

ROMANS
Lesson 448–January 6, 2019

Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES
a Christian Church
Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...a Christian Church with worldwide impact. My name is Pastor Rory Clark. At Barah Ministries, our God is the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We make a difference by teaching the Word of God from God's perspective, and not from man's perspective.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON
Love is a Decision

For Christians, the Lord Jesus Christ is our GOD. He is the chauffeur of our lives. We choose to love Him.

The BIBLE is His navigation device. Through the bible, God gives us guidance, direction, power and truth. We choose to love His Word.

Because Christians choose to love the Lord, to the world we are "Jesus Freaks." Well...if loving our amazing relationship with the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord Jesus Christ makes us freaks...then so be it. Deuteronomy, Chapter 4, Verses 39 and 40 say...

DEUTERONOMY 4:39

Know therefore today...and take it to your heart...that the Lord is God...both in heaven above...and on the earth below...and there is no other God.

DEUTERONOMY 4:40

*So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I, the Lord, am giving you today...**THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH YOU AND WITH YOUR CHILDREN AFTER YOU** (a motive for love), and that you may live long lives on the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time."*

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God’s promise is that if we are faithful to Him and to His requests, things will go well with us and with our descendants! That’s a promise to Israel...and a promise to the Church...and God always keeps His promises.

When we say that our God is SOVEREIGN, what we mean is that He is the most powerful being in the universe, and that nothing happens in the universe without His permission. He is not the sponsor of everything that happens in the universe, but everything passes through His permissive will.

Because Christians love the Word of God, to the world we are “Bible Thumpers.” Well...if loving the truth makes us bible thumpers, then so be it. First Corinthians, Chapter 2, Verse 16 says...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 2:16

For who has known the mind of the Lord so well that he is capable of instructing Him? (Of course no one!) But we believers in Christ have the mind of Christ (the Word of God...the Bible).

The Word of God is the Lord Jesus Christ’s exact thinking. As Christians, we obey it. Why? Hebrews, Chapter 4, Verse 12 says...

HEBREWS 4:12

For the word of God is alive and powerful...and it is sharper than any two-edged sword...and it is piercing...even as deep as the division of soul and spirit...of the division of both joints and marrow...and is a critic of the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The way that seems right to us is not the way that is right to God. Therefore, Christians count on the Word of God for instruction. Second Timothy, Chapter 3, Verses 16 and 17...

SECOND TIMOTHY 3:16

All Scripture is God breathed (the Greek word...theopneustos) and is profitable for teaching the truth...for reproof of those who are sinning...for correction of those who are living in error...and for instruction in righteousness for those who believe in Christ...

SECOND TIMOTHY 3:17

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...so that the man of God (especially Pastors) may become capable...and be completely equipped for every good work.

Therefore, as Christians we obey Second Timothy, Chapter 2, Verse 15...

SECOND TIMOTHY 2:15

Study to show yourself one who is approved by God as a workman...as someone who does not need to be ashamed...as someone who is accurately handling the Word of Truth.

Welcome to a place where you can grow your relationship with God...and where you can learn His exact thinking through the study of His Word, allowing God to create an amazing life from within you.

One of the benefits of being a “Jesus Freak” and a “Bible Thumper” is that through the study of the Word of God, we begin to see ourselves as God sees us. We learn not to trust how we see ourselves. Here’s Hillsong to remind us how God sees us in their song WHO YOU SAY I AM.

MUSIC AND REFLECTION

Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ
Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

WHO YOU SAY I AM
Hillsong Worship

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We’re grateful, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Happy New Year Father! ... even though to You one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like one day...we are grateful that You have given us time to believe in You and to learn Your Word and to apply what You teach us for ourselves and toward others...

Father, help us set aside time for You this year...help us to make this the year when we factor Your thoughts into every decision we make...help us

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make this the year when we reject the lies the world is offering...and instead of being conformed by the world's thinking...help us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds...

...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...Amen.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON
Love is a Decision

Since we have been away from our main study for a couple of weeks, let me remind you of the context of our study.

In Paul's letter to the Romans, Chapters 12 through 16, the Lord tells believers in Christ the do's and don'ts of The Christian Way of Living. Romans Chapters 12 and 13 discuss a Christian's duties, and need to be viewed as a single unit.

Romans Chapter 12 spells out a Christian's duties to the church. Believers in Christ are spiritual beings...we have a spiritual gift...and we are in unity with other believers in Christ as the body of Christ. We are to present our bodies as a sacrifice acceptable to God...we are to keep on having our minds transformed by God...we are to think highly of ourselves but not too highly...we are to love believers in Christ unconditionally...we are to recognize our function in the body of Christ, a function different from and critical to others in the body...and we are to love our enemies the same way our Lord loves His enemies.

