

“Can There Be Love Without Morality?”

Romans 13:8-10

Sermon Series: “True Love In An Unloving World”

Introduction: How do we know what’s right and wrong? Things that used to be considered wrong are not considered right. Does morality change?

We have this big emphasis on social justice. How do we know what’s just? What is justice (refer to the fact to last summer’s series and working on a book)? Before we work through the spiritual underpinnings of justice, let’s begin with a working definition of justice. A basic definition is that justice is righteousness. It is action which is in harmony with moral and ethical norms as given by God. Therefore, doing the just thing is doing the right thing, the moral thing. Justice relates to how we treat others so it is treating others in a right, fair, equitable, and moral way.

But how do we know what’s right and wrong, or just? This definition sounds like it relates to treating people in the right way, in a loving way. Well, to do the loving thing is to do the right thing and to do the unloving thing is to do the wrong thing. Can love ever be wrong? But how do we know what is the loving thing? Is it feelings based? No (60 year old and 14 year old, incest). The right thing is the loving thing and the wrong thing is the unloving thing. But that sounds like a dog chasing its tail. It is unless there is an objective standard of morality that reveals what is the right, and therefore, the loving thing to do. So no, I want to show you that there can’t be love without morality as we look at this Scripture.

Why does it matter? It matters because it affects how we live our lives. Will we follow the commands of God in Scripture and also revealed through the natural law or do what we want to do? Will we do what’s right or succumb to the pressure of society who say Christians are judgmental for speaking of what’s wrong but they clearly point out where they think Christians and others are wrong? It matters because these are huge issues that guide our lives and define the world: abortion, sex outside of marriage, gender change, homosexuality, racial issues. But deeper than specific issues, how do we know what’s right and wrong?

1. Love is the summation of and fulfillment of the Law so it is impossible to separate love and morality (v. 9-10).

-Let’s address the foundational question that is denied in our society today that there is not objective morality of absolute right and wrong and here are some objections answered:

A. If there’s not objective morality, how can anything be wrong or how can we know what’s wrong?

B. You can’t know what’s right for someone else.

- C. No absolute truth**
- D. Only human rules**
- E. No basis for discussion without standards (C.S. Lewis-without natural Law, we can't argue, but we can only "fight like animals")**
- F. Just follow your own conscience**
- G. Mind your own business**

2. We have an ongoing, moral obligation to love everyone (v.8).

-I say everyone because Jesus made it clear that everyone is our neighbor. This includes people who aren't like us, people we don't like, people we disagree with, and people living immoral lifestyles.

-I say ongoing because we can never pay off this debt. John Stott writes, "Earlier in his letter Paul has already referred several times to the importance of paying our debts. We are in debt to the unbelieving world to share the gospel with it (1:14); we are in debt to the Holy Spirit to live a holy life (8:12f.); and we are in debt to the state to pay our taxes (13:6f.) It is in fact this reference to debt which forms the transition between verse 7 and verse 8. Let no debt remain outstanding, Paul writes, except the continuing debt to love one another (8a)." Alford says, "Pay all other debts: be indebted in the matter of love alone." "But there is one debt which will always remain outstanding, because we can never pay it, and that is our duty to love. We can never stop loving somebody and say, 'I have loved enough.'" Mounce says, "The obligation to love has no limits."

3. Love is expressed by righteous actions so we love people by treating them in a godly manner (v.9).

-Explain how these actions are wrong and unloving at the same time

-However, its more than not doing certain things. It's also doing good towards people.

Matthew 19:16-22- 16 and 1 John 3:16-17

Warren Wiersbe says, "If we love others, we will not sin against them...As believers, we do not live under the Law, we live under grace. Our motive for obeying god and helping others is the love of Christ in our hearts."

4. Love does no harm so anything that harms someone else is unloving and wrong (v.10- Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.).

Definition: David Robinson says, "The principle that we ought to do no harm is fundamental to the Natural Law. The idea that people should not harm themselves, others, or nature is at the foundation of how reasonable people ought to understand morality." "When the natural Law says do no harm it means do no wrong, do no evil, do nothing against the natural order, do nothing unnatural."

Conclusion: This demonstrates to us that we have failed to keep God's Law so we are sinners in need of a Savior. Jesus is that Savior who kept the Law we failed to keep and lovingly died the death we deserved to die.