



Supernatural Practical Christian Living Part 5

August 10, 2025 Romans 12:9-21

(video 41:15)

You want to turn again, such a joy to get to say that, to the book of Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. Been away from it now for a week or so, and we're in this glorious, glorious chapter. Just to remind you again, not that many of you need much of a reminder, I hope you can say it by heart by now, but the first 11 chapters of the book of Romans, orthodoxy, the riches, the glorious mercies that have been extended to us in Christ. But what do you do with it? Again, so many people, sad to say, think in Romans 12 through 16 is sort of an afterthought, unimportant. As important as all those doctrines, all that theology, all that orthodoxy in Romans 1 through 11 are; the great truths of justification, the great truths of sanctification, the great truths of glorification, the great truths in Romans 9, 10, and 11 about the nation of the Jew and their particular role to play in God's plan and end times and prophecy and all of that. As fabulous as it all is, in a sense, it's foundational to get to this point. Why? Why is Romans 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, why is Romans 12:1-21 that we're really focused on right now, why is it so important? Because people are more concerned about what you do than what you say. They're more concerned about what we are as opposed to what we say we are. It's critical. The glory of God is at stake in this passage of Scripture. If you believe the first 11 chapters of the book of Romans, if you claim those truths, if they have claim on your life, that we need to show that glory of God to a world that needs Christ by praising Him with life and lip and being obedient to His commands. St. Francis of Assisi, our famous quote that we use so often: *Preach the gospel at all times. If necessary, use words.* They don't care what you say. They care about what you and I do. What do we say all the time? They'll know we are Christians by our what? Love. And that's usually taken in the context of by our love for one



another, the one and others of Scripture. Well, that's true, but let me take that one step further. There's a bigger picture than that. They'll know you're a Christian by your love for Almighty God. And what does Jesus say? Don't say you'll love Me if you don't obey My commands. For most people in the world, the only Bible they're ever going to read are the pages of your life and mine. These are not, these statements here in Romans 12, are not options. They're not good suggestions. They're commands. They're in the imperative tense. They are absolute commands. And what's he say? Romans 12:1-2. Knowing these mercies that have been extended, you present your body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship. In other words, commit. Then what did we learn after 12:1&2? We learn in 3-8. Your giftedness. Serve. Use your giftedness. What's your gift? It's you. There's only one you. There's no one like you. God's given you that package, that spiritual gift package, that life mapping, those experiences, that background, your personality, your physical talents, your emotional talents, your mental skills and ability, and your spiritual blend of gifts. And there's no one like you. There'll never be another John MacArthur Jr. There'll never be another Charles Spurgeon. But there'll never be another you either. And God has put you where He's put you for a purpose. Talk about meaning in life. Nothing could give greater meaning to a human being than to know you're in the very center of God's will, doing what God has equipped you, called you, and commanded you to do. We make that joke. Hey, while I'm gone, act like Christians. It's not a joke.

Well, what does this Christian life look like? He tells us in verses 9- 21, as I underscored a couple of weeks ago, every one of these is a character quality exemplified by the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 9, ***Let love be without hypocrisy.*** We talked about that. ***Abhor what is evil.*** ***Cling to what is good.*** We talked about all that. Then he says, in your service, ***Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;*** That's the attitude.



