

COLLOQUIES with Pastor Brian

Romans 13:8-14: ⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. ¹¹ Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹² the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; ¹³ let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. ¹⁴ Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

L: May God add blessings to the reading and hearing of these words.

ALL: Thanks be to God! Let us pray: Amen.



Romans 13:8, NRSV

It was really easy to read this scripture as a teenager and think "Yeah, I think I can do this." Time and experience have made me a more experienced person, and reading this scripture as an adult is a completely different experience.

Because as a teenager who was in love with the world and had experienced very few disappointments, there wasn't much punch in this scripture. I wasn't committing sleeping around, I wasn't hurting people, I wasn't stealing, I was pretty happy with my life. Sometimes it takes getting older to realize that what seems okay as a child is actually not okay from a broader perspective.

Now as an adult, I look back on these 'easy' commandments and realize that in all of these, I have failed in some way and still do, to some extent. Does not killing include supporting forces that do kill in my name or with my permission, no matter how hidden? Does my not coveting include native lands, my neighbor's new cool trailer or just having the type of car Fred said drives better in cold and snowy weather?

My answers are probably different than yours, and... hear me on this... That is okay. Our journey of faith is not direct nor is it the same as everyone else. Yet our movement as a shared 'body of Christ' to run the race is similar and we are to all be the 'great cloud of witnesses' encouraging one another to the finish line.

I've recently learned that this congregation did some amazing work creating and adopting some guidelines for meetings, ministry, and any gathering to help us find ways to keep practicing our best habits towards becoming that Body of Christ. Next week, I'll be reintroducing them to our whole congregation and myself. Since I am the least familiar with them, I'd love for you to tell me as much as you can about how they were formed, the values and ideas that were trying to protect, and how we can live this valuable Covenant as a congregation going forward.

I'm not a kid anymore and I suspect you are not either. But when it comes to the life of faith, we need gentle, experienced eyes for ourselves and others so we can aspire to the lofty goals Jesus (and through today's letter to the Romans, Paul) sets for us in scripture and practice. It matters less what we believe than how we act and there is more than enough room for all to be present in this life of faith. Blessings to you in the days ahead!

With peace,

Pastor Brian