Romans, Chapter 13 spells out a Christian's duties to the state. In the first passage, Verses 1 to 7...Christians are exhorted to be in submission to the governing authorities. The second passage, Verses 8 to 10, outlines a Christian's debt to others, a debt we owe to the Lord Jesus Christ. As citizens of the state, the Lord expects us to have a genuine concern for others. God wants believers in Christ to LIVE UNconditional love. This LOVE IS A DECISION!

Here's passage two of Romans, Chapter 13, Verses 8 to 10...

ROMANS 13:8

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Do not keep on owing anything to anyone except owing the debt to (God to) love one another unconditionally...for he who loves his neighbor unconditionally has fulfilled the law.

Translated another way ... “do not fall short of your obligation to God as a Christian” ... it’s the obligation to love others unconditionally.

ROMANS 13:9

For these are commandments... “You shall not commit adultery...you shall not murder...you shall not steal...you shall not covet” ... and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this one, “You shall love your neighbor just as you love yourself...unconditionally.”

These first four commandments in Romans, Chapter 13, Verse 9 are the things those demonstrating unconditional love do not do. Why?

ROMANS 13:10

Unconditional love does not keep on doing wrong to a neighbor...therefore when we demonstrate unconditional love for others it is the fullness of the Mosaic Law.

Loving other human beings fully meets the Mosaic Law’s intention... that is, UNCONDITIONAL LOVE toward others...a live and let live philosophy. Through the Mosaic Law, God suggests ways to demonstrate our love for others by following a set of principles. When we use our freedom to follow the Law we demonstrate the intent of the Law... UNCONDITIONAL LOVE toward others.

Christians owe it to the Lord to express divine love, unconditional love, in every human relationship because the Lord wants us to reflect His unconditional love...and He wants us to pass the unconditional love He has given to us to others.

Happy New Year!

My hope is that this year you realize that LOVE IS A DECISION. There seems to be a hope inherent in a new year’s beginning...a hope this is going to be “the year” ... hope that something is going to change...yes, hope this year we are going to get better. I have no such hope. I have celebrated

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sixty-four new years, and regardless of the best-laid plans, they “aft go aglee” as John Steinbeck would say...our plans often go astray. Why? Well for me, like for you, what always shows up when we plan for the new year is us...and I’m sure you’ll agree we can be master saboteurs of our own success and happiness.

How is your life?

The idea of getting better suggests that we are already pretty good, and that our life only needs a few tweaks here and there to make us perfect. Is your life nearly perfect?

If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, actually you are perfect. God made you perfect at the moment of salvation by imputing His absolute righteousness to you through the baptism of God the Holy Spirit. God sees you as perfect. So why, every year, do we get new year angst...a desire to change something?

Perhaps it is because our eyes are on people and self rather than on God. The sequence of a real Christian’s life is to Love of God, to Love Others, and to Love Self. Often, new year’s angst comes from reversing the sequence. We become lovers of self, which often causes us to despise others, and to forget about God completely. God does not belong on our back burners. Second Timothy, Chapter 3, Verses 1 to 5 reminds us to...

SECOND TIMOTHY 3:1

...realize this...that in the last days (in every generation) difficult times will come.

SECOND TIMOTHY 3:2

For men will be lovers of self (narcissistic)...lovers of money (materialistic)... boastful...arrogant...revilers (verbally abusive to others)... disobedient to parents...ungrateful...unholy...

SECOND TIMOTHY 3:3

...unloving...irreconcilable (unforgiving...like the devil)...malicious gossips (slanderers)...without self-control (reckless)... brutal (untamed)...haters of good...

SECOND TIMOTHY 3:4

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...treacherous (betrayers) ...reckless (rash) ...conceited (puffed up) ...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...

SECOND TIMOTHY 3:5

...holding to a superficial form of godliness (like religion...they talk the talk but don't walk the walk) ...although they have even denied godliness' power. Avoid such men as these.

Yes...these maladies even affect believers in Christ when we let ourselves stray from God and His Word...when we don't make God and His Word a priority.

What is the solution to this dilemma we face every year? How can we solve our new year angst once and for all? **LOVE! Not only in this Happy New Year, but in every new year to come, the solution to all our problems is unconditional love.**

Love is a decision. Love is the greatest weapon in our lives. When we learn to Love God, to Love Others, and to Love Self every moment of every day through the enabling power of God the Holy Spirit, then every day is just another day.

