

# Dressing for Christ Part 2 - Romans 12

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     Good morning. It is a blessed morning, and we are privileged again to be gathered together as God's family to worship, and I must say I've been encouraged greatly already this morning.
- We're going to continue in Romans, and thank you, Joey, for reading that for us. Hopefully we'll finish chapter 12 there, Dressing for Christ, and that's the second part of that sermon that I did last Sunday, and it deals again with more practical living.
- And that's where, how do we say it, the rubber meets the road? Practical living. Now we know who we are in Christ.
- How do we live it out? And so what is the golden rule? Do unto others as they do unto you, right?
- Oh, I caught you there, Peter, didn't I? Is that how sometimes we like to live? Yes. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- [ 1 : 45 ]     There's a story told of a woman who was bitten by a mad dog.
- It looked like she was going to die of rabies, and so the doctor told her she should make her will. For if we know rabies is a disease without cure, or at least it used to be that way anyway.
- And once you got it, you had very little time left. So the doctor told her she should make her will. Taking her pen and paper, she began to write.
- In fact, she wrote and wrote. And finally, the doctor said, that is surely a long will that you're making. The woman snorted and said, this is no will I'm writing.
- I'm making a list of all the people I'm going to bite. Ouch. I mean, that's funny, right?
- [ 2 : 55 ]     That's comedy in the flesh. But how many times do we find ourselves tempted to be right there? To bite back.
- And to kick out at those around us. The portion of Scripture that we're going to deal with today is largely on revenge.
- Or the lack of revenge in the Christian life. There's a few other thoughts that Paul shares here as well. But by and large, that's what it is.
- And that too is practical living. And how do I react when I'm hurt? Especially by someone within the church.
- How am I going to respond? Before we begin our passage, let's turn again. And if you have your Bibles, turn with me to Philippians chapter 2.
- [ 4 : 03 ]     I read this last Sunday as well as a theme verse. But it's good for us to understand what's going on.
- Philippians chapter 2, verse 13 and 14. Sorry. Verse 12 and 13.
- Therefore, my beloved, I have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but much more in my absence. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. So I think we understand that we are to work out our salvation.

That has started with God giving me a new heart. But is there a contradiction here? In these two verses.

[ 5 : 12 ] For in verse 12, we are told to work out our salvation. It's an action required of me.

Of us. The verse that follows. For it is God who works in you both to will and do for His good pleasure.

So who is going to work this out now? Is it God? God. We need to understand this.

God. And right in the center of this is the sovereignty of God. That God does according to His will.

And there is the free will of man. God has given us His Spirit. God has given us.

[ 6 : 23 ] God has given us. God has given us. God has given us. God has given us. The free will of man needs to yield to the Spirit of God within me.

Cooperate. We need to recognize and to yield to God's power within me. Without that power, I can do nothing.

I cannot clean up my life. It is God in me. And yet, God has chosen by His divine will that means to cooperate and allow.

You know, when is the last time God forced you to read the Bible? He doesn't, does He?

The Spirit in us is gentle in nudging us, in leading us, in asking us to respond.

[ 7 : 37 ] So let's keep that in mind as we look at practical life, Christian life. This is God's will. He has given us the strength, the power within us.

Am I willing to yield to that? And as well with that, we need to remember that we live in a fallen world.

The entire world is under the sway of Satan. And as God, by His grace, through faith in His Son, has lifted us out spiritually, not physically, at least not yet.

We are now to live above the standard of a fallen world. And it's by the Spirit of God to do that.

And this is Paul's message, or God's message, through Paul's writing, that we are to walk in the Spirit.

[ 8 : 53 ] This is what it looks like. And Romans 12 is one chapter that lays it out very clearly. Relationships here on earth that rise above a fallen world.

For in the natural, we will fight and devour and bite one another. Like the woman with rabies.

By the way, that was just a story. And although it has happened. So having that in mind, let us start in verse 14.

