurt her to think that he wouldn’t get many valentines – maybe none at all.

That afternoon she had the cookies and mild out on the table. When she heard the children outside she looked out the window. Sure enough here they came, laughing and having the best time. And, as always, there was Chad in the rear. He walked a little faster than usual. She fully expected him to burst into tears as soon as he got inside. His arms were empty, she noticed, and when the door opened she choked back the tears.

‘Mommy has some warm cookies and mild for you.’

But he hardly heard her words. He just marched right on by, his face aglow, and all he could say was:

“Not a one . . . not a one.”

Her heart sank.

And then he added, “I didn’t forget a one, not a single one!””

- Dale Galloway, *Rebuild Your Life* [Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1998, pp.358-359]