Then he says, ***not lagging behind in diligence***,... Serve constantly, quickly, efficiently, where God has placed you to serve. And by the way, do it with a joyful attitude, and do it with zest, and do it with life. ***...fervent in spirit***, verse 11. It means boiling over with excitement. Remember that example I gave of the Kansas City Chief football fan with one side painted black and one side painted red and wearing an Indian headdress and screaming go Chiefs and all that. If we can do that for a football game, that's really the attitude of heart we're supposed to have in the things of God. Verse 12, ***rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation***,... Why? Because when you start serving with that type of an attitude, what's going to happen? You're going to be, undergo persecution. Persevering in tribulation. All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 2 Timothy 3:12. So, God said, in verses 9-21, Paul sort of gives us the attitude there. Verse 9, we talked about that. ***Love without hypocrisy, abhorring what is evil, clinging to what is good***. Then, what's the attitude, what's the response, and what's our action in the family of God? And that's what he covers there in verses 10, 11, and 12. ***Rejoicing in hope***, knowing that when you serve, there's going to be persecutions. Persevere. Why? Because you've got a joy in your heart. Why? Because you know the end of the story. You know what's coming. You know where you're going. He who's begun a good work in you will perfect until the day of Jesus Christ. You understand Ephesians 2:10. Every good work you're going to do, He's already foreordained that you and I might walk in them. We got all that down, and we're ***devoted to prayer***. He gives that grace. He wants that communion. In verse 13, what's going to happen? Not only are you going to have struggles, other saints are going to have struggles, and so you need to be on the lookout and meet their needs as well. He says in verse 13, ***contributing to the needs of the saints***, those you can help along the way. Who should that be? Whoever God puts in your path that you have the power and the ability to help, tangibly or in some other way, we're called upon to do it. He says ***practicing***



hospitality, and then we get to the focus that I wanted to focus on today. Because you had your attitude. Then he widened the circle to how you're supposed to act and respond and relate in the family of God. Then he widens the circle a little bit more, and he's going to talk about some things that you're going to, he encompasses not just the family of God, but those outside the family of God that you're going to run into, and what should be our response, our attitude, our reaction and action towards them.

And he starts off, if you will, with sort of the worst of the lot, and he says in verse 14, **Bless those who persecute you**; He repeats it. **Bless and do not curse**. What in the world does that mean? Well, first of all, I'm so happy you asked. It's actually an old principle, a very old principle, if you will. It's a combination of the Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 5: 44, as well as in Luke 6:27-28. It wasn't an accident that I asked Justin Kaufman, thank you, by the way, Justin, for reading the scriptures for us today, to read that passage in the gospel of Luke. You know, there's a lot of things, but actually those thoughts are brought together in this verse of scripture. **Bless those who persecute you**. Jesus said in Matthew 5:44, **But I say to you, love your enemies**. (Luke 6:28) **Bless those that curse you**. (Luke 6:27) **Do good to them that hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you** and persecute you. Again, it's a combination of that verse. This verse here in Romans 12 is a combination of that Matthew 5:44 verse and the Luke 6:27-28 passage given by our Lord. Notice that in that passage over in Luke 6 that Justin read for us, it says, **love your enemies**. The word love there is *agapaō*. Matthew 5:44, he says, **love your enemies**. The word is *agapaō*. It's that heartfelt, non-hypocritical, not phony, not fake, sincere type of love. And he ends up that Luke passage. Well, just listen to it. Let me just read it for you again. Luke 6:27-33. **...do good to them who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. And whoever hits you on the cheek, offer also the other also**; By the way, I



think it is very important. I'm not going to do it today because I've got other things to cover and I'm not teaching this but I'm going to come back to this Luke 6 passage because in preparing this for you all today, there's a lot of misunderstanding as to what this passage means. And what does this mean? What about self-defense? What about protecting somebody who's being assaulted on the streets of Cincinnati? What about the military? What about somebody who breaks into your house? What about... there's all sorts of "if's", "coulda's", and "shoulda's" there that some apply and some don't apply. And we need to have, I think the water's gotten really fuzzy on this. And I just want to clarify it for all of you. But setting some of those things aside for now and stay focused on the one point that I want to get across to you on this aspect today. Let me continue on. Don't worry about turning the other cheek. We'll explain what all that means. **...offer him the other also; And whoever takes away your coat, do not take your shirt from him either. Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. If you love those**, here's where I wanted to get to. **If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners also do the same.** What's the point? The world is going to respond to goodness with goodness. And the world is going to respond to persecution with persecution. That is not what being a Christian is. To show the distinctives of the Christian life, we need to respond with love to those who literally persecute us. It's an incredible thought. It's a Christian distinctiveness.