Romans 12, verse 14. He says, Bless those who persecute you.

Bless and do not curse. And of blessing those who harm us. And what does the word bless mean?

[ 9 : 59 ] Bless. When we are blessed by God, what does that mean? Does anyone have a thought?

What does it mean to be blessed? To be forgiven? Okay, that's blessed. To be given something good.

Yes. And so, it is to show favor upon. So when we're blessed by God, He is showing His favor on us.

And we receive that by faith in Christ. So, goodwill towards someone else.

Goodwill towards someone else. God's goodwill to us. Desiring to bless us as we respond in faith. Now, we are told here and instructed, Bless those who persecute who hurt you.

[ 11 : 18 ] Bless those who hurt you. May you have good favor, goodwill towards the person that hurts you. Be it in church or outside.

God. Can we do this? Humanly? We cannot. This is rising above humanity.

This is in the strength of God. But this is the expectation of the church of Christ. Because He has enabled us.

Empowered us. We are to repay evil with good. But how about my feelings?

Do we not have feelings when we are hurt? Do we not? And do those feelings not want to overtake?

[ 12 : 28 ] And if we don't give those feelings some time to adjust according to truth, what will happen? We will, instead of blessing, we will curse or retaliate.

The principle here is our feelings never, never should lead the way over truth.

Because they will lead us astray. They need to adjust to truth.

And so, hence, the instruction here. You know, in, as an example, in marriage, and I could recount probably many personal examples, but when I have been grouchy to my spouse, my wife, or done something mean to her, and she has in kind returned with a faith and treated me special, and did something, went out of her way to do something good.

The end of this chapter speaks about heaping coals of fire on your head. Bless and do not curse.

[ 14 : 06 ] This is the Christian community. Proverbs 15.1 A soft answer turns away wrath. Does that work?

It does. And so, these are real things that we are to focus on, to dress each day.

When Jesus was persecuted, how did he respond? When he was in the judgment hall, how did he respond?

What did he say? He was quiet. He did not retaliate.

In that moment, he decided to be quiet. When Stephen was being stoned, from which he would die, what did he do?

[ 15 : 26 ] He prayed for them. Yeah. He said, Father, forgive them. For they do not know what they do. Do not hold this against them.

This is a standard above the world. That the world does not understand. So, it's only possible to bless, to show kindness.

It's when we have divine life. The life of Christ. And we're submitting to it. And, you know, blessing in our words, in our deeds, our actions.

And even in our thought life. As we surrender to Christ. Moving on to verse 15.

Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Rejoicing is joy, happiness, and weeping, sadness.

[ 16 : 40 ] And crying. And we are instructed to do both. Now, which is easier?

To rejoice with someone or to weep with someone? To rejoice? Okay.

Would we all agree? No? You know, when someone's going through sorrow, do not our emotions kick in?

And we find it easier to identify and to come alongside? And when someone is rejoicing and, like we had last Sunday, is being honored, it's actually harder, in many cases, to rejoice with them in the true sense.

And yet here we are instructed to identify with fellow believers, whether they are weeping or rejoicing.

[ 17 : 51 ] And I just want to share a thought on weeping, on going through a tough time. And when we come alongside someone, we need to be careful that we're showing empathy and not sympathy.

And that, and I'm going to explain the difference. Empathy is showing love in much compassion and understanding.

It's coming alongside with understanding. Sympathy is coming alongside and pitying and saying, oh, poor you.

Look what you're going through again. That does not lift up. It does not build. Whereas empathy, coming alongside, yes, I may never have been there, but I understand you're going through a deep valley.

I'm here to listen. And we need to understand that difference, that we do not pity, in that sense, to keep them wallowing in their troubles.

[ 19 : 19 ] Rather, help them out. Lift them up. It's very important in our relationships that we do that. So there's verse 14, or 15, to rejoice with those who are rejoicing and to weep with those who are weeping.

