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Sermon Manuscript: Romans 13:8 26 March 2017

**Are you serious? You want me to care? Prose Manuscript**

**Romans 13:8**

**Topic:** Care for fellow believers and neighbors.

**Subject:** The way that Christians should keep God’s second greatest commandment

**Complement:** is to care for his/her fellow believers and neighbors.

**Purpose:** The listeners will care for fellow believers and neighbors to keep God’s command.

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| **Intro:**  1: Arouse interest | Who among you has credit card? Remember the euphoria or rush of happiness when you go on a shopping spree and have everything charge to your credit card? Then, a month after, your bill came. You open the mail and saw your statement. Just then, you realized how much you owed the bank. You are obligated to pay the bank back. If you don’t pay it on time or in full, more charges will be incurred until this obligation has been settled.  As a student, I am obligated to comply with SBC policies and requirements such as dress codes: no sleeveless inside the campus. Inside the classroom is okay but once you’re outside and the weather is so hot and humid, oh wow. As a foreigner, I am obligated to comply with Singapore’s law to avoid being fined in this fine country. That means no chewing gum for me or eating or drinking inside the MRT even though I’m hungry.  Obligation, without our noticing, has been woven into the human lifecycle. Be it in the form of societal, moral, legal, or relational obligation. Every part of life has to do with obligation. |
| 2: Raise need | As Christians, do we have an obligation that we need to fulfill? As a matter of fact, we do. There are commandments that needed to be fulfilled. The first is to love God and the second is to love others. As Mark 20:31 mentioned, there is no commandment greater than these.  Oftentimes, we are more willing to love God than loving others. Loving others would often lead us say, “are you serious? You want me to care? You want me to love them? Them?” |
| 3: Subject | So, how do we keep God’s second greatest commandment then? |
| 4: Bkgrd | Back in apostle Paul’s days, it was also not easy for Christians, particularly those in Rome, to keep this second greatest commandment. It was harder for them to live it out when they were facing difficulties, discrimination and persecution from existing authorities. |
| 5: Preview  R, Passage | Today’s verse will show us the way and reason why we need to fulfill the second half of God’s commandment. Restatement: Let us turn our attention to Romans 13:8 and learn from Paul’s instructions to the Roman Christians in how and why need to keep the second greatest commandment (text). |
| T, MPI,  Explanation | In verse 8a & b, we see that we need to first, care for fellow believers. The “each other” here pertains to the Christian community, in other words, fellow believers. The word “to love,” on the other hand, can be understood into two points. |
| SP “A”  Explanation | In verse 8a, we see the text “owe no one anything” and then followed by “except to love.” Here, we are talking about obligations of a person especially that of a Christian. Paul was instructing that as Christians, all obligations of any kind and to whoever should be settled; except the obligation to love one another, to love fellow believers. It is an obligation to care for fellow believers. |
| ILL  (Scriptural) | Why are we obligated to do so? Because, Jesus said so. In John 13:34 (ESV), Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” Jesus had demonstrated his love for us by dying on the cross for our sins. As his followers, we, too, need or are obliged to demonstrate this love to our fellow believers by caring for them. |
| App  (companion-ship; talks) | As good brothers and sisters in Christ, we can fulfill this obligation by being there for them whenever they needed someone to talk to, cheer them up, go shopping with, watch movies with to name a few. As sons and daughters, we can set a few minutes of our time to have conversation with our parents; even small talks are appreciated. |
| SP “B”  Explanation | Now, caring for fellow believers is not a one-time deal unlike any common obligations that once it has been settled, you are free from it. That is why Paul clearly mentioned that we can and should “owe no one anything, except to love each other.” Knowing that a debt that one owes can never bind a person forever as long as it has been cleared and settled, thus Paul instructed that the debt to love should be an exception. The word “to love” means a higher moral obligation that is perpetual in nature. It is an obligation that one can never paid off as it is recurring in nature. Caring for fellow believers is continuously being done. |
| ILL | Why do we need to do this continuously? Because, God had unceasingly demonstrated His unconditional love for mankind since the very beginning. Just like the father in the parable of the prodigal son who never stop loving and waiting for his son to return back to him. Through Jesus Christ, God had shown His love for mankind and He is patiently waiting for Adam’s descendants to accept His gift and restore mankind’s relationship with Him. |
| App  (visiting) | As brothers and sisters in Christ, we should be ready anytime when our fellow believers needed our help. When one of our brothers or sisters is sick, not only we minister to them by visiting one time. We can send messages that will cheer them up. We can include them in our daily prayers. Following up on them is also important not only when they are sick, even more so when they have already recovered. |
