

# Reach Out For Your Fellow Man

*Romans 13:8-10*

Pastor GL Wong

Self-righteousness causes perversion within our hearts: we take sides and draw such sharp lines that we may even yearn for evil and wrong from the other side. It hurts the unity of our nation and God calls His church to respond with neighborly love.

In Romans 13, Paul shifts from the topic of submission to civil authority to emphasising the larger society – love for one's neighbour.

3 truths that helps us as Christians to reach out to our neighbours:

## **1) You owe a debt of love to your neighbour**

v8a – While there is a call to repay what we owe; Paul tells us of an on-going debt we can never fully pay off – the debt of love (agape) we owe to others. God, in His sovereignty, positions us strategically where we are to do good works and through them, He leads our neighbours to seek and find Him (Acts 17:26-27). We need to recognise that we are God's plan, wherever we live, to love our neighbours. Having experienced God's special saving love, we are indebted to God and our neighbours. While we cannot repay our debt to God (we have been saved by grace through faith), we are called to repay the debt of love to others. As we receive God's precious love freely, we are moved and empowered to repay the debt of love to our neighbours freely also; not because they are deserving. God calls us to keep paying the debt of love, so don't stop loving!

## **2) Your neighbourly love is a fulfilment of God's law**

Jesus' teaching on the commandments at the sermon on the mount reveals for us that the standard of the ten commandments are higher than we think (v9). They are not just the external actions, but they begin with what is inside the heart. In quoting Leviticus 19:8 as a summary statement, Paul reveals that all the commandments are fulfilled not

when we just don't do what is wrong, but when we love our neighbour. When we love, we will fulfil the law. When this happens, we seek their welfare and obey the law not just to stay out of trouble or do the right thing, but because we love them. It is our love that leads to our obedience. God's plan for us as believers is for our love to be the fulfilment of the law and it begins with the presence of love in our own hearts. Whatever good you seek for yourself, seek good the same way for your neighbour. Submit to the direct authority of God over our lives to love our neighbours as ourselves!

## **3) Reach out motivated by the love of Christ**

It is love that must be the motivation for us to reach out to our neighbours. Such a love is only possible if we ourselves have been gripped by the love of Christ for us. This love that God commands does no wrong to a neighbour (v10). God is love and His perfect love fulfills the very law that is given to us. This very love, the purest and most beautiful kind of love, the love that does no evil but absorbs our evil, is manifested through the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ on the cross. Through the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), Jesus reveals Himself to be the good loving neighbour that has come to do no wrong to and fulfil the law for us. On the cross, Christ was everything true love could possibly mean. Despite our indifferences and transgressions, Jesus still reaches out to us in love. He is the neighbour we didn't deserve but got. He first loved and reached out to us. Let the love of Christ motivate and empower you to love and bless your neighbours!

## 4 Steps to Bless Our Neighbours

**#1** Discern from the Lord the neighbours to reach out to

**#2** Pray for these specific neighbours daily this week

**#3** Take time to prepare a gift for each of these neighbours' household

**#4** Knock on these neighbours' doors, and pass the gifts to them