

Romans: A Study on Reformation  
Lesson 41 “Counter Culture”

I. Introduction and Review - We are continuing our series on **Romans** today. We have been focusing on reformation and how Paul sought to reform the church in Rome.

A. The specific issue Paul was dealing with was strife between the Jewish and Gentile home churches. The Jews kept trying to get the Gentile to keep the the law, while the Gentiles had an attitude of superiority because the Jews were the ones who crucified Jesus. They sort of thought God was done with Israel. All of this created a ton of strife and kept them from impacting the culture in Rome the way they should have.

B. After spending 3 chapters explaining God’s redemptive plan which included both the Jews and Gentiles, Paul makes a shift in **Romans 12** about how these people should live in the light of everything God had done for them.

1. Last week we studied **Romans 12:9-15** about what the authentic Christian life looks like. It is a life of love and service where we fill the cups of other people. The only way to live this is to have an authentic encounter with God where we pull off our mask and let Him fill our cup so we can pour out onto others.
2. Today, we are going to finish **Romans 12**, and talk about the counter cultural movement Jesus started 2,000 years ago and what that looks like in everyday life.
  - a. Christianity is not a subculture, it is a counterculture. We are not called to adopt the values and mindsets of the world and tack on Jesus. We are called to bring the values of the kingdom of heaven here so we shape the culture of this world to make it more like heaven.
  - b. Paul tells us we do that by living in humility and choosing not to defend ourselves when we are wronged. Every time we choose to do that, we bring His world here.

II. Counter Culture

A. **Romans 12:16-21**

1. **Verse 16** The same mind doesn’t mean we all agree on doctrine. That’s impossible until Jesus returns. In this verse, same mind means a life of humility and service where we look out for the welfare of others.
  - a. **Phillipans 2:5-7** - Jesus was God, yet He didn’t use His position of power to promote, but to serve. Let, means you let it. You control if this mind is in you.
  - b. Associate with the humble - The one thing Jesus said to learn of Him was that He was meek and lowly in heart. **Matthew 11:29**.

- c. Why don't we do this? Fear. We think if we don't pursue lofty things and if we don't self promote, we won't be promoted. Some of you may think God doesn't want to promote us, but that is not what the Bible teaches. **James 4:10** says when we humble ourselves, God promotes us. It's not wrong to want to be promoted. It's wrong to self promote.
- d. The proper attitude toward humility and associating with the humble is this is a seed we are sowing. When we sow seed to serve someone else, we will reap a harvest of God serving and promoting us.
- e. Wise in your own opinion - must seek God's kingdom and His ways.

2. **Verses 17-21** All of these verses pick up a theme from the Sermon on the Mount about not defending yourself and loving and serving your enemy.

- a. Don't repay evil for evil. **Matthew 5:38-45** Who lives like that? Jesus introduced a whole new paradigm about how to handle mistreatment.
  - i. The key to understanding applying all of this is when we so kindness, generosity in a situation where we are mistreated, we are sowing seed and inviting God to repay as us that which we lost.
  - ii. When we defend ourselves it is also seed. That seed will bring harvest, it's just a much smaller harvest of good fruit and also brings a lot of bad fruit as well.
- b. If it's possible, live in peace with all men. Sometimes it's not possible, but if its up to us, it should be possible. We must do our part.
- c. Don't avenge yourself, give place to wrath. Does these means under the New Covenant God is wanting to destroy our enemies? I thought He told us to intercede for them.
  - i. God's wrath was poured out on Jesus on the cross. Jesus was cursed in our place so we are now blessed. Paul is telling us to make room for the blessing of God that comes on us because God's wrath was poured out on Jesus on the cross.
  - ii. God will repay. It doesn't mean He's going to destroy our enemy, but that He will repay us for the damage we incurred by loving them well.
- d. When we know God repays us when we are wronged, our response is to bless our enemy. Blessing seed attracts blessing harvest.
  - i. Heaps up coals of fire on his head is a quotation of **Proverbs 25:21-22**. These coals of fire aren't judgment, but conviction. Ex: how many of us have done someone wrong and then they are kind to us. What is the effect on our conscience? We feel guilty and want to do whatever we can to make things right. Why? The Holy Spirit worked on us through their actions.
  - ii. We see God rewards us when we bless our enemies.
- e. We defeat evil with good and darkness with light. We sow the seed for the world we want to live in.
- f. Melissa story

III. Conclusion - Jesus was the greatest revolutionary of all time who brought a new culture of love and grace to earth to counter this world's culture of fear and hate. In this passage, the Apostle Paul invites us to follow Christ's example so we can help bring more of His world here. Out of that we sow a culture of peace, love, and blessing so we can reap a harvest of peace, love, and blessing.

A. Transition to Craig