

Amazing Love (Part 2)

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: 17 November 2019

Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0:00] John 3.16, would you please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's word together.

! God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. I got a blessing to the reading of His word.

Would you please be seated? Around this time of year, many schools and companies are conducting performance reviews.

You're called into your child's classroom as a parent to meet with their teacher. Who then goes over their performance with you. A lot of times what they'll do is they'll explain to you first the areas where they're strong.

The areas where they're doing well. Then they'll talk about the areas where they're doing okay. And then finally, about the areas where they're not doing so well. Some areas of weakness. And no matter what the teacher tells you about how good your child is doing in certain areas, what you leave with thinking most about is those areas of weakness, don't you?

[1:31] Same thing when it's your job performance. A supervisor calls you into their office and in a similar manner, they talk about the things that you've done well, things that you're doing okay on, and the areas where you could be doing better.

And you leave those performance reviews in the same way. Not so much thinking about the areas where you're doing well, the good things that they had to say, but more about the areas that you need to improve upon.

And those are the things that end up upsetting you the most. Our tendency again is to focus on the areas where we need improvement.

Of course, we focus primarily on these areas because we want to perform at a high level. And it's not bad to want to do better.

My point, though, is to show that performance matters a great deal to us. We want to perform at our best.

[2:38] Both our own performance and also the performance of our children. Why is that? Why do we care so much about those things? Well, I'd say that the reason is due to the fact that you've been raised to think that your performance makes you who you are.

This has been instilled and reinforced in you since you were a child. With things like chore charts, report cards, standardized tests, recitals, sports, awards banquets.

Then you grew up and you heard the same message from your co-workers, from your boss, from your friends, maybe even your own spouse. The world tells you that few things matter or shape you more than your performance.

It's a message that dominates our view of reality. If you do well, you will be compensated. You will be acknowledged. You will be rewarded.

If you don't do well, you will be left out. You'll be seen as a failure and maybe even punished. As a result, we put a lot of emphasis on performance.

[3:54] And it ends up being something that motivates us primarily because we believe that what we do identifies who we are.

I am what my performance indicates. My identity is wrapped up in my performance. One thing that I've seen a lot of younger generations, my generation, have to battle with is the pressure that parents put on their children to perform.

They demand that they perform at the highest level possible, both in the classroom and on the ball field. Some parents push their kids for their own benefit.

And I think that that's being a good parent. If you know what your child is capable of doing, you want to do what you can to help them realize their full potential.

However, I've seen many parents push their children to perform well, not because their motivation is primarily for their child's good, but because they want to see their child performing well because it's a part of their own performance.

[5:12] You understand what I'm saying? I want you to perform well not because I want you to perform well, because your performing well makes me look good. And so, whereas one generation might have had a problem with a trophy wife, these generations have a problem with trophy kids.

But what if I told you that all of this, basing your identity on your performance or your child's performance is a lie? That staking your identity on your performance is delusional?

The Apostle Paul, a man who was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write about one-third of the New Testament, was a Pharisee like Nicodemus, who Jesus is talking to in John 3.16.

To become a Pharisee, you had to perform at a very high level. You had to memorize Scripture. You had to know the law. And you had to study for years under a rabbi who would put you through the ringer to make sure that you were an expert in the law and prepared for the task that a Pharisee was to perform.

And so Paul was a Pharisee, and he was a Pharisee who had performed very well. He was better than most. He was great at being a Pharisee.

[6:42] You know, the Chicago Bulls that dominated much of the 1990s in the NBA, they had a lot of good players. They had some great players. Then they had Michael Jordan.

And when I was thinking about what Paul was like, I think that at this point or at one point in his life, before he was saved by Christ, he was like the Michael Jordan of Pharisees. Listen to his own performance review found in Philippians 3, beginning in verse 3.

He says, For we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh. Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also.

If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more. Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. As to the law, a Pharisee.

As to zeal, a persecutor of the church. As to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

[7:49] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ.