Let me tell you something. We live in an angry society. We live in an angry culture. Hey, I've told you many times growing up in the 50s and the *Leave it to Beaver* generation, trust me, there's a big difference today in America. The people are angry. It is incredible the hostile reaction you get from people in your own family just by having a difference of opinion. Look



at the articles that you're inundated with emails and the internet and television and so forth about shun your family member if they follow President Trump or conservative. Shun your family member if they're... are you kidding me? You're going to shut people out of your life because of their political differences? It's unbelievable. We have never, and let me just hasten to say this though, we've never had a time in our lives when the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ could shine brighter than in our own personal response to all of that, to all of that.

I was, well, I'm going to give it to you now. Sure, time's getting away. I'll do it now. I was boarding a plane in Seattle yesterday, making my connections, coming back from Alaska. And I was in the D group. And so, you know, I wasn't flying first class. I was in the D group. And I don't know what it was. I was, I know exactly what it was. I was looking on my phone. I was looking at something else. I wasn't paying attention. And people were going through the gate to get on my flight. So in a quick panic, I get up and I go, whoa. So I saw a girl with a suitcase standing, you know how they have this deal. If you're, if you're really privileged, go this way. And if you're me, go this way. And you walk up to this thing and they're shooting your boarding pass before you go down the plank and go on that tunnel to get on the plane. And everybody's crowding around up here. Oh, you know, and I assumed, you know, it was the D's and E's. I didn't know, but this girl was standing there. And I walked up to her and I said, can you tell me what group is boarding now? I couldn't see the sign. And she says, oh, that's a, that's a C group. I said, oh, good. I'm a D. There's an older guy, tall guy, and this group of people standing here. As soon as I asked her that question, he just barks at me and says, "Hey, they'll tell you when it's time for the D group." And just as soon as he, I mean, he said it almost like that. And as soon as he said that, wouldn't you know, the guy goes, we're now going to board group D. And this guy rushes past me and 15, 20 other people as well. And I thought, man, that was weird. Well, then, you know, you get your thing shot with a little deal and you walk



past, you have a nice day and you're walking through the tunnel. Well, before you get on the plane, you know, it always backs up. So I'm standing, I'm thinking to myself, this is really weird. And it dawned on me. I mean, it was obvious I wasn't trying to get it. To me, I was innocent. We have assigned seats. I wasn't racing for a seat. I wasn't racing for an overhead bin. All I, I had my Bible and these notes I'm preaching from, that's all. And so, but it dawned on me, that guy was in the D group. He assumed I was going to walk on that plane ahead of him. And he wasn't about to let that happen. And so, I started thinking to myself, you know, this is a perfect, I was reading these notes. I said, I got a perfect opportunity to live out exactly what I'm going to preach tomorrow. When I see that guy on the plane, I'm just going to see if he says something to me. And if he does, you know, I'll say, you know, something, I'm sorry, sir, that I've been, whatever. Well, as it turned out, I got on the plane and I never saw him again. But something else happened that I never have had happen to me before. I'm going down the row. I'm in 25A, I think it was. No, I'm 21A on a window. And I get there and there's an older guy with a mask on, asleep with his head against the window in my seat. Okay, well, he's obviously in the wrong seat. I motion to the flight attendant. She comes to see me. And I say, hey, you know, just, I think this gentleman, she goes, oh, no. He's a wheelchair-bound individual and we've moved you. Oh, and so, and I'm teasing, of course. I'm fin-fra, so I say to her, well, let me ask you a question. Everybody on the plane arrives at the same time, right? And she laughs, said, oh, yeah, well, where have you moved me to? So, she walks me out, well, we've put you in 25B. That's the middle. Now, I didn't want to be in a middle seat for a lot of, but the main reason is I want to open my notes. I want to get my Bible. I want to get, I got three and a half hours to study God's Word before today. Uninterrupted, and I can't do it with all this going on. I said, oh, man, I had sort of hope to have, you know. And there was a guy standing there, and he heard the whole conversation. Just to show you how the Lord just