Verse 16, be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own eyes or in your own opinion.

So we are to be of the same mind toward one another. What does that mean, to be of the same mind? It is to be like-minded as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The context of the verse, to not lift myself up above others, but to see each and every one of us as equal in the Lord.

As created by God. To be like-minded does not mean uniformity that we all have to think identical in our thoughts and procedures on how to do things, but rather a likeness in the body of Christ.

[ 20 : 51 ] In the context, to not set our minds on high things, but associate with the humble.

You know, in this congregation, and I'm going to just use this as an example, we have people here from so many cultures.

I grew up in La Crete, Alberta. Peter grew up in Tabor. Some of you grew up in Mexico, in Bolivia, in Belize, in Ontario, in Grand Prairie, and in between.

I don't know where you all came from. All of us come with a level or a different cultural background.

Although many of us, most of us are Mennonite in background, we're still different in how we grew up and in our practices. Our education levels vary greatly.

[ 21 : 59 ] It is so easy in the flesh to lift myself up. In Christ, we are equal.

And we need to see each other regardless of our backgrounds. We're brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Everybody is on the same playing field. Why do we need to be reminded? Why is Paul writing this?

Because he understands our struggles. And that's what brings unity. It's that understanding of who we are in Christ.

He ends verse 16, Do not be wise in your own eyes, in your own opinion. Do not lift yourself up in pride and think you're better.

[ 23 : 07 ] You're even better than God, ultimately, if you're wise in your own opinion. Let's turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 4.

Just highlight that further. 1 Corinthians chapter 4. And let's maybe start in verse 5.

We could read the whole chapter, but let's start in verse 5. 1 Corinthians 4. Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos.

2 Corinthians 5. Let's look up, ■■■■■. 1 Corinthians 5.

It says, And what do you have that you did not receive? Why do you boast as if you had not received it?

[ 24 : 36 ] And he goes on. I'll read one more verse. You are already full. You are already retained as kings without us. And indeed, I could wish you did reign, that we might also reign with you.

Paul is dealing with an issue in Corinth of those who are acting like, I've got it together. I am above.

And Paul reminds you, what do you have that the Lord did not give you? What gives you the right to lift yourself up? And some of the divisions was Paul against the Paulists and other teachers and taking sides and I belong to this group, but it was elevating, elevating.

And it's a good reminder, what do I have besides what the Lord gave me? The answer is nothing. Nothing.

And so, hence, do not be wise in your own opinion. Let's move on to 17.

[ 25 : 51 ] Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things. Amen. So he's repeating, repay no one evil for evil. Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.

Or fist for fist. Or words for words. We are not to do that. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

And it means to provide or have respect for others and bestow the goodness of God on them. Instead of repaying evil for evil.

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. So let's just touch into that a bit.

He says, he's talking about living in unity, peaceably. And he has two factors here that he brings out, two conditions.

[ 26 : 57 ] He says, first of all, as is possible. If it is possible, as much as depends on you. So, in other words, it will not always be possible to be at peace with everyone.

Sometimes we face the reality that not everyone is my friend. But I want everybody to be my friend.

I want everybody to like me. That is true. And if you're like me, then you have that. But it's not always possible.

But then he qualifies further and he says, But as much as depends on you, live peaceably. Do your part.

We are responsible before God to do as much as I can to live at peace with each and everyone. Whether I have offended someone or someone has offended me, I am to do what I can.

[ 28 : 18 ] To rectify. To seek. To earnestly reconcile. But is that fair? But he hurt me. Am I required to go?

Yes. If he doesn't come right away, I will go. This is the Lord Jesus. By the way, did we go out to meet God first?

Or did he come out to meet us? And we are bearing his name. And so we are called to make peace.

As much as depends on you. To deal with your heart. To come clean. And how the other person responds is not in my hands.

And I can do nothing further but to pray for that individual. I want to take this one step further. We have sometimes struggled with this with communion.