The righteousness from God that depends on faith. Elsewhere, Paul expressed this truth by asking the Corinthian believers in chapter 4, verse 7, what do you have that you did not receive?

Then he adds in chapter 15, verse 10, by the grace of God, I am what I am. In other words, it's what God gives to you that makes you who you are. That what matters most in life isn't anything that you've done, or anything that you can do, but what God has done for you.

Maybe your perception of God doesn't match Scriptures. Maybe God isn't at all how you think He is, or have been told that He is.

Maybe you view God like those performance reviews that you've had to sit through. He's behind the desk, reviewing your good deeds and your bad deeds.

[9:14] Sure, He wants you to perform better, but His job isn't on the line. It's up to you to perform well. And if you don't, then too bad, so sad.

After all, according to this view, if you want to go to heaven, the ultimate reward that there is in life, then you had better perform well. And you'd better be ready, because that performance review could come at any moment in time.

And so maybe for you, that's what Sunday morning feels like to you. Every Sunday morning feels like a performance review. And who would want to come for that?

Who would want to come to church week in and week out to feel like they're undergoing yet another performance review? The God of the Bible is much different than that. He is not passive.

He does not sit behind the desk, sitting on the sidelines. He is a measureless mystery whose plans never fail. He swirled solar systems into existence out of empty spaces by the sheer power of His own voice.

[10:20] He sets princes on thrones and casts kings down into the dust. He has unleashed His kingdom on the earth through a virgin's womb, and He's crushed the power of the devil through His cross and His empty tomb.

And yet, this all-powerful deity whose strength cannot be matched and whose plans cannot be thwarted, who dwells in unapproachable light, whose essence is totally pure and holy, is also a God of overwhelming and irresistible grace.

He gave His only Son as a sacrifice to atone for your sins, to save you, not based upon your performance, but on His.

Jesus, again, is speaking, if you remember, to Nicodemus about salvation. That's the context within that John 3.16 takes place within.

He is explaining to him, He has explained to him that salvation is something that God does, not something that we do. He is telling him that only God is able to save a sinner, that a sinner can do nothing to contribute to their salvation, that it was necessary for God to become a man, to perform this ultimate sacrifice that sets us free and gives us eternal life.

[11:45] Why would He do this? Why would He take our sins away by placing them on Himself? Well, we've seen at the beginning of verse 16, for God so loved the world.

How has He displayed His love for us? By giving His only Son. You see, you can tell someone that you love them, but ultimately, it's your actions that reveal whether your message to them is true. God meant it when He said that He loved you. And He backed that statement up by offering His Son in your place to die for your sins.

So here's the main idea for this morning's message. Our gracious God demonstrated His amazing love for us by offering His only Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

Christians, who are the recipients of this amazing love, should likewise love sacrificially. You see, this is a very important thing to God.

[12:53] It is very important to Him that you exemplify His love in this world. John 13, 34-35, Jesus says, A new commandment I give to you that you love one another just as I have loved you.

You also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another.

When Jesus uttered those words, He knew that the hour of His death had come. That He was going to be a substitute for sinners. That He would substitute His life for them.

In doing so, His disciples would know how great His love was for them. One of God's chief characteristics is love. And as His children, we should want to reflect that love.

To reflect His image and His character to one another and to this world. 1 John 4, 7-12, Beloved, let us love one another for love is from God and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

[14:04] Anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love. In this, the love of God has made manifest among us that God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us. God wants you to exemplify His love because love is the heart of Christian witness.

Jesus is no longer physically in the world to manifest God's love in this age. He's given that responsibility to us, to His church.

Love which originated in God and was manifested in His Son must be demonstrated by His church to the unbelieving world. Our love for each other authenticates our love for God and it's a testimony to the unbelieving world that we believe what we teach, that we have been transformed by this same gospel that we ourselves are preaching.

[15:28] Now I wonder if we were to ask our community this question, what group in our community is the most loving group?

In all of Bartlesville, what group seems to be the most loving of one another and of others? I wonder where our church would rank.

