

Romans 12:9-13

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 May 2024

Preacher: Clay Naylor

[0 : 00] Last week we did 3-8, and today we're looking at 9-13. But just by way of review, just understand that like in the previous chapters, Paul has been working out our salvation, talking about what it is that God has done for us, that He's saved us from our plight and our sin.

He has elected us. He has justified us, made us right in His sight, regenerated us. And then now, in these latter chapters, as in all His letters, He starts to work out the practical implications of what that looks like in daily life.

Like, how do we respond to such a great salvation? And it means that though truth, knowledge, and doctrine are vital, like we must have really strong, robust theology, we must have strong, sound doctrine.

It is so important. But it's also insufficient without the Holy Spirit's empowerment and application to the inward man. Our learning must translate into living.

And that's what Paul is focusing on in chapter 12, 13, 14, 15, throughout the rest of the book. And so, working out the practical implications in everyday life about what the gospel looks like.

[1 : 26] And so, we will begin over as a recap. We'll just start in verse 1. We'll read down to verse 13. He says,

Let us use them.

Let us pray together. Let us pray together.

Lord, we offer up this time to you. I pray you would have your way with us, that your word would fall where it's supposed to, that your spirit would apply it to our hearts, that we would walk away changed by what you have to say today.

Let us help me be faithful to the text and to lift up the name of Jesus and seek to build up today in Jesus' name. Amen. All right. So today, if you were here last week, you need to, if you weren't, you should go back and listen to the message.

[4 : 09] Because if you remember, for sake of time, I kind of dropped off a little bit. That might not happen today because that means that I have more to do this Sunday. And I'm not trying to stretch things out for no reason.

But we were looking at the gifts that are mentioned in the verses that are before, starting in verse six through eight.

And we went through a list of them last week, but I'm just going to finish them this week. And then we're going to dive into our text today. But if you missed it last week, really quickly. A spiritual gift is an ability given and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be used in any ministry of the church.

For its equipping and strengthening until Christ returns. And there are several places in the New Testament, at least four places where these gifts are mentioned and renamed.

But gifts are given to bring glory to God through his church to equip and build up the church. To strengthen unity and to include all believers in the work of the Lord.

[5 : 21] So that's some of the reasons. But we left off at leadership last week. So we'll just pick up with the, he mentions leadership. And the gift of leadership is those who have the ability to lead the body, to direct members, to accomplish goals and purposes of the church, to motivate people to work together towards God's goals, God's intended purposes.

You see a biblical example of someone like that in Nehemiah. He's a great example of that.

Characteristics of that is they tend to focus on long-term goals and purposes of the church and accordance with God's will.

So it's different than just like earthly leadership. I've known really great leaders in the world who are terrible leaders in the church. So don't equivalent like the two. And they break down things into small, achievable tasks and coordinate people to carry out things.

They usually plan ahead when there is no plan ahead. And some of the misuses of that gift is sometimes they get discouraged when people don't follow.

They can get impatient and frustrated when people aren't carrying out the tasks that they've been given. And at worst, sometimes they can develop a self-agenda and use others to accomplish that agenda for themselves.

[6 : 46] So a few things there. And sometimes if we're not careful, we can put them so high to where they're not accountable to anybody. I've seen that in churches as well. Just something to be aware of.

So we all need to be knocked down at times. We all need to be humbled. And then next you see this idea of the gift of mercy, which is also referred to as helping.

And it's the special ability to have compassion for and to give aid to hurting people. Like cheerful acts of compassion characterize people who have this gift.

They have a, you know who they are. They have just a gift to empathize, to listen and bear your burdens and cry with you, pray with you. Even if they don't know what to say, they're just there for you.

And they're just sensitively aware of the needs of others in the church. They usually are very warm, approachable, and easy to talk to type people.

[7 : 48] And they empathize with those who are hurting and suffering. Some of the misuses of the gift is those people can sometimes easily be taken advantage of.

And sometimes, because of their feelings, try to make things too easy for people that actually may need tough love at times. Be more led by their emotions than wisdom.

And then prophecy. Da, da, da, da, da. So, can't skip it. It's there. It'd be nice to take that out, right? I'd say no. So, as we mentioned last week, there are two primary camps of people. Faithful believers on both sides in the church who have different views on what might be called the miraculous gifts.

