

The background of the image shows ancient Roman ruins. A large, circular stone structure, possibly a well or a niche, is the central focus. To the right, a cross-shaped structure is visible, partially obscured by a semi-transparent overlay. The entire scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The word "ROMANS" is superimposed in a large, black, serif font across the center of the image.

ROMANS

Another Transition/Hingepoint ... (Romans 12-15)

1. Romans 1-3: **God's glory.**
 - doctrine of *Total Depravity*.
2. Romans 4-8: **God's love.**
 - doctrines of *Justification & Sanctification*.
3. Romans 9-11: **God's sovereignty and my responsibility.**
 - doctrines of *Election & Free will*.

4. Romans 12-15: **Transformed Relationships.**
 - what happens when I give God ALL of me.

God's Mercies

Rom. 12:1

My New Life

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers & sisters, in view of God's mercy, ...

Romans 12

First Week: My Transformed Relationship With God. (Rom. 12:1-2)

... I live in His *mercy*, not in my *fear*.

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, *in view of God's mercy,*

- ***Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.***
- ² ***Do not conform*** to the pattern of this world, ***but be transformed*** by the renewing of your mind.

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

My Transformed Relationship With God. (Rom. 12:1-2)

Because I live in God's mercy,

1. I am no longer afraid of Him.

- I live in His mercy, demonstrated for me in Jesus

2. I offer myself entirely to Him.

- because it's the only response that makes any sense!

3. I reject *conforming* for *transforming*.

- the forming of my life is now shaped by God's mercy & grace!

2nd Week: My Transformed Relationship With The Church. (Rom. 12:3-8)

... I see the Church through God's eyes.

1. an Organism, *not* an organization.

- a living entity.
- empowered with supernatural abilities through the Holy Spirit.
- expressing His Son, Jesus, to the world.
- led by Jesus, and accountable to Him.

The Church is not a mere organization but a living organism. It has life *because* it is the Body of Christ ... (and) **through His Body, Jesus wants to express Himself to the world.**

T.H. Epp

2nd Week: My Transformed Relationship With The Church. (Rom. 12:3-8)

... I see the Church through God's eyes.

1. an Organism, *not* an organization.

2. A Body, not a business.

- a living, breathing, dynamic & beautiful expression of Jesus Christ.
- a physical representation of Jesus, where every part of His Body moves in harmony as he directs them.

*⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so **