I also wonder how much you feel like you are loved here. What I'm driving at this morning is what I believe that this scripture is driving at and we're focusing just on the fact that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son.

Next week we'll talk about the last portion of verse 16. But I believe that what this section is pointing to is that love shouldn't be something that our church is merely good at.

Love should be something that our church and you as a believer should excel in. And I believe that we will love more as we better understand and are reminded of God's amazing love.

[16:52] That it's a love that's not earned by your performance but is based solely upon His grace. The better we understand God's love the more we will reflect it.

And the more we reflect it the more changed our culture here in this church will be and as a result of that the greater impact we will have for the Lord in our community.

I believe that God is big enough to do that. Do you? Two truths then about sacrificial love that we need to understand so that our love excels.

First is this. Sacrificial love is not based on performance. Last week we unpacked the first part of this verse for God so loved the world and we saw that God's love is unmerited undeserved and unrestricted.

Now we move on to unpack the great truths contained in this second part of this theologically rich verse that He gave His only Son.

[17:56] God gave didyemi in the Greek means to give to bestow to present. Some gifts are given based upon performance but as we saw that last week this is not the case with this gift.

This was not a gift that we could earn. It wasn't a gift that we deserved. This verse is so simple that children can easily understand it yet it's filled with so much truth that I could preach on it for months and each week there would be a new discovery something different to see and behold and bewildered by.

Even though you have been told that God's love isn't based on your performance you've still no doubt been tempted to believe that it is from time to time I'm sure. Like I've been tempted from time to time to believe the same.

Most popular television preachers men like Joel Osteen will say things like a personal relationship with Jesus is humanity's only hope and that God's love is based upon his grace.

But then in their preaching they will indicate that it is really contingent upon your performance to gain more of God's favor to gain more of God's love that God is just waiting for you to make the first step.

[19:10] He's waiting for you to claim those blessings that he has for you. He's waiting for you to step out in faith. In other words what they're saying is whether or not you receive God's grace depends primarily on you and your performance.

that God will do his part but only after you do yours. And if he sees you performing well then and only then will he love you and bless you.

This way of thinking about God is very popular but let me tell you it's not biblical. And if it's not biblical it means it's not true. The love and grace of God has never waited for us to make the first move.

Case in point our original parents Adam and Eve the juices of the forbidden fruit were still on their lips when God came to meet them in the garden.

And when he called them out of their hiding place and once he had done that he lavished them with undeserved love by way of his undeserved grace.

[20:18] At that moment what Adam and Eve deserved was death that never ends. But instead if you remember God makes a sacrifice and he clothes them with that animal skin to cover up their nakedness.

The first sacrifice that is performed to cover up their shame and their guilt their sin. And then he promised them that one day someone would come and he would crush the serpent's head into the ground.

That he would destroy it. That he would rub its skull into the dirt. This truth that God's love is not based upon our performance is what separates Christianity from every other religion in the world. Christianity is the only religion that teaches that man can do nothing to earn or to pay or appease God in order to gain his love and entrance into his kingdom.

The Bible says that God so loved the world that in his grace he gave his son Jesus Christ as a sacrifice to die for the sins of people who are saved by faith in his death and in his resurrection.

[21:37] The empty wisdom of human religion proclaims what goes around comes around. That God only helps those who help themselves that you get what you pay for but let me tell you that

these are all lies that lead only to despair.

The gospel of Jesus Christ tells a totally different story. By God's grace we aren't rewarded by our performance. No one's performance could measure up to God's standards but by his grace we receive the performance and payment of someone else.

By God's grace he helps those who can't help themselves. By God's grace what goes around does not come back around but is extinguished at the cross of Jesus Christ.

Yes, God is pleased with our good deeds that we've performed after we've been saved. As a result of our salvation as a result of being indwelt by his spirit and being transformed we aren't just hearers of the word but doers of the word because we want to.

not because we feel like we have to. Those good deeds aren't performances we view them as our offerings as our sacrifices.

