



Part 3 of 5: *When Love Wins*

APPETIZER: Picking up the Peace(s)

Fear based Love vs. Perfect Love

In review:

- Vengeance is God's – not ours
- Our work is laying down war and violence and upholding peace
- Our mantra is humility
- Love as our guiding principle

1 John 4:18

DINE IN: When in Rome

Romans 12:6-11

Pax Romana:

Peace: vetted through dominance & punishment

People: divided into classes with wide social gaps

Purpose: to be the governing authority for the world with Ceasar as Lord

Peace through Jesus:

Jesus: Lord

Lordship: Love

Love: lifts someone up – even an enemy, gives up power and sees the “other” as family

Ok, BUT...

Really love your enemy?

Pretending to love others = Religion – I'll do it because im required to..

WDJD?

- Moved into the experience of people who were rejected by religion and really saw them
- Moved outside of normative religious values to show that even the poorest of the poor were part of this new kingdom

- Love moves towards, love draws in, love lays down power and pretense

TAKE OUT: Love, Actually

What's wrong?

Wrong: Empire – the ruling way by force and coercion

Wrong: individuality and self preservation (comfort and safe passage)

What's Good?

Good: mutual submission, humility, and active peacemaking

Good: a love ethic that chips away at empire, selfishness, and ego

How to do it?

Love that is genuine – works towards unity

Honoring one another

Doing the hard work that is pleasing to God: including more people in the Good news, laying down ones life (comfort, wealth, power) for the sake of someone else

HOMEWORK:

1. Home Church Hangout Video– Learning how to love your family well this Christmas season.
2. Perfect love casts out fear. Who needs you to use the power of love to confront injustice, abuse of power, harassment, bullying? Love provides opportunity for reconciliation.
3. Spend your money this Christmas to support peace, not empire.
4. Hospitality and radical welcome are part of the way we spread peace. Who is God prompting you to invite to Christmas? To create space for in your life and community?

Home Church Questions

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic – in one Large Group]

1. What stood out to you from the teaching on Sunday? Talk about your learning from this series so far and what you are looking forward to.

Watch the home church hangout video.

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture – in Discussion Groups]

2. Read **Romans 12:6-11**.
 - a. What verse or idea stands out to you?
 - b. Read verse 9 again. Think back to the sermon: "What is wrong vs. what is good." Where might you find this idea unsettling in your own life? Family dynamics? Employee/employer? Other areas...
 - c. How do you cultivate spiritual zeal? What diminishes it in your life? What increases it? Talk about the decisions you need to make this week in order to increase your spiritual zeal. (simplicity/generosity/time/spiritual practices etc)
 - d. The church "united through love" is a key theme of romans 12:9-11, where do you see this working/not working today? In the church? In your family?

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together – in Huddles]

3. Go over the homework from Sunday's message with your huddle. Talk about specific things you are processing. What next steps can your huddle support you in?
4. Spend an extended time praying together for truth, love and courage.