works it all out. Just all you got to do is have the right heart at it. Not that I'm so great. I'm just saying, if you just have the right heart attitude. He always works it out. This guy says to me, are you wanting an aisle seat? I said, you know, I really do. I got to work on a bunch of stuff, and it's so hard in the middle seat. He says, no problem. When I get off this plane, he says, I got to go all the way to Hawaii. Don't worry about it. I'll be happy to take your, and he got up, total stranger, and changed seats with me. Okay, that is a minor little thing. The whole point of that is, look how angry, how angry people are. And a Christian distinctive is supposed to be totally different. And one commentator shared how his nephew was murdered in a grocery store bodega, really, robbery. And how his brother-in-law, the father of the murdered boy, was a pastor in the state of Washington. And while it was right and appropriate that this individual get sentenced to jail for the murder that he committed and all of that, this pastor showed up at the sentencing and shared Christ with the man and repeatedly met the man on several occasions, visited him in the state penitentiary in Washington in order to share the gospel of Christ with him. Think how distinctively unworldly and how Christian that is. Now, whether or not that guy ever came to know Christ, I don't know. But the impact, this pastor said, that that had on the guards and the people at the penitentiary, when they realized this pastor coming in to visit this prisoner is visiting the guy that murdered his son. It had a tremendous impact for the Lord Jesus Christ. And I couldn't help but think, hey, look, I'm not in that position and I understand we're flesh and we're sinners and I don't know their spiritual condition. But what a difference that is compared to those four students that got killed in Moscow, Idaho, and how the one parent refused to even go into the sentencing because they thought they'd been sold out by the prosecutor. And maybe they had been sold out by the prosecutor. As a matter of fact, I felt like they'd gotten sold out by the prosecutor.



But that's not the point. The point is, where is your heart in terms of blessing those who persecute you?

Let's unpack this verse a little more. That verse, 14. Well, what does the word persecute mean? *Diōkō* (G 1377) in the Greek. To harass, to trouble, to mistreat, to persecute, to pursue with the intent of doing harm. We are to do what? When people harass us, mistreat us, treat us rudely, "Hey, they'll call section D when it's time, you'll know." It can be something as just a verbal insult or slight to murdering your son. When those who persecute you, bless and curse not. I didn't say they shouldn't be held accountable for their crime. I didn't say they shouldn't maybe get the death penalty or go to prison for life or whatever the sentence of man's civil law might be. I didn't say that wasn't appropriate or right. That is very appropriate and very right. The question is, what's your heart and what's your response to it? And are you seeing the big picture and the sovereignty of God? And by the way, this is not an option. This is an absolute command. You and I are commanded to bless those who mistreat us.

Now, the question becomes, what does the word **ble^ss** mean? The word **ble^ss** there is *eulogeō* (G2127), *eulogeō*. And it means to, well, technically, literally, it means to speak well of. But it actually means to pray for God to bless them. Pray for God to bless them. But the most powerful illustration probably I've ever seen in my own personal experience of this involves my own older brother-in-law who was greatly maligned in ministry by a trusted confidant and friend, wrote a multi-page letter accusing the organization, and him in particular, of doing all sorts of things. Over an 11-month period, the entire board of that ministry did an exhaustive interrogation of every member in the ministry involved, every witness, every person, every fact, every financial record, every document, every everything, with the ultimate conclusion after 11 months that it was totally, totally, 100% unfounded, written out of total spite and hatred and so forth. However, during that 11-month period of time, while