Things like prophecy, tongues, those sort of things. One would be the cessationist view, which just means that they believe that after the time of the apostles, after the canon of Scripture came, like, those miraculous gifts cease.

[8 : 56] They're not needed anymore, and they've stopped. And no need for anything else. And some faithful men that I respect, John MacArthur, R.C. Spurl, or just a couple cessationists.

And then the other side, I would just, you know, be careful of labels, okay? So, but the other side might be referred to you as continuationists, this idea that those gifts have not ceased.

They actually are in practice today in the church, just as they were in the early New Testament, and will continue until Christ returns. And as I said last week, I think our congregation is somewhere in the 50-50 or 40-60 range.

We haven't found it to be an issue to divide over, and we actually kind of refuse to let that happen. So, we're not going to become tribal about it. Like, these gifts are actually meant to strengthen the unity of the body, and it would be a shame to allow something that's actually meant to strengthen to divide.

So, we're just not going to allow that to happen. But, it's the gifts that make us uncomfortable, right? So, looking at prophecy, in short, that word just means speaking forth, proclaiming publicly God's Word boldly, and it manifests itself in things like preaching, teaching, admonishing, at least scripturally can sometimes, this idea of foretelling future events.

[10 : 29] But, primarily, boldly speaking the truth from God and what He has said to other people. So, cessationists would say that prophecy is limited to proclaiming and teaching what is already in the written and enclosed canon of Scripture.

All right? Fair enough. Continuationists would say, yes, it is teaching the Scripture. It is teaching the closed canon of Scripture.

But, it also can be speaking forth in human words something that the Holy Spirit has sovereignly and spontaneously revealed or brought to the mind of the believer.

All right? So, remember, this isn't a sermon about prophecy, so I'm not going to get into all this right now. It's a class or whatever. But, what I have found is that with that, Scripture is the standard to test all things and discern all things, whether they are true or false.

Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5, 19-21, Do not quench or suppress or subdue the Spirit. Do not spurn or depreciate the gifts and the utterances of the prophets.

[11 : 45] But test and prove all things, what is good, and hold fast to what is good. So, in the context, right, teaching on these gifts, Paul says twice in 1 Corinthians 12, To earnestly desire them, and especially that you may prophesy.

So, this is just my opinion. I'm more in the continuationist camp. I've seen the gift exercised in good ways, and I've seen things abused. So, in my opinion, Paul doesn't leave any room for us to wiggle out of pursuing uncomfortable gifts.

He doesn't say we can. And I know some wonderful, sincere Christians, like many of you and others I respect, that would disagree with that and say that it's closed.

These gifts stopped at the closing of many of them, the New Testament canon. But I would just humbly disagree. And I'm not making a big case for that today, though, because that's not what the text is about.

But I assume that New Testament authors, they said that these gifts would continue in their function until Christ returns. That's 1 Corinthians 13, 9-12.

[13 : 03] So, when God's Word is like boldly proclaimed and taught faithfully, God uses His Word to pierce our hearts. It leads to building up of the body, conviction of sin, repentance.

And Paul instructs prophets not to speak only when they have the faith and confidence that the Spirit has revealed something to them.

And then it is to be tested and discerned in the church. So, a couple is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, 6, Ephesians 4, 11.

And I guess an Old Testament example would be Jeremiah. A New Testament example could be Agabus, which is Acts 11, 27 through 30. But some characteristics of people who have this gift, if you think that.

They have a keen awareness and a weightiness to what they think God says. Like, God's Word burns in them where they can't be quiet. And they would rather please God than please man.

[14 : 07] And they call people back to repentance and away from sin. They only consider themselves a messenger and can stand boldly in opposition against what people may be saying against God's Word.

So, but in closing, just to wrap some of this up. Again, this wasn't a message that's intended just to do that. You need to be aware of the gifts that God has given you or may not have given you.

And He may have given you more than one gift. So, quick question. Do you humbly recognize that you have been given all gifts? And that you have a limited ability in certain areas?

And that proves that you need the rest of the body. Because we just don't have it all. We need each other. And furthermore, do you understand that your gifts are needed for the body of Christ?

To work effectively as each member is needed. So, in closing, just this part of it, three things. Don't over-evaluate yourself in the church.

[15 : 12] Which is what Paul said here in that passage. You are special. You are unique. You have been given gifts. But you're not indispensable. God gave you all good things.