| Big T  (review MPI) | And so, verse 8a & b tells us to care for fellow believers. That we are obliged to do so as commanded by Jesus and to do it perpetually or continuously. Now in verse 8c &d, we are also told to… |
| MPII  Explanation | Care for one’s neighbors. So what do you mean by neighbors? In the text, the word “another” or in Greek τὸν ἕτερον was used to differentiate that this would mean other than beside self. This can be extended to people beyond our friends or fellow believers. Thus, can be relegated as neighbors. Neighbors can be friends, mere acquaintance, strangers or even enemies. So, with this point, we can further see how we can care for our neighbors and why we need to care for them. |
| SP “A” | So how does one love another? How does one care for one’s neighbor? For starters, we need to treat people how we would treat ourselves. There’s no way that we would not be treating ourselves well. In the same manner, we should not be treating people any less than they deserved regardless whether they are friends, strangers, mere acquaintances or even enemies. |
| ILL  (act of kindness)[[1]](#footnote-0) | Last year, April 13. NBC Dateline picked up a story that went viral over facebook. It was about a man who came into a restaurant. He asked to be sat on a table that is waited by a single mother. As he sat there for two hours, seven families came and went. This man paid for every one of the seven families’ bills; paying close to 600 dollars for people he didn’t even know. He left a 1,500 tip to the waitress who is a single mother though his bill was only 20+ dollars. When asked why he did these, he just said, “Family is everything. I’ve lost all mine.” The man did to the families as what he was raised up to do, that is to show kindness and help others as he would have done to his own. Through this random act of kindness, this man was still able to be a light to others even in the midst of heartbreak. |
| Explanation | This is what Paul meant when he was instructing the Roman Christians in this text. That amidst their sufferings and persecutions from the existing authorities, they still need to be a light to others, loving and caring even those who persecute them. |
| App  (changing mindset; being in the shoes of others) | As Christians, we can do this by first changing our mindset. Instead of thinking how we feel, we should start thinking how others would feel. By being in the shoes of other people, we would then be able to have an idea what they would have gone through and learn how to care for them. Once there had been a change in our mindset, it will be natural for us to carry out random acts of kindness. |
| SP “B”  Explanation | Then comes to understanding why do we need to care for one’s neighbor? In verse 8d, we see that doing so has “fulfilled the law.” The law here pertains to the Mosaic law or the Decalogue and fulfill the law would be completing what this law has prescribed. In other words, this law was God’s commandments. So, the reason why we need to care for one’s neighbor because it is an act of keeping God’s commandments. |
| ILL  (learn to obey commands) | Charlie told Snoopy that it needed to learn to obey commands. So, he told Snoopy to sit. Snoopy obeyed yet done in an unconventional way. |
| App | Sometimes, our attitude towards God’s commandments is like that. We would begrudgingly obey and worse, we could have cared less and not care for our neighbor. After all, it does not mean I will die if I don’t care for my neighbor. But as Christians, as followers of God, if we love Him, we will start to care and keep His commandments. John 14:15, Jesus said, “if you love me, you will keep my commandments.” |
| Big T | So, let’s get back to the questions of “ are you serious? You want me to care? You want me to love them?” The answer is a big YES. We need to start to… |
| MI  R | Care for fellow believers and neighbors. This is God’s command! If we really love God, we should have no problem loving each other and loving another. Keeping God’s commandment is to continuously show concern to fellow believers and treating our neighbors as we would treat ourselves. |
| App  (fellow believers) | So how do we care for our fellow believers then? For starters, we can ask “how may I pray for you today?” Then, be a listener and try to refrain from interrupting by giving opinions immediately. After listening, do summarize what you have understood to show that you really are listening and cared about what’s going on in their lives. Another way is be there ready to give words of encouragement or speak the truth in love. |
| App  (neighbor) | How about caring for one’s neighbor? Is try being in their shoes or situation a good idea? Maybe, we can start with simple tasks like keeping shared space clean and comfortable to live in. In helping or commenting something, be sensitive and try to ask first for their consent before taking matters in our own hands or running off with our mouth with unsolicited advice. |
| End | As Christians, if we love God, we will fulfill His commandments. We will not hesitate to frequently show affection and concern to our fellow believers. We will not even ask God, “why do I need to show kindness to people I don’t know?” |
| Prayer | “Lord God, forgive us as sometimes we would be questioning why we need to show care to our fellow believers and neighbors and yet forgetting that this is your command for us. If we love you as we claimed to be, we will not even hesitate to express this love for others. Lord, help us to be mindful of the people that you love that we may also love them. In Jesus name, amen.” |