he spoke the truth in love when asked, I saw my brother-in-law, and I heard accounts from his spouse and others, pray regularly and ask others to pray that the individual who'd so maliciously attacked him would be blessed by God. 1 Peter 2:20-23. What's 1 Peter 2:20-23 say? It says this, ***For what credit is there if when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it and you patiently endure it*** (That's exactly what my brother-in-law did) ***this finds favor with God.*** ***For, get this, you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; And while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats.*** I'm not saying he didn't speak the truth in love. I'm not saying he didn't stand up and say, "No, I didn't do that.", or whatever. What I'm saying is there was no revile. There was no retaliation. And there was positive prayer of blessing on the other individual. ***while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept trusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.*** And that is exactly what you and I are called upon to do. It says we are to bless, and it says, curse not. Curse not. *Kataraoimai* (G2672). Do not call down evil upon the other person. Don't curse them. Don't even think it in your heart. Why? Because we have an opportunity to glorify God. We have an opportunity to do what we're called to do. He says, bless them and curse not.

By the way, do you know what the biggest, I said we live in an angry society. They've done studies. And it isn't pressure and tension brought about over a long period of time because of your job. You know, you're an air traffic controller and you're just under such pressure. So you're an angry person. No, they have found out that the thing that causes the greatest anger is the buildup and buildup and buildup over time of little slights that people will not let go. Stupid stuff... in a hurry and can't find your car keys. Somebody takes your parking spot at



the mall. Somebody cuts in front of you in the check-in line at the airport. Those things build up over and over and over. And that's causing hypertension and anxiety and all this stuff. And of course, I'm sure it's fueled by politics, and it's fueled by the internet and it's fueled by podcasts and all these other things and so on and so forth. But the bottom line is, it's not the thing you might think. And like one commentator said, like the phrase from Song of Solomon (2:15), it's usually a host of little foxes that literally do the most damage to our spiritual vineyard, if you will. So Chuck Swindoll gave an example. And by the way, this is 45 years ago. He had a little Volkswagen Beetle, the black kind when they first came into Vogue, I think, in the 60s or 70s. He says, I went out with my wife and young family to a local restaurant. He says, I parked my Volkswagen Beetle next to a car that happened to be pointed in this direction, but we parked. He says, and as I was getting out and fumbling with one of the kids, I lost loose of the door and the door banged the car next to me. He said, I got a little Volkswagen Beetle, this guy's driving a big Chevy Impala or whatever it was. He said, I did put, I think, a little scratch in the door. He said, I felt so bad about it. But I got the kids out and we got into the restaurant, happened to be sitting in a table looking out the main window of the restaurant. Well, this individual must have just finished dinner, been checking out and saw what happened. Because he went over to his car and before he got in the driver's side door there, he looked, he said, and I knew what was going to happen next. He got out his keys. He got in his car. And before he started his car, he took his door, opened it, and went bam, bam, bam, bam, five or six times against Swindoll's little Volkswagen and dented up really pretty bad. He says, and then he drove away. He said, that is how the world responds. And that is exactly how you and I are not to respond.

Well, it says, ***Bless those who persecute you.*** Pray for those who, how do you do that? How do you possibly do that? Well, D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, in his commentary on this portion of



scripture, has a five-step spiritual process to follow, to put practical application to work on how you bless those who mistreat you. How could you possibly be able to do that? Well, first of all, it's not natural. That's the whole point. This is supernatural practical Christian living. You can't do it unless you're a child of God. You can't do it unless you are possessed by the Spirit of God to prompt you, to motivate you, to enable you to try to live, to even want to live, these passages out. But this is, I thought this was so helpful, what Lloyd-Jones shared. First step in learning how to pray blessings for those who mistreat you:

- One, he says, start by **remembering how God treated you when you were His enemy**. In other words, take it back to where it needs to be in the eternal scheme of things. Romans 5:10, we were enemies with God. Titus 3:3, we were haters of one another. Romans 5:8, ***But God demonstrates His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, what? Christ died for us.*** Think about what you were before you came to know the Lord.
- Second thing he said to do, always do this, he says. Separate the sinful conduct; the mistreatment, the slander, the banging the car door against your car, the screaming at you before you board the plane in Seattle, whatever it is. **Separate that action from the sinner himself**. And ask this question, why is he or she acting like that? Why are they acting like that? It's because they're lost. It's because they're unregenerate. It's because they're a slave of Satan. It's because they do not understand. 2 Corinthians 5:16. Know no man in spiritual terms. He says, I want to know no man after the flesh, Paul says. What does he mean by that? I know no man after the flesh. What he means is I don't look at people in the flesh. I look at them as eternal souls. I look at them in light of eternity. He says, you know what? You



remember what you were before you were saved. And then you separate this activity.