Even your gifts. So you shouldn't boast about what has actually been given to you. Seek to honor God and not yourself. Secondly, don't neglect your gifts.

Paul told Timothy, do not neglect the gift you have which is given you. 1 Timothy 4.14 If you fail to employ your gifts in the church, number one, you're robbing the body of those gifts and the use of them.

You're also forcing other members to carry your load caused by your fear or your selfishness. And then thirdly, you're out of touch with the Spirit of God.

Then fourthly, you are dead weight and you're acting in a dysfunctional way to the body. So, apply. Don't neglect. Embrace those gifts. As Paul said, don't neglect the gift you have been given.

[16 : 18] And then he says, this way I want to remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is given to you through the laying on of hands. So, meaning that it was possible for Timothy to allow his gift to weaken by infrequent use.

Not really using it that often. It got weak. So, he says, fan into flame, stir up, rekindle, keep burning, use that gift and therefore strengthening that gift.

So, that closes that part of our message from last week. And now we're going to dive back into 9 through 13.

Alright. So, I'm going to bust this up into two different points. But again, we're talking about practical, everyday Christian living.

How do we live in response to this great salvation that Paul's been talking about all the way up to this point? So, first, he kind of focuses on personal responsibilities.

[17 : 27] And then, after that, he focuses on responsibilities to the body of Christ. So, number one, personal responsibilities. Something in verse 3. He says, let love be genuine.

A poor what is evil. Hold fast to what is good. So, this idea of genuine love. So, that means for love to be sincere.

Authentic. The real thing. So, true, genuine, Christ-like love is better than any spiritual gift. And like if you remember, in 1 Corinthians, he had to remind them of this.

So, as he was talking about spiritual gifts, he eventually comes full circle. And he says, So, as in 1 Corinthians, he does it right here in Romans, he moves from speaking about spiritual gifts again to the more excellent way of love.

Love here is agape. Many of you know what that is. But it's not really a type of human love. It doesn't originate in humanity.

[18 : 51] It is only an unconditional love that has God as its source. And it comes out of 1 John 4, 16.

So, we have come to know and believe that the love of God has for us. God is love. And whoever abides in love abides in God.

And God abides in him. God is love. So, love in the New Testament, the Spirit-given virtue, focuses on wholly the needs and welfare of others.

Okay? So, it's not thinking about self-centeredness. It's not thinking about what they can get out of things. It's thinking about others. And that's why you do things sacrificially to meet those needs, whatever they are.

Because it is a love that God has shown us and empowered us to show other people. 1 Peter 1, 22. He wrote, So, another way of looking at verse 9 would be, some of your translations may say, Let love be without hypocrisy.

[20 : 12] That would be true too. Love that is without hypocrisy or self-centeredness. But why would that be the case? Because a hypocrite is totally concerned about himself.

How will I appear? How can I create a good impression on other people? As love is sort of my outward front to those things. Hypocrisy tends to show itself in two ways.

It tries to make the outside look better than the inside. And then it also seeks to draw attention to the flaws of others.

Right? In an effort to hide their own flaws. Hide their own internal sin by wrapping it up in a moral, outward appearance. So hypocrisy, not being genuine love, is falsehood, concealment, deceit, cloaking, and misleading.

Hiding. So it's the opposite of what we're talking about here. So therefore, Paul says, let love be without hypocrisy. Let it be genuine.

[21 : 19] Christ-like love is shown in like honest, ardent, pure motive that only comes from God. And it can't be just manufactured by human willpower.

And so you could argue that true love can actually be shown by someone who doesn't know God. It's something that God gives us. And it goes to meeting the needs of other people, no matter what it takes, to love them, and then thus glorifying God in the process.

So it's produced through the gospel that's been poured out into our hearts. As it said in chapter 5, verse 5, true love, genuine love, hates evil.

As we're seeing right here in our passage, it hates evil. It pursues good. It's love that spawns affection in the church and seeks to build up the church.

Love is zealous, fervent, and selfless for the Lord's sake. And in the most trying of circumstances, love is what overcomes everything through hope, steadfastness, and suffering, and prayer.

[22 : 30] That's what verse 12 says. So it's all kind of connected. You could argue that love, genuine Christ-like love, is what is the heading of the rest of this chapter.