[22:54] We've understood what we've been given and the great love from which we have been from which we have received undeservedly. But even those asked do not result with God loving you any more than he always has.

If you say that you are a Christian then your love for others should not be based upon their performance. We love the unlovable.

We give respect to others without making them earn it. Our continued love for God isn't based upon him giving us any more or anything else than he already has in Jesus Christ.

Christ. And if we know as a Christian that I've been saved through Christ who atoned for my sins who's given me eternal life then what more could you want from him than what he's already given to you?

It's not based upon your performance but upon his grace. many of you know me you know that I'm a big sports fan and I'm thankful for a son who shares that love with me.

[24:07] And I'm grateful to be able to go watch him play and to help him help coach his teams and to see him being taught many of the great lessons that I believe sports can teach us about life.

But I'll tell you that what I'm most concerned about is his performance in the classroom more so than his performance on the ball field but whatever the case may be if he doesn't perform well my love doesn't diminish for him at all.

May not be happy but it doesn't mean that I love him any less. And if he performs well it doesn't mean that I love him any more. But sometimes there's failure in our ability to communicate that to our kids isn't there?

And I think sometimes there's failure from us as parents in making our kids believe that we love them less when they perform poorly or that we love them more when they perform well.

And so Jack had a particular game where I know that you have bad games and I know that you have good games being an athlete and sometimes you play a team that's just better than you sometimes things just don't go your way and you lose.

[25:19] But the one thing that has always been important to me for him is that you never quit. You never give up. When things go hard the answer isn't to lie down and do nothing.

And so there was a game where it was obvious that he had quit. And that was upsetting to me. Not because he didn't play well not because he lost but because he quit.

Because the one thing I respect about my father and I'm thankful that he taught me that I want to teach to my kids something that I believe is biblical is that we don't quit. When adversity comes we press onward correct?

And so I wanted to communicate that to him as well as my wife Danny and I felt like we did and then the next game came and he played well. He didn't quit. And I was really happy about that.

And so I told him after the game you know hey buddy good game. And he looked up at me and he said did I make you proud? But it was the way in which he said it that broke my heart.

[26:29] Because the way in which he said it there was hesitation. There was doubt and there was fear that I had loved him less because of the previous week's game and there was hope that I would love him the same or more because of his performance as a result of this game.

And I was convicted in that moment and I was like well I have not communicated effectively the love that I have for my son to him. And so I had to tell him you know buddy I'm proud of you no matter what or I love you no matter what.

And win or lose it doesn't matter and it doesn't affect the love that I have for you. And I hope that that's a message that was communicated to him but one I know that I need to work on more and

more.

When we come to John 3.16 I believe that's part of what the message is that God has for us. God says my love for you isn't based upon your performance and if you doubt that then look to the cross. If you doubt that I love you. If you think that I love you any less. If you think that I stopped loving you when you face adversity and you quit or want to quit.

[27 : 49] If you think that my love diminishes for you in any way, look to the cross. There are deeper parts to this love that we'll explore next week.

We are only scratching the surface. This is a love that truly is between the Father and the Son that we've been brought into by His Spirit.

And I hope that we'll explore that more next week but there is just so much here to go through. Like I said, it could be months and we would still have more to uncover and to see. But my point is that this is the kind of love that we should exhibit as born-again believers in this world.

To love like God means to love not based upon performance but based upon the performance of Christ for us. who was the offering for our sins, who stood in our place, who endured God's wrath for what we had done and who then gave us the faith to believe the gospel and be adopted forever as His children whom He totally loves now and forevermore from everlasting to everlasting.

Sacrificial love is not based on performance. So what is it based on? Sacrificial love is based on grace. Jesus wasn't given so that God could love you.

[29 : 23] Jesus was given because God loves you. In other words, the love of God is not the result of Christ's death but its cause. It is because God so loved the world that He gave His Son, His only Son, to be sacrificed on the cross.

It was while we were still guilty, sinners, running, hiding from God that Christ came and died as a sacrifice to atone for our sins.