**Are you serious? You want me to care?**

**Romans 13:8 (Cyclical Inductive)**

*Purpose: The listeners will care for fellow believers and neighbors to keep God’s command.*

**Introduction:**

1. Arouse Interest: Using loans and credit card as illustration depicting obligations needed to fulfill when charges were incurred.
2. Need: As Christians, do you feel you are obligated to love your fellow believers and neighbors? Why? How would you love your neighbor?
3. Subject: How do we keep God’s second greatest commandment?
4. Background: Paul was expounding on the righteousness of God to the Romans and applying it by fulfilling God’s greatest commandment particularly the second-half of the commandment wherein the Christians in Rome needed to live it out despite facing difficulties, discrimination and persecutions from existing authorities.
5. Preview: Today’s verse will show us the way and reason why we need to fulfill the second half of God’s commandment. Restatement: Let us turn our attention to Romans 13:8 and learn from Paul’s instructions to the Roman Christians in how and why need to keep the second greatest commandment (text).
6. **Care for fellow believers (8a & 8b).**
   1. It is an obligation (8a) (ILL: John 13:34).
   2. It is recurring in nature (8b) (ILL: God’s unconditional love for mankind).

(Verse 8a & b mentioned to care for your fellow believers. We are obliged to do so as commanded by Jesus and to do it perpetually. In verse 8c & d, you are also to…)

1. **Care for one’s neighbors (8c & 8d).**
2. It is treating people how you would treat yourself (8c) (ILL: Act of random kindness).
3. It is an act of keeping God’s commandments (8d) (ILL: Obey commands).

**Conclusion:**

1. Care for fellow believers and neighbors. This is God’s command! (Main Idea)
2. Keeping God’s commandment is to continuously show concern to fellow believers and treating our neighbors as we would treat ourselves. (Restated Main Idea).
3. Application: How would you start caring for your fellow believers? A word of encouragement or a prayer, perhaps? How about caring for one’s neighbors? Does try being on their shoes or situation be a good idea?
4. Prayer

Romans 13:8 (ESV)

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

**Exegetical Idea:** The way that the Roman Christians should fulfill the second-half of the law given by God is to love each other and to love their neighbor.

**Exegetical Outline:**

1. The way the Roman Christians should fulfill the second-half of the law is to love each other (8a & 8b).
   1. The Roman Christians had an obligation to fulfill (8a).
   2. The Roman Christians were to love fellow believers continuously (8b).
2. The way the Roman Christians should fulfill the second-half of the law is to love their neighbor (8c & 8d).
3. The Roman Christians were to love their neighbor (8c).
4. The Roman Christians then would fulfill God’s second greatest commandment (8d)

**Verses Questions**

Context What did the author record just prior to this passage?

Paul has been instructing everyone submitting to authorities by urging everyone to pay taxes to authorities (v. 1-6), specifically all what is owed and to whom they owed (v.7). In verse 8, he turns to another fulfillment of law – God’s law.

Purpose Why is this passage in the Bible?

This shows us that loving one another and loving our neighbors fulfill God’s commandment.

Background What historical context helps us understand this passage?

Paul was expounding on the righteousness of God to the Romans and applying it by fulfilling God’s greatest commandment particularly the second-half of the commandment wherein the Christians in Rome needed to live it out despite facing difficulties, discrimination and persecutions from existing authorities.