And maybe arguably the rest of the book. It's like saying, hey, this is what God's love looks like. And so it goes on. And so a spinoff of that, it says, abhor what is evil.

All right? So that doesn't just mean kind or dislike it. It means hate with intense hatred what is evil. Loathe all ungodliness.

Turn in horror from all wickedness. So hatred of evil is the other side of love. Because love, by its nature, cannot approve of what is evil.

Right? That's why I argue with people, you know, like in evangelism, if they have a problem, they'll say, God is love. I'm like, do you know where that's written?

[23 : 31] And you usually don't know where it came from. But then you say, like, yeah, but don't you know that, like, God's love is hatred of evil? Like, God's love demands that evil must be destroyed?

And they kind of see it at that point. But love cannot approve what is evil. To hate evil comes from a fear and love for God.

Evil is the enemy of God. It is the enemy of love. Right? And so if we are His children, we likewise will hate evil. As the wisdom writer said, the reverent fear of the Lord is hatred of all evil.

Proverbs 8.13 And if God is love and He hates evil, then we will as well. And that's why the psalmist said, O you who love the Lord, hate evil. Psalm 97.10 So as you continue to grow in your walk with Christ, you have a growing love for what is good and a growing hatred for what is evil.

Okay, I'll read this too. Psalm 101.2 and 4. The psalmist wrote, And so, if we hate evil, then we need to like look at our lives.

[25 : 13] If we love the Lord and hate evil. If you hate evil, then how can we fill our minds and our life with so much evil at times? Evil things on social media.

Evil things in movies. Evil things in video games. We can't fill our minds constantly all day with these things and just expect to be unchanged by it. It affects us.

And so, instead of evil, hate it. And then on the flip of that, hold on to what is good. The next part of this, he says, is connecting the idea of evil.

Hold fast, which means to glue, to cling, or to bond together to what is good. Evil has a strong pull on our flesh. Evil has a...

Sin has a strong pull on our flesh. So that's why he's saying, instead of just being pulled away by it, cling to what is good. What God says is what is good. Bind ourselves to Christ and what is right and worthy.

[26 : 14] Alright? And we know what is good. If you're asking, okay, well, how do I know the difference? How do I know what is good? In verse 2 of this chapter.

Don't be conformed to this world. Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God. What is good and acceptable and perfect.

So, as we, by grace, continue to separate ourselves from the world, instead, we'll saturate ourselves with God's Word, God's truth, and we will know what is good.

And we will replace those things that are evil. So don't drift just by your flesh to what is evil, but hold fast to what is good. Alright?

Alright? Then secondly, we get to number two, responsibility to the body of Christ. Alright? This is verses 10-13.

[27 : 12] But he says, Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal. Be fervent in spirit. Serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope.

Be patient in tribulation. Be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints. And seek to show hospitality. So, verse 10 connects to what we just talked about.

Let love be genuine. So he's working that out. But he says, Love one another with a brotherly affection. Verse 10. That means to have tender, tender affection for one's brother that's inside one's family.

Right? Again, this is a love that you can't just learn through human means. This is a love that is taught to us by God. 1 Thessalonians 4.9.

He says, Concerning brotherly love. Same word. Same phrase. You have no need for anyone to write to you. For you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.

[28 : 17] So we are devoted to our brothers and sisters in this same type of family type love. And here's the point.

Like in your family, you don't love them because they're cool, attractive, unattractive, annoying, frustrating. You love them because they are your family.

Some of us have family members that are very hard to love. But we don't cast them out. We persevere with them. We stick up for them. That's what Paul is trying to say.

Like, look, you're a family. It doesn't matter. All these are external preferences and things. Like you are a family. You'll be a family for eternity. So stick up for one another.

Be there for one another. Serve one another with brotherly and tender affection. You can show itself in all kinds of ways. But being in the hospital recently, the Lord reminded me of this example.

[29 : 18] A long time ago when I was at UAB Hospital. Very, very sick. Not doing well. Like, almost died a few weeks prior.

And I was just in a very frail, you know, mindset and body. And if you've been in the hospital for any long period of time, you can tell how the day is going to go when your nurse comes in in the morning.

If they're like, hey, how are you doing? You know, it might be, okay, this is going to be a good day. If they come in like, hi. You're like, oh, no. They're going to make life rough for me today.