[ 29 : 31 ] I know that so and so has an issue with me. Should I be taking part in communion? And it's something that we sometimes struggle with.

And if we have done our part, as much as depends on me, then we are free to commune.

To fellowship. For if that was not the case, I would not have taken communion as your pastor for years. For there's people who have rejected truth.

Teaching. Teaching. And who have openly called my name. And I simply would not be able to commune.

But God does not work that way. He frees us. But I have to examine my heart. To come clean. And we are instructed not to be held hostage by others, but to come free.

[ 30 : 43 ] To come clean of that. And that's all I can do. Is ensure that my heart has done what it needs to do. In rectifying a situation.

And so, hence, I am to, as much as possible, live peaceably with all men. Moving on to the last section here in verse 12, or in Romans 12.

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath. For it is written, Vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord.

Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink. For in so doing, you will heap coals of fire on his head.

Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good. And the last instruction, but bringing it all to a close, he says, Beloved, do not seek to avenge, to pay back, to take vengeance, like the lady in her story.

[ 32 : 03 ] To rise above the flesh. Why? What is the reasoning? Vengeance belongs to whom?

To God. To God alone. The judge of all men. We are to release the paying back of evil to God in every situation.

Do we trust God with that? Is he able? Is he just? Is he just? God. Is he just? Is he just?

Is he just? Is he just? Is he just? Is he just? Is he just? Is he just? Is he just? Is he just? Is he just? But sometimes the evil keep going. God, are you sleeping?

That's what it feels like, right? But their day is coming. God in his time will repay evil. Every sin has to be paid for.

[ 33 : 20 ] Accounted for. It's not Christ standing in the gap for you. Then we will stand for God and pay the price.

And that is a promise of Scripture. And so the Lord will repay. When we read the book of Revelations and we read much on the wrath of God coming upon this world towards the end and the end times which may not be that far away.

you know, there's a sense at least in my eyes there's a sense of the horribleness of what's going to happen as God's judgments will fall on the ungodly.

And my heart would as we read this would I would not desire for anyone to face God's wrath and yet God is just and every sin payment and He will repay for He is righteous.

And so as we go through this life let us remember the Lord is in control and He will in His timing do justice.

- [ 35 : 10 ] I can let go to conquer the flesh to push it down to allow the Spirit of Christ to reign in me. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Is it easy? It isn't. And yet we are equipped. Every born again believer is equipped. The last verse do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.
- And you know every time that I open my mouth and respond in negative when somebody beats me up I am overcome by evil.
- Every time I respond in like-mindedness in actions I'm overcome and in the moment I'm just like they are and the flesh has surfaced and taken over.

- [ 36 : 29 ] And this is this is the climax he's saying believers in Christ let us rise above. I want to close with some words of wisdom in James chapter 1 you may not think this is applicable but it is.

James chapter 1 very simple verse verse 19 so then my beloved brethren let every man be swift to hear slow to speak slow to wrath or anger the Christian life we are to slow down in our response and to let truth prevail to allow it time to work through the emotions that we're feeling and James puts it very well listen slow to respond in speech and slow to get angry as we allow God's truth to penetrate and it will save us much grief as we're slow to speak because if we have even 10 seconds to think often a response has been prevented that would hurt that would hurt back all of you that are married know how this works in marriage but it also works between brothers and sisters in the church it works at work everywhere so this is what we're called to and and just that we recognize that that our divine calling is to rise above a fallen world and that we have the power of Christ in us to equip us to do it in us as we surrender to that will may the Lord continue to work through us may we continue to respond and just to give way to surrender to that as we as we continue to get dressed for Christ let's pray father what a privilege it is to be called your children to bear your name to be sealed by the Holy

Spirit but what a responsibility God to walk in the Spirit to yield to it and there too Lord we look to you for the strength to do that may you have your way in each one of us God as we reflect your grace and your love to one another in Christ's name Amen Amen