Love is a capacity, and it can expand eternally. Love distinguishes Christians from unbelievers. John, Chapter 13, Verses 34 and 35...

JOHN 13:34

"A new commandment I (the Lord Jesus Christ) give to you believers in Christ...that you love one another unconditionally...even as I have loved you unconditionally...so that you also might love one another unconditionally."

JOHN 13:35

"By this unconditional love...all men will know that you are My disciples...if you have unconditional love for one another."

If there were one word that makes Christianity unique...that in fact **DEFINES** Christianity...it is **LOVE**.

When we return from our five-minute break we'll learn more about our greatest weapon as Christians, **LOVE**, so we can deploy it in our lives.

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BREAK

Five Minutes

TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON

Love is a Decision

Let’s welcome Deacon Denny Goodall with the offering message.

THE OFFERING

Deacon Denny Goodall

OFFERING VERSE

ROMANS 14:4

Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls...and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

OFFERING

FLIGHT OF THE EAGLE

Dave McClure, Instrumental

TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON

Love is a Decision

As believers in Christ we are to love others unconditionally. Love is a decision. It’s an easier decision to make when we know, and when we believe, that we are loved. Here’s Phillips, Craig and Dean with their song HOW DEEP THE FATHER’S LOVE FOR US.

MUSIC AND REFLECTION

Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ

Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

HOW DEEP THE FATHER’S LOVE FOR US

Phillips, Craig and Dean

TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON

Love is a Decision

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Welcome back! We're studying Romans, Chapter 13, Verses 8 to 10...

ROMANS 13:8

Do not keep on owing anything to anyone except owing the debt to (God to) love one another unconditionally...for he who loves his neighbor unconditionally has fulfilled the law.

ROMANS 13:9

For these are commandments... “You shall not commit adultery...you shall not murder...you shall not steal...you shall not covet” ... and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this one, “You shall love your neighbor just as you love yourself...unconditionally.”

ROMANS 13:10

Unconditional love does not keep on doing wrong to a neighbor...therefore when we demonstrate unconditional love for others it is the fullness of the Mosaic Law.

The lifestyle of LOVE is journey, not a destination. Ephesians, Chapter 4, Verses 1 to 3...

EPHESIANS 4:1

Therefore I (Paul), the prisoner of the Lord, implore you believers in Christ to live a lifestyle worthy of your calling to salvation...

This verse highlights your responsibility to God...to others...and to yourself.

EPHESIANS 4:2

...a lifestyle of humility (obedient to and dependent on God)...a lifestyle of gentleness (not harsh...with emotions under control...tough on issues but soft on people)...with patience (enduring all things until the end)...bearing with one another in the sphere of unconditional love...

Believers in Christ who exhibit these three virtues are caring for their relationship with self (humility)...are caring for their relationship with God (gentleness), a fruit produced by the Spirit...and are caring for their

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relationships with others (patience). These three virtues maintain the unity among believers in Christ.

EPHESIANS 4:3

...and keep on making diligent effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

God has placed all of His believers in a state of unity. Our job is to preserve the unity by loving others unconditionally even when we don't agree with their approach to life. Love is a decision. So do you love when...

<YOU'RE THE VICTIM OF ADULTERY>

<YOU HAVE TO CARE FOR ELDERLY PARENTS>

<THE WOMAN IN THE STARBUCKS LINE DOESN'T DO WHAT YOU WANT HER TO DO>

<WHEN YOU REALIZE YOU HAVE BEEN DECEIVED (for example, by religion...Penance-Purgatory-Confession of Sins-Working for Your Salvation)>

First Corinthians, Chapter 13, Verse 13 says...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 13:13

But now faith (in God), hope (of a secure future for self), and unconditional love (toward others)...abide in the sphere of these three...but the greatest of these is unconditional love.

Are you happy? Happiness is a choice. When you are not happy, can you love your way through the situation? Can you hug it out?

<WIFE UNHAPPY WITH HER HUSBAND>

Unconditional love is the best evidence that you are a Christian.

If you were arrested, brought to court, indicted, and tried for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

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How do you treat those whom you are in a relationship with? How do you treat those who mistreat you? How do you treat those who harm you? How do you treat those who wrong you? Do you love them even when you don't like what they did?

Unconditional love is the love we are talking about. Love is a decision. This love requires self-sacrifice...this love is not spontaneous...this love is not effortless...this love is not a feeling...instead, it's a commitment to action...it's a willingness to meet a need without a request.

When you love others unconditionally you tell people about the possibilities of a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul captures the essence of unconditional love in his prayer for us in Ephesians, Chapter 3, Verses 14 to 19...