And realize that's an eternal soul that's lost and is totally blind.

- Third thing he said, recognize, and you've already really done this, **recognize that the persecutor being spiritually blind, he's not beyond redemption.** He's not, well, that's just one of those people that are going to hell. No, he's what you and I were on our way to hell before the truth was explained to us. No matter what is being said about you, to you, done to you, that person, as long as they're breathing, is not beyond redemption.
- You start doing this and you'll naturally do number four. **Feel compassion,** even pity for them, as one that is headed for eternal judgment. I got news for you. The doors on your Volkswagen, the time that you get on an airplane, the ridicule you receive in public by somebody who's out of control because they want on an airplane first, or whatever it might be, means nothing. It means nothing, period. But it means nothing in light of eternity.
- And lastly, he says, five, **pray earnestly for their salvation and transformation.**

That is the way you pray blessings on an individual who's mistreating you. And I will commit, I will suggest to you, that even process needs to be a matter of prayer. I said when we started through, these verses 9-21, I said, some of these you're going to look at and say, hey, I'm doing that and I'll be encouraging. Some will maybe be new information, something you just really didn't think much about in your Christian walk. You'll say, I need to implement that. And some, as this one is, quite frankly for me, is very convicting. It becomes very, see, you know what? I can forgive somebody who's harmed me in a heartbeat. Really, I'm just don't, I'm not an angry person. But I have a hard time when somebody has hurt my wife. Well, I got news for you. There's no wife or husband or child... someone's hurt your child. There's no



exemption there. I'm not saying you don't stand up for what is right. I'm not saying if it's a legal situation or whatever. You know, I'm not talking about any of that. I'm talking about your heart attitude towards a person who you perceived, or who actually has, wronged you or another one you love. The heart attitude is that you and I, it's not a good suggestion to be more holy. It's a command. You're to bless those who mistreat you. You who mistreat me. This is raw, right there, stuff. But it is exactly, and it is so contrary to the world's mind. And you can see why he tells us to do it. It's all about the glory of God. Your entire life is about the glory of God. What greater example will you ever have to demonstrate the glory of God than responding in a supernatural way? What did Jesus do? Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do. That's to be our prayer. His prayer from the cross as He's being crucified is the prayer we're to have. Forgive them, Lord. They're ripping me to shreds. They don't know what they're doing. They know what they're doing, but they don't know what they're doing. Forgive them, Lord. How about Stephen in Acts 7:30? He's being crushed under stones. What's he say? Oh, I hope you bring down thunder and wrath and pulverize these people. No. What's his dying words? Father, don't lay this to their account. You can do this. Do you know why you can do this? Because God does not command anything that He does not supernaturally enable. And you and I just need to make it a matter of prayer. And to literally ask God to give us more and more grace. To humble our souls and humble our hearts before Him. To live these out.

In verse 15, he says, ***Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.*** What's he mean by ***rejoice with those who rejoice***? It's an absence of jealousy. It's being happy when something wonderful happens to someone else in the family of God. Or even outside the family of God. Proverbs 17:5. By the way, this is a very interesting twist on this. Proverbs 17:5. Says, ***He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished.*** Do you know if you rejoice when



someone who mistreats you suffers harm on their own? Do you know that God's going to chastise you for that? You're getting a double whammy. Not only are you being mistreated by the individual that you've refused to bless. But when you get happy because bad things happen to them, God chastises you for it. So I'm telling you, you better start obeying the word of God. It's the only way it's going to get better. 2 Corinthians 2:3. Oh, **that my joy would be the joy of all of you.** In other words, my happiness is your happiness. That's one sure way, I think, God gives us of knowing that you're born again. That you're in the family of God. When something good happens to another Christian, let's say, and maybe you don't even know him. And you read about it. Or you see, it's usually in the sports world. Or it could be in the political realm. Or entertainment. Something that you see. And something happens and you know that that guy or gal is a genuine believer in Christ. And there's something. Why are you happy for that person? Why? Because the spirit of God in you is producing this result. You're rejoicing over their joy. You're happy over their success. You're happy over their achievement.