Atonement means or as far as Scripture goes it's that aspect of the work of Christ and particularly His death that secures the restoration of fellowship between individual believers and God.

So Jesus makes it plain in John 3.16 that unless God has loved the world by sending His only Son to be lifted up as a sacrifice for sin, all humanity would have perished in their sins.

It is God's love and justice that make the atonement of Jesus Christ necessary for our salvation and that this sacrifice is the supreme demonstration of God's love for humanity.

[30 : 39] The magnitude of God's love is revealed by the extraordinary cost that He was graciously willing to pay to absorb our sin and rescue us from its eternal consequences.

If anyone was to enjoy the saving grace and mercy of God who saves the cross of Jesus Christ was absolutely necessary. The New Testament explicitly identifies the death of Christ as a sacrifice for sins.

Hebrews 9.26 the second part of that verse. But as it is He has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Such imagery there draws from the history of Israel in the Old Testament and the prescriptions there for sacrificial worship. Christ's sacrifice on the cross is the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrificial system that was instituted under the law in the book of Leviticus.

If you remember God gave Moses the law and He instructed him to build a tabernacle. The tabernacle was a portable tent to be placed in the middle of the Israelite camp symbolizing God's presence with His people.

[32 : 01] The book of Leviticus begins with God's filling the tabernacle with His glory. But there's a problem. God is holy.

His people are not. So the theme of the book of Leviticus seeks to answer this question. How can a God who is holy dwell in the midst of sinful people?

The answer to that question is that sinners are to offer sacrifices to the Lord that will atone for their sin. One life must be substituted for another's.

One's sins must be transferred to another to atone for their sin and to render them then acceptable in God's presence. And so the people were commanded to offer different kinds of animal sacrifices and while not all of them were prescribed to atone for sin, the ceremony on the day of atonement, which occurred only once a year surely was.

On that day, the high priest of Israel was to enter the most holy place inside the tabernacle, the inner chamber where the ark of the covenant was kept and the glory of God was concealed.

[33:22] On that day, the priest would take two goats with him to the tabernacle. One goat would be sacrificed, the other would be the scapegoat which would bear the sins of the people and would be banished forever outside of their camp from the presence of the Lord.

The blood of the sacrificial goat was to be sprinkled on the mercy seat which was the covering of the ark of the covenant where atonement for sin was made because as Leviticus 17:11 says, So after dealing with the sacrificial goat, the priest then turned his attention to the scapegoat.

Leviticus 16:21-22 And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel and all their transgressions, all their sins.

And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area and he shall let the goat go free into the wilderness.

So by laying his hands on the head of the scapegoat and confessing all of Israel's sins on it, the high priest was symbolizing that God had reckoned the sin and guilt of the people to be transferred over to this animal.

[34:59] Instead of bearing their own sin and being punished and banished from God's presence, the people had their sin imputed to a substitute, to this goat. The innocent goat bore their sin, their guilt, their punishment, their shame.

And the people would then banish it outside of the camp. By sprinkling the blood of the sacrificial goat on the mercy seat and by imputation of the sins of the people on the scapegoat, the priests then had atoned for Israel's sins and the people were released from punishment.

Now in the same way, all these things are just foreshadowing of what Jesus would come to do.

Jesus, our great high priest, was also God's great sacrifice for our sins.

Just as the mercy seat was the place where atonement was made and God's wrath was averted, so the cross of Jesus Christ became the place where his blood was shed and it provided atonement for our sins.

Jesus offered the sacrifice and he is the sacrifice that was offered. Like the scapegoat, he bore our sin by having it imputed to himself, having it applied to his account.

[36:18] He bore our sins in his body. And as the Bible says, when the midday sun, as Jesus hung suspended on the cross between heaven and earth, was darkened.

And I believe that in that moment what was happening is God the Father was placing his hands upon the head of his son, transferring all of our sins over to his account.