And I had a nurse come in I'd never seen before. And she was not happy to be there. She was like, I asked her how she was doing. She goes, I don't want to talk about it. And she just kind of kept on like, oh, no.

This is going to get rough. And so she was pretty rough most of the day. And then at some point, my IV went bad. Like, you know, started leaking out medicine.

[30 : 20] And I like clamped it. And I was like, oh, no. This lady is going to have to give me another IV, which is what you don't want a mean nurse to do ever. And so I just went beep, you know, pushed the button.

I could see the nursing station. And one of the people, you know, told her, hey. You know, she was like. And I'm like, oh, no.

And so she starts walking towards the door. And Kara, one of the nurses that I knew on the floor, like jumped in front of her. And she said, don't worry about it.

You go. I'll take care of it. And Kara was a believer. Went to a really solid church in the Birmingham area. And she came in and changed my IV.

And I was just apologizing. Like, I'm sorry. I'm sorry you're having to deal with this. I'm not your patient today. Like, you've got so much going on. And she just said, she just stopped.

[31 : 27] And she was like, Clay, you're my brother. And it's my pleasure to serve you today. It's my honor to serve you today. And she just put my IV in. And I was just like, wow.

But when we have Christ, we have love for one another as a family. And so on a spin of this. What page is out of order? Sorry. Have you experienced that genuine brotherly love for your brothers and sisters here at CFC? Show honor to one another.

A strong exhortation to show true admiration, genuine appreciation for your fellow believers by putting them before yourself.

It says outdo one another in showing honor. I like to call this like a holy competition. I like to exceed and surpass one another in serving one another, helping your fellow believers.

[32 : 31] Paul said in Philippians 2.4, let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. So we're to give preference and put others before ourselves, which is the total opposite of our fallen nature, which is only to put you first.

Your preference is what you want. And try to manipulate everybody else to give you what you want. So total opposite. It's only what the Spirit of God can do. Paul wrote in Corinthians, let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

Seek the welfare of his neighbor. So are you quick to show respect for your brothers and sisters in Christ? Are you fast to acknowledge the success and accomplishments of your brothers and sisters?

Are you quick to show genuine love by not being jealous or envious of them? And does the Spirit within you drive you to take initiative to find practical ways to manifest that respect and love for the saints?

So on a spinoff of this, again, this is also reconnected. He says, don't be slothful in zeal. Don't lag in your zeal.

[33 : 45] Verse 11. So sinful, sloth, and apathy, indifference are enemies of doing good. They allow evil to thrive.

So we're not to lag behind in our diligence. Not to be lazy in zeal. Solomon wrote, well, probably Solomon. We think so. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.

Ecclesiastes 9.10. So the right motive for seeking excellence in our labor in the church is to glorify God, which is the chief purpose for why we were created.

Right? But what does not honor Christ, what does not bear witness to His glory, is our slothfulness, our mediocrity, and our smug satisfaction in Christ that cannot be achieved by slothfulness of zeal. So one reason we fail to achieve excellence in our endeavors is we don't give it all we have. We don't work that hard. So slothfulness and mediocrity tell the world about something that we're living for.

[34 : 57] All right? If we serve the Lord with slothfulness and laziness and mediocrity, then that says that our Lord is not that great.

You see that? Like, some of you are blessed to have jobs and things that you enjoy. And you passionately wake up every day.

You're driven to do it. Like, you love it. You love what you do. And that's why you get out of bed in the morning sometimes, to go and do those things. And you're passionate about it. And so there is no higher calling, though, than to honor and serve the Lord.

And He is worthy. He is greatly honored when we pursue Him with the utmost zeal. And others see that and go, wow, like, your God is something else.

Like, wow, the zeal, the hard work, the diligence that your church shows. Because Matthew 5, 16, Jesus said, in the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

[36 : 04] So, therefore, seek to excel, not lagging in zeal, pushing ourselves to the highest limits of endurance to achieve a level of excellence and bring glory to God as a church.

Okay? So, here's the spinoff. Don't lag in zeal, but be fervent in spirit. This is the next part of this. I love the word. A lot of the Irish friends of mine use the word fervor all the time.

Fervor in spirit. It means to boil or to burn in the spirit. And it means having sufficient heat to adequately produce energy, but not so much heat that one goes out of control.

You get it? Too much fire, bad. In other words, enough fire, perfect. And it's said of Apollos in Acts that he was fervent in spirit.

