

# COLLOQUIES with Pastor Brian

## Putting the Beatitudes Into Practice

### Romans 12:9-21

<sup>9</sup>Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup>love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. <sup>11</sup>Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. <sup>13</sup>Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. <sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. <sup>17</sup>Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup>Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' <sup>20</sup>No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

I've heard the Beatitudes most of my life but rarely wanted to achieve them. Rather, I felt like the Beatitudes were reserved for those who have no choices, so God/Jesus made up this list of "things that stink for you but you can look forward to later" because... feelings. Yet that plan has some trouble if one is to take Paul's letters into account. Instead of restating the Beatitudes, Paul puts them **Into Practice**. Ugh!

This is no longer a passive statement that Matthew and the other early gospels record, naming a situation as it stands. It has been turned into an action statement, expecting US to Do Something. And the somethings are pretty specific.



We are living in the hardest environments I've ever experienced to find ways to 'love neighbor'. I have great neighbors. Like today, when someone in my neighborhood passed by and then took the trouble to turn the car around to talk, I counted my blessings. Later, after a 30-minute conversation about how completely differently we both are seeing current events (and each other), I wonder if we both feel the same. It is one thing to 'think' differently, it is another entirely when your differences in thinking challenge the quality of life for all those around. Or is it?

That's the challenge I have with this week's passage from Paul's letter to the Romans. It seems to preach we take an actively benign role in our attitudes about others unless it is to love the stranger, extend hospitality, and associate with the lowly.

I'm going to wrestle with this a bit longer, then on Sunday when we see each other, I hope you might come with some insights on this passage as well. Peace to you, and blessings in your walk in holiness.

Pastor Brian