Jesus talked about hell being like outer darkness, isolation. salvation. And there, as darkness filled the land, Jesus was led outside of the camp like that scapegoat, bearing our sins, removing them from us, going to that place of isolation in our place for the sins that we've committed.

salvation. This is a love that is not based on our performance. It's a love that was carried out by Jesus Christ.

It's a sacrificial love because our God is a gracious God. The innocent bore the sins of the guilty, and that knowledge should forever change our lives.

[37:50] You know, we live in an outrage culture where the popular thing to do is when you feel offended is to act outrageously about it, right?

And you know, I think it's heartbreaking. It must be for God that so often we come to this verse and we've kind of, we're so familiar with it, we just go right by it. It should outrage us.

It should outrage us that our sin is that deep. That dirty. That God had to give his own son.

That he was willing to give his own son. The innocent taking the place of the guilty. You know, one of my things that I enjoy, I enjoy reading true crime books or watching shows about true crime.

It's weird, I don't know. But one show I've been watching, it talks about false confessions. That, you know, the police who typically do a great job in some instances where they're poorly equipped in small towns or whatever, they just want to find somebody to put the charges on so that they can appease the people who are seeking justice.

[39:08] And so, they'll put a person in a room and they'll wear them down for hours and hours until they get some kind of confession out of that person. Though the evidence doesn't say that they were guilty at all, the confession does, and then later they recant and whatnot.

But there's outrage over this. An innocent person is in jail paying the price for somebody else's sins. And we demand justice be done.

But when it comes to Jesus Christ, do we realize? It's a different story when it's us, isn't it? It was not just your sins or the sins of others.

It was my sin that put Him there. He died for the sins that I've committed. He is innocent. I'm guilty. And yet He willingly did it so that I could have eternal life. We should be outraged by the love of God who would die in the place of sinners to redeem us from our sins and give us eternal life.

[40:22] So, what do we do with this? At least two things. First of all, live sacrificially. Every day, present yourself to God as a living sacrifice.

God gave His very best for you. We ought to give our very best for Him. The time that we spend with Him on a daily basis.

Our service to Him in His church. It shouldn't be something that we have to try to find time to do. And I'm speaking to myself. It should be something that we look to do.

Sacrificing other things in order to give God our best. Because that's what He did for us. Secondly, love graciously. This does not mean neglecting discipline.

True love is not an enabling love. But it means that we're gracious towards one another. It means that we're gracious towards others. It means that we don't base how we're going to respond to somebody, if we're going to love them or not, based solely upon their performance or what they can give to us.

[41:35] We're going to love graciously like God who loved, not based upon our merit, not based upon anything that we deserved, not based upon because we were, you know, we looked a certain way or belonged to a certain group.

And so we ought to love the same. And I want to close by reading all of Romans chapter 12.

Because this is what it looks like when we live sacrificially and we love graciously.

This is God's command for you, His child, and for us, His church. And so we begin a service by standing in honor of God's word.

And I want to close this time by standing once again in honor of this scripture. And don't stand yet. Before I tell you why I want you to stand.

I mean, I'm thankful for your eagerness. My hope and my prayer is that in your standing and us reading this scripture is that this will be the pledge of our church.

[42:37] that this would be your pledge to one another. That this would be more importantly your pledge to God. That we will be a people who reflect His image by living sacrificially and loving graciously.

Let's stand and read this word together. May this be our pledge in our prayer. I appeal therefore to you brothers by the mercies of God present your bodies as a living sacrifice.

Holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but 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. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. But to think with sober judgment.

Each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members and the members do not all have the same function. So we though many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.

[43:52] Let us use them. Let us use them for one another I will add. If prophecy in proportion to our faith. If service in our serving. The one who teaches in his teaching.

The one who exhorts in his exhortation. The one who contributes in generosity. The one who leads with zeal. The one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine.

Abhor what is evil. Hold fast to what is good. 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. Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse them.

[44:49] Rejoice with those who rejoice. Weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God.

For it is written, vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord. To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

For by so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Thank you.