Acts 18, 24. It communicates something to the world again when we serve him with great fervor and not slothfulness of zeal.

[37 : 12] So, that's kind of tying it all together, those two verses. So, I've gotten the question a lot. Is it right to pray to the Holy Spirit?

And I usually say, yeah, be careful how you answer this, but it is right to ask the Holy Spirit to help you in things that apply to his role.

Okay? Things that the Holy Spirit does. Things that the Scripture says, this is what the Spirit of God does. This is his role. It's okay to ask him to help you for that. So, this is a verse about the Spirit.

So, have you asked the Spirit to give you zeal? To give you a fervent spirit and fire to serve in the body? To serve one another.

Alright? Last part of verse 11. Serve the Lord. Oh, man. This one would be a sermon by itself.

Okay. So, serve here is douleo.

[38 : 16] To serve as a slave in a good sense. To yield obedience. So, it connects to Romans 1. Verse 1, where Paul writes, he called himself a bondservant, a doulos of Christ Jesus.

Called to be an apostle. Set apart for the gospel of God. So, doulo. Doulos. So, in the Mosaic Law, there is something provided for an indentured servant.

Alright? Someone who could work off their debt. Right? It provided a way for them to voluntarily become a permanent bond slave of a master in his family that they respected and loved dearly.

That's Exodus 21, 5 and 6. So, basically, like, I love serving this family. I love my master. I love his family.

I don't want to leave his house. So, I want to bind myself to him. And I want to be his slave. Now, to our mind, that just sounds crazy.

[39 : 29] Like, what? Inconceivable. Offensive. Because human masters can hurt you. Human masters could abuse you. But not when your master is the Lord.

Like, the freest person is the slave of the perfect master. Right? And if it sounds awful to you, would you freely and willingly give yourself wholeheartedly in love to be a slave of the Savior?

Who saved you from death, sin, and hell. And make it the purpose of your life to honor your master every hour of every day. To let your schedule revolve around his schedule.

To let your drive be his drive. You think about what a slave would do. Right? They served their master. It wasn't just go and do what you want. But in this case, the perfect master is Jesus Christ.

And as Paul says in Romans, we are slaves of Christ. Right? So, verse 12. Rejoice in hope. Following Jesus inevitably brings hardship.

[40 : 37] And we know that. Some of us have served the Lord for many years. And we haven't really seen a lot of fruit for our labor. It can feel that way at times. Like, man, this is just... You get weary and you get tired.

Is the Lord ever going to come back? Or is this ever going to change? But without hope, we cannot survive. We cannot make it. And so, why do we rejoice in hope then?

Because God has promised to return. Our ultimate redemption. The fulfillment of all things. And so, we're encouraged. And as in 1 Corinthians 15, 58.

I've seen this verse so abused. People just put it on their t-shirts and apply it to athletics or whatever they want to be hardcore about. But he's not.

Paul's talking about standing firm for Christ and waiting for His return. 1 Corinthians 15, 58.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast and movable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

[41 : 45] So, therefore, we have hope. And if we have hope, we can, next part, persevere in tribulation. Next part of verse 12. As fellow believers, we're to face trials and hardships together.

Alright? So, remember, we're a body. So, if we face trials, we go through it together. It's not just me and my trial and my problem and the bodies over here. Like, we go through it together.

And we're not to panic and be anxious and alarmed, but rather patient in tribulation, persevering, pushing forward together as a body, despite hardships and difficulties.

But why can we be patient in our tribulations and face it together? One of my favorite verses, right? John, if that's right to say, right? John 16, 33, Jesus says, I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace.

In this world you will have tribulation. But take heart, I have overcome the world. Christ assures us that despite all trials and all oppositions, we can have true, perfect peace and confidence in Him.

[43 : 01] Why? Because He's overcome. He has triumphed over the world. He's deprived it of its power over us. He's conquered it on our behalf. And because we are united to Him in His life, His death, and His resurrection, we also will conquer because of that.

So, the more trials we endure and afflictions we have, the more destitute we are of our own resources and we go to Him. So, we can remain undaunted and take heart, good cheer, and be courageous, be patient in tribulation as a church.

Last part of this, verse 12. Be devoted to prayer. All right? It literally means to be strong towards something. It carries this idea of steadfast and unwavering.