1. What does the word “owe no one anything” mean?

In the original text, “owe” here is ὀφείλετε, an imperative verb. This word pertains to the obligations mentioned in verse 7 and other civil obligations attached to it. The “no one anything” pertains to the relations to everyone. The entire phrase connotes a general duty of a Christian.[[2]](#footnote-1) This phrase means that the general duty of a Christian is to be clean of obligations from anyone, obligations arising from civil and natural relations.[[3]](#footnote-2)

1. What does “except to love each other” mean?

Here, ἀγαπᾶν (to love) means to be a higher moral obligation[[4]](#footnote-3) that is perpetual in nature. One can never paid off and recurring in nature. The “each other” pertains to the Christian community. [[5]](#footnote-4) This phrase pertains to all the saints ought to love another, as obliged by the new commandment of Jesus Christ as “children of God, brethren, and member of the same body.”[[6]](#footnote-5)

1. What does “another” mean in this passage?

Unlike ἀλλήλους, the word used here was τὸν ἕτερον to differentiate that this would mean other than beside self. In this context, it can presumed that the other or another here pertained to outside the Christian community. According to Gill, it is “every other person besides himself, even his neighbor, in the largest sense of the word, including all mankind.”[[7]](#footnote-6)

1. What does “has fulfilled the law” mean?

The νόμον here would pertain to the Mosaic law[[8]](#footnote-7) and the word πεπλήρωκεν here would be completing what the Mosaic law prescribed.[[9]](#footnote-8)

**Translations of Romans 13:8**

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| Greek | Μηδενὶ μηδὲν **ὀφείλετε** | εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλους **ἀγαπᾶν**· | ὁ γὰρ **ἀγαπῶν** *τὸν ἕτερον* | **νόμον** πεπλήρωκεν. |
| Literal Translation | You **owe** nothing to no one | If not to love *one another* | For loving *another*, | He has fulfilled the **law** |
| ESV | **Owe** no one anything, | except to love *each othe*r, | for the one who loves *another* | has fulfilled the **law**. |
| NIV | Let no **debt** remain outstanding, | except the continuing debt to love *one anothe*r | for whoever loves *others* | has fulfilled the **law**. |
| NLT | **Owe** nothing to anyone-- | except for your obligation to love *one anothe*r. | If you love your *neighbor*, | you will fulfill the **requirements of God's law**. |
| NAS | **Owe** nothing to anyone | except to love *one another*; | for he who loves his *neighbor* | has fulfilled *the* **law**. |
| RSV | **Owe** no one anything, | except to love *one another*; | for he who loves his *neighbor* | has fulfilled the **law.** |
| KJV | **Owe** no man any thing, | but to love *one another*: | for he that loveth *another* | hath fulfilled the **law**. |

**Parsing of Verbs:**

ὀφείλετε – present active imperative 2nd person plural

ἀγαπᾶν – present active infinitive

ἀγαπῶν – nominative singular masculine present active participle

πεπλήρωκεν – perfect active indicative 3rd person singular

1. Rachael Trost, "Story Behind Viral Post of Man's Act of Charity at a Utah Denny's Restaurant," NBCNews.com, April 13, 2016, , accessed March 26, 2017, http://www.nbcnews.com/dateline/story-behind-viral-story-man-s-act-charity-utah-denny-n554246?cid=eml\_onsite. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, "Romans 13 ," Meyer's NT Commentary , accessed February 17, 2017, http://biblehub.com/commentaries/meyer/romans/13.htm. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. John Gill, "Romans 13," Gill's Exposition, accessed February 17, 2017, http://biblehub.com/commentaries/gill/romans/13.htm. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. Meyer, "Romans 13." [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Handley Carr Glyn Moule, "Romans 13,” The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, accessed February 17, 2017, http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/romans/13.htm. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Gill, “Romans 13.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. William Robertson Nicoll, “Romans 13,” The Expositor's Greek Testament, accessed February 17, 2017. http://biblehub.com/commentaries/egt/romans/13.htm. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. Meyer, "Romans 13." [↑](#footnote-ref-8)