



HEBRON

Sunday, March 17, 2019

Dr. Landon Dowden

THE GOSPEL COMMUNITY IN THE COMMUNITY (Part 1)

Romans 12:14 (ESV)

Overview of 12:14-21 – The Gospel changes how we relate to the world.

- The Gospel of Christ transforms the way we view and treat the people who harm us most.
- By God’s mercies, we are not called to treat others as they deserve to be treated but to treat them as Christ has treated us.
- What makes the Gospel Community special is not just how we treat each other but how we treat the people who hate us because of Christ.
- We are disciples of Him who died for His enemies.

Passage in a Sentence: As we take the gospel to our neighbors and the nations, we are called, by God’s mercies, to bless those who persecute us.

I. WE NEED TO ACCEPT THE REALITY OF PERSECUTION

- a. We are called to not just be the church gathered but also the church scattered. The Gospel Community is called to take the Gospel to the Community.
- b. We are called to be in the world but not of it (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19; Ps. 96:3, 10; 2 Cor. 5:20; Matt. 5:14-16).
- c. If we really are the Gospel Community and we live the Gospel in the Community, then the question of persecution is not “if” but “when.” (Matt. 10:16-25; 2 Tim. 3:12)

II. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE REASON FOR PERSECUTION

- a. The more we live Eph. 2:10, the more persecution we will face. (Matt. 10:22, 25; John 15:18-21)
- b. In what ways are we not of this world? As we live Rom. 12 and Matthew 5:6-10
- c. Why does the world hate this/us? John 3:19
- d. Candlish: If our Christianity is lukewarm, if we seldom openly identify with Christ’s cause, the danger of persecution and the resulting temptation to retaliate will be slight.



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III. WE NEED TO PRAY AND PLAN SO THAT OUR REACTION TO PERSECUTION IS A REFLECTION OF CHRIST'S CHARACTER

- a. Bless those who persecute us
  - i. What does it mean to bless?
    - 1. A good word
    - 2. Asking God to do good to them
    - 3. We are to respond for their good and for God's glory.
  - ii. The issue is not just to bless (action), but also to want to bless them (attitude).
- b. How can we bless our enemies and rejoice in persecution?
  - i. Grasp that as we live the Gospel not everyone will like it.
    - 1. Don't be caught off guard.
    - 2. Don't be surprised.
  - ii. Determine now to respond with blessing rather than cursing.
  - iii. Rely fully on Christ.
  - iv. Set our eyes on Jesus.
  - v. If we are to love others rightly, we must meditate on the cross constantly. (Matt. 27:39-44; Luke 23:34)
  - vi. Remember that we too were once enemies of Christ. (Rom. 5:8)

IV. WE CAN REJOICE WHEN PERSECUTED KNOWING THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL WILL BE REWARDED