

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 37

I. Exposition of Chapter Thirteen (Continued).

A. The Christian's obligation to Others.

1. Verses 8-10 - The obligation to Love.

- a. **Verse 8 – “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.”** – This verse has often been used in order to prove that God never wants us in any debt whatsoever. This verse, however, must be taken within its context. In **verse 7** Paul commands the believer to give others what is due them, whether it be taxes, customs, reverence (fear) or honor. Now he states that we're to not owe anything but love. This is NOT commanding believers to never have a debt of a mortgage or a car payment, etc., it's simply saying that we're to meet our obligations of paying our bills.

- b. Jesus permitted borrowing in passages like **Matthew 5:42**.

“Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.”

- c. **See also Deuteronomy 15:6; 28:12.**

- d. However, there are warnings about borrowing

“The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower is servant to the lender.” - Proverbs 22:7

- e. **“...except to love one another...”** – There is one debt which will never be “paid off” and that is to love one another. The word **“love”** is the Greek word **“agapao”** which is the verb form and means to actively love unconditionally and sacrificially.

“The only thing we are allowed to owe is divine love; that love produced in the heart of the yielded saint by the Holy Spirit, a love self-sacrificial in its essence, giving of itself for the benefit of the person loved. Alford says; ‘Pay all other debts: be indebted in the matter of love alone. This debt increases the more, the more it is paid, because the practice of love makes the principle of love deeper and more active.’”¹

- d. **“...for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.”** – Concerning who this love is directed to, Picirilli states: **“Here in verse 8, unlike most Scripture passages, the ‘one another’ probably is not used in the marrow sense of Christian fellowship. All our fellow men are included, not merely the Christian brotherhood. Paul’s use of ‘neighbor’ (verses 9, 10) makes this opinion likely. Furthermore, even here in verse 8, when Paul says ‘he that loveth another,’ the Greek word for ‘another’ means someone different.”²**

e. Verses 9-10 – Explanation as to why love fulfills the law.

- 1) The law of the Old Testament is divided into three main areas. The Moral, Civil and Ceremonial law.

- 2) The Moral Law is basically the Ten Commandments, the Civil Law was an expansion of the ten laid out for the governing of Israel and the Ceremonial law had to do with the priesthood, the tabernacle, the feasts, and the sacrificial system.

- 3) Jesus fulfilled the law:

- a) Christ died on the cross for the broken moral and civil law. Sin, transgression, wrath, judgment and death fell on him for our lawlessness.

- b) Christ's death on the cross fulfilled and abolished the ceremonial law contained in ordinances (**Colossians 2:14-17**).

- 4) The Moral Law is referred to here as being fulfilled by Love. (**Note Matthew 22:34-40**).

- a) The Ten Commandments are divided into two parts (**Exodus 20:1-17**):

- The first four have to do with man's relationship with God.
- The last six have to do with man's relationship with man.

- b) Both parts have to with Love.

- If we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (**Deuteronomy 6:5**):

➤ We will not have any other gods before Him.

¹Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 227.

²Robert E. Picirilli, *Romans*. (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 272-273.

- We will not have any graven images or idols.
- We will not take His name in vain.
- We will serve Him each day of the week and the principle of “rest” on one of those days.
- If we love our neighbor as ourselves (**Leviticus 19:18**):
 - We will honor our mother and father.
 - We will not murder in thought or deed.
 - We will not commit adultery in thought or deed.
 - We will not steal.
 - We will not bear false witness against them.
 - We will not covet what belongs to another.

B. The Christian’s Obligation to the Gospel.

1. Verse 11 – “And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed.”

- a. Picirilli connects this by stating: “The first two words in verse 11, ‘and that,’ look back to the teaching just given, to love one’s neighbor as oneself. Paul is going to introduce the subject of the soon coming of our Lord as a special impetus for Christian love and indeed for a clean and wholesome, watchful and alert Christian life.”³
- b. “...knowing the time...” – The word “time” here means; “season,” “a special, critical, strategic period of time.”⁴ It’s also used in referring to “an opportune moment”. (cf. I Chronicles 12:32).

“That we ‘know the time’ means we are aware, knowledgeable, about the times that are in God’s hands. We understand what era we live in, that these are the last days. We know how our times fit into the program of God. Indeed, we recognize the shortness of time, and thus the urgency behind wide-awake Christian living in these days.”⁵

- c. “...that now it is high time to awake out of sleep...” – The word “sleep” is used figuratively to refer to “spiritual stupor” or “spiritual laxity”. (cf. I Corinthians 15:34; Ephesians 5:14; I Thessalonians 5:6.)
- d. “...for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.” – This is speaking of the time of the rapture of the Church which is the final salvation when the body is made incorruptible and immortal (I Corinthians 15:50-54), and the total redemption of our body is received (Romans 8:23).

2. Verse 12 – “The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”

- a. The “night”, according to several expositors, represents the darkness of this world. Acts 26:18; Ephesians 5:8-14; Colossians 1:13; I Thessalonians 5:4-5; I John 1:5-7; 2:8-11.
- b. The “day” is probably referring to the closeness of the coming of the Lord. (cf. I Thessalonians 5:2,4; II Thessalonians 2:2-3).
- c. “...let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.” – The words “cast off” mean, “to lay aside” like you would a garment. In contrast, the words “put on” mean “to be clothed with”. (cf. Ephesians 4:22-25; Hebrews 12:1; James 1:21).
- d. “armor of light” – See also Ephesians 6:10-17.

3. Verses 13-14 – More on putting off and putting on.

- a. Verse 13 – “...walk properly” – means, “decently” and “honestly.”
- b. “revelry” – “feastings and drunkenness with impurity and obscenity.”
- c. “drunkenness” – “intoxication.”
- d. “lewdness” – “sexual immorality”
- e. “lust” – “behavior completely lacking in moral restraint.”
- f. “strife” – “conflict resulting from rivalry and discord”⁶
- g. “envy” – “a strong feeling of resentment and jealousy.”

f. Verse 14 – “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ...”

³Robert E. Picirilli, *Romans*. (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 275.

⁴Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 228.

⁵Picirilli, 275.

⁶Louw and Eugene Albert Nida