

June 8, 2008

“IOU♥”

Gospel-Changed Lives, series #5

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Romans 13: 8-14

⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

¹¹And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

I.O.U.♥

Gospel-Changed Lives, Part 5. Romans 13:8-14

Sermon-Based Discussion

INTRODUCTION

Everyone's got their interpersonal struggles. If you ask a Christian, "What are your struggles with people?" you'll hear these common answers:

"I'm just not that patient with people."

"I have a quick temper with people."

"I struggle with purity, especially with my boyfriend or girlfriend."

And then, a Christian might ask a friend to pray for them in one or more of these areas. But less common is when a person comes right out and says, "My struggle with people is I just don't love them enough." In this session, we'll see how all of our interpersonal struggles are rooted in not a lack of morality or interpersonal skill. All of our interpersonal struggles are ultimately rooted in a lack of love for those people.

Where does a Christian find that love? From God who has shown us His love through Jesus Christ. And because of that debt of love, Christians can love others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you have any debts (financial or otherwise)? What's it like living with debt?

Read Romans 13:8-10

2. In light of our teaching series on "Gospel-Changed Lives", how are Christians indebted to God? What would you say to a person who doesn't think Christians owe much to God?
3. How is every sin against another person a failure to love that person?
4. List some of your interpersonal struggles. What would change if you had more love for those people?

Read Romans 13:11-14

5. The time to show love is limited. If that doesn't spur a Christian on towards loving neighbors, what might that reveal? What should such a Christian do?

GOING DEEPER

Is there someone you're envious of? Someone you hate? Someone you are overly critical with? Is there someone you lose patience with? Is there someone you lust after physically? Etc. Consider how a major increase of your love for that person would empower your attitude and actions towards such persons.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Will you pray individually or as a group that God help you pay that person the love you owe God? Will you admit that your root problem may not be simply you need more patience/kindness/purity, but that your root problem may be you need more love?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"The most important [commandments are]... to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."...

(Mark 12:29-30, NIV)