Like, you are devoted to eating food. Everybody in here. You're devoted to getting sleep. It's that same weightiness. Be devoted to prayer.

Be devoted to it. Connecting to that idea of being patient in tribulation. So, the more trials we endure, again, that drives us to God. And that makes us go down on our knees and ask for His help.

[44 : 21] Right? It says in Colossians 4.2, Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. So, at the church, we are to be unwearied. We're not to grow weary in our prayer.

Or, we do need to do more as a body to pray together. I know we do in our community groups. I know we do in our core groups. But we should be doing more. Coming together and praying. It should be like, hey, I'm bored. What do you want to do? I don't know. Let's go find some other believers and pray together. Like that kind of devotion. Something that's not self-effort. Only God's power can give us these things.

It was once said, the thermometer of a church is its prayer meeting. The spiritual pulse of a local church. J.B. Johnson wrote, The prayer meeting is the rallying point where the power of faith in the church concentrates and takes hold of the arm that moves the world.

The spirit of prayer and the love and practice of the prayer meeting will give such an organic strength to the church and make her terrible as an army with banners.

[45 : 34] All right? So have we devoted ourselves to prayer? And I think he's mainly talking about corporate prayer as believers in this context. What can we do to do more? Then verse 13.

To meet the needs of the saints. It's connected to the word koinonia. Right? That genuine, true fellowship of believers. It expresses commonality and partnership.

Mutual sharing. Acts 2.44. Acts 4.32. It says that all the believers came together and they were of one heart and soul.

And no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own. But they had everything in common. And so, this isn't socialism. It really is just saying, because of the love of Christ, hey, look, what I have is yours.

Like, if you need something, I want to be there to give it to you. I gladly, because of Christ, share with you what I have. It's the opposite of stinginess.

[46 : 39] It's my stuff. And, you know, that kind of mentality. And so, we, in this church, my wife and I, we've been blessed by many people meeting our needs in countless ways.

Helping us pack and move five times. Oh, my goodness. Over the years. Sometimes it's helping me do yard work. Physically demanding probably why I got sick in the first place.

Helping us watch our girls when emergency situations came up. So many ways that y'all have met our needs in this body. And lastly, he mentions practicing hospitality.

One of the chief ways that we can meet the needs of the saints is to practice hospitality. This isn't just having some people over and having a potluck. It can include that. But it's more than that, really.

In ancient times, traveling could be dangerous. And ends to stay in were scarce, expensive, and sometimes places of sin that believers didn't really want to go to.

[47 : 42] Drinking, prostitution, brawling. And so, early Christians often opened up their homes to other believers. Vulnerable travelers. Especially believers.

But it does mean, the word, to show or to pursue familial love to strangers or outsiders. So, again, it goes back to the idea of brotherly love. Instructing the church to show hospitality towards one another.

And it's important because hospitality pictures aspects of God's grace in the gospel. All right? He brought us into his family.

We were outsiders. We were estranged. He brought us in. He made us a part of his family. He provided for us and protects us. And so, this is how we express that to other people.

To be a lover of strangers. Those who are on the outside. So, don't do it begrudgingly. And do it without complaining and representing Christ in your hospitality.

[48 : 44] Peter wrote, Do not neglect to show hospitality to one another without grumbling. Man, that can be a hard one. Are you afraid of showing hospitality? Or do you get frustrated when people come over to your house and make messes?

Is it stressful for people to stay with you? Like, if you show hospitality to people, are they, like, nervous to be at your house? Because you're going to, like, jump on them about something? Or do they feel at home?

Are you more concerned with, like, looking nice and tidy than you are actually caring about the people who are coming over? That's me. Okay? So, like, but we've got to be careful.

We've got to depend on God's grace more. And it's a blessing to use our homes and our resources to show hospitality. But we get stressed out and worked up.

And all the wrong ways, we're concerned about looking good on the outside. Than doing good to the people who are coming over. Instead of encouraging those that we host, we feel compelled to, you know, talk about, well, I'm sorry, this isn't perfect.

[49 : 53] And then have them say, it's okay, it's all right. Like, to help us in our insecurities. But not to do that. Don't do it with grumbling. Do it joyfully. Share with others what you have.

And welcome them in as family. So, these begin the practical implications of the book of Romans. He continues going on from there.

And so let's close in prayer. Amen.