EPHESIANS 3:14

For this reason I (Paul) bow my knees (in prayer) before God the Father...

EPHESIANS 3:15

...the Father...from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name...

EPHESIANS 3:16

...that the Father would grant you believers in Christ...according to His glorious riches...to be strengthened with enabling power through His Holy Spirit indwelling the inner man (the new creation)...

EPHESIANS 3:17

...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...and that you, being rooted (in foundation like a plant) and grounded (in foundation like a building) in His unconditional love...

EPHESIANS 3:18

...may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth (how wide) and length (how long) and height (how high) and depth (how deep God's unconditional love is)...

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EPHESIANS 3:19

...and that you may know (through experience) that the unconditional love of Christ surpasses knowledge...that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

What a loving prayer directed to us by our favorite apostle.

Our foundation is the Rock...the Lord Jesus Christ...we are transformed by His Word...we are motivated by His unconditional love for us...and we are to reflect His love to others...we are enabled with power by God the Holy Spirit to love others unconditionally. When we experience God's love in ourselves, we almost have no choice but to extend His love to others. This unconditional love is a decision, and I hope your new year is filled with loving decisions on a moment-by-moment basis until we are at home, face-to-face with our Lord.

GOD WANTS YOU!

Make the Most Important Decision of Your Life

The closing moments of our study are for anyone who does not have a personal relationship with the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We want you to know that GOD WANTS YOU.

What is going to happen to you when you close your eyes in this life? Will you go to heaven or will you go to hell?

Many think the key to getting to heaven is to be a good person. According to this standard, "bad people" go to hell. The bible obliterates this delusion. Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 23 says...

ROMANS 3:23

...all creatures have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

We're all bad people! Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 10...

ROMANS 3:10

...it is written "There is no creature who is righteous, not even one..."

First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 22 says...

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FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:22a

...all in union with Adam at physical birth (and that is every human being) are set to die the second death in the Lake of Fire...

That's not your fault, but it is your circumstance.

The good news is that the Lord Jesus Christ did something about the problem because He doesn't want anyone to go to hell...Second Peter, Chapter 3, Verse 9 says...

SECOND PETER 3:9

The Lord is not slow about His promise of salvation, as some accuse Him of, but instead He is patient toward unbelievers...not wishing for any to perish (in the Lake of Fire) but for all to come to repentance (a change of mind about having a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ).

The Lord provides human beings with the bible to illuminate the path to heaven...John, Chapter 20, Verses 30 and 31...

JOHN 20:30

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book (the bible)...

JOHN 20:31

...but these things written here have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ (The Messiah)...the Son of God (in human form)... and that by believing in Him you may have the resurrection life in His name.

How can you get to heaven? Right where you sit, RIGHT NOW, you can tell God the Father that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the moment of eternal life for you. Acts, Chapter 16, Verse 31...

ACTS 16:31

“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and everyone in your household who also believes.”

Believing in Jesus Christ is your acknowledgement that you can't do a thing

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to get to heaven on your own. Being a “good person” does not cut it. Even being a “bad person” does not cut it. You can’t work your way into heaven. Romans, Chapter 11, Verse 6 says...

ROMANS 11:6

But if salvation is by grace, and of course it is, it is no longer on the basis of works...otherwise grace is no longer grace.

Salvation does not happen as a result of your work...it’s your attitude toward having a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ...you want a relationship or you don’t. If you have to work for a free gift then the work makes you deserve the gift. In salvation, there is no work you could do that is impressive to God. The Lord would never allow you to save yourself! It’s wiser to let God save you, because once God does something He never changes His mind. So heed the warning in John, Chapter 3, Verse 36...

JOHN 3:36

“He who believes in the Son has the resurrection life right at that moment... but he who does not obey the command to believe in the Son will not see the resurrection life...instead the wrath of God (the Lake of Fire) abides on him.”

The apostle Peter reminds us of the words of Old Testament prophet Joel in Acts, Chapter 2, Verse 21...

ACTS 2:21

‘And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved.’

The Lord is ready for you to join the ranks of those who are saved. He lived for you... He paid for your sins on a Cross with His blood...He died for you...He was resurrected from the dead for you. Now GOD WANTS YOU. Are you ready to join me in heaven when you close your eyes in this life?

Just remember this if you remember nothing else...God loves you unconditionally. Here’s June Murphy to sing a song she wrote and produced...a song sung from God’s perspective...and one of the best Christian songs ever written...WHEN I SAY I LOVE YOU.

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CLOSING SONG

WHEN I SAY I LOVE YOU

June Murphy

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

Thanks for coming!

Thanks for watching!

Thanks for listening!

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