In similar manner, it says, **weep with those who weep.** And I think it's important to underscore that. I think it's pretty obvious what it means. It means to have compassion. It means to have empathy. It means to mourn with those who are heartbroken and sad over something. But the word actually *weep* there carries with it the idea of visual tears. And I don't think you have to actually shed tears. But what he's saying is, don't be afraid to let your empathy, or your sympathy, be seen. Not just in your heart you feel bad with them. Let them know, in other words, that you grieve with them. There was a pastor. I don't know if it was. I can't think of his first name. His last name was Bailey. He died in the early 60s. He lost his wife and five children to cancer, some other form of disease, and one, I think, to a car accident. He buried his wife and five children. And he's the guy, he wrote a book called *A View from a Hearse*. And he knew what he was talking about. And it's in that book, and many of you have



heard the example, where he says, I was sitting on a bench grieving. A friend came along to comfort me. He quoted some Bible verses. He said some platitudes. He prayed a prayer. He stayed and I'd given anything if he would leave. When he left, I was so thankful that he was gone. Another friend came along. Sat down beside me. Never said a word. Put his arm around me. Shed a tear or two. Mumbled a prayer I couldn't hear. Got up. Walked away. I was begging God for him to stay longer. It's the heart. It's where is your heart in genuine compassion. You know one of the reasons why we don't comfort people, we don't weep with those who weep in the right way. We love people the way we want to love them, or the way we think they need to be loved instead of loving people the way they need to be loved. Most people, it takes time for their head, for, excuse me, their heart, as you've heard me say before, to catch up with their head. The scriptures are true. You know I believe in the scriptures. You know I want them to live according to the word of God. But there's times a broken heart just needs to know that somebody else's heart is broken with theirs. And they don't need to be preached to. They don't need to have three points in a poem or a suggestion or "Just trust the Lord, it'll be all right." They know it's going to be all right in their head. They know they're supposed to trust the Lord. They're trying to trust the Lord. It takes time for the heart to catch up with the head. And the greatest thing you can do is to cry with them. Let the tears flow. Put your arm around [them]. Don't worry about what to say. Be there. And by the way, when it's time to go, go. You'll know when, if your heart's right with the Lord. He says ***rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.***

He says some other great things here as well. And if the Lord tarries and I have the privilege of preaching to you next Lord's Day, which I'm planning on. Hope the Lord's planning on it too. We'll unpack more of those for you. But as Brian comes to lead us in a closing hymn, let's ask God's blessing on these truths that we have looked at this morning.



Father, we just humbly pause before You right now. We ask, Lord, that You indeed would be glorified by our conduct, by our speech, by what we say and what we don't say, by what we do and what we don't do. Father, we pray that You would enable us to obey Your commands, to bless those who persecute us, bless those who mistreat us. We will never be more like your son, Jesus Christ, than when we say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." When we say, "Father, bless them, lift the veil of spiritual blindness from their eyes. They're an eternal soul on their way to hell. Father, save them. Lead them to a saving knowledge of Christ." Father, may we also be able to rejoice and have a true God-ordained joy over the good things that happen to others. There's an absence of jealousy. And, Father, may we know how to weep and comfort those who weep. May we comfort them with the comfort with which we ourselves have been comforted. And, Father, it's not enough that we know these things, but that by Your grace, You enable us to live them out. Father, we ask all of this, and again, in the name of Your Son, our Lord and Savior, the matchless name of Jesus our Christ, and all God's redeemed people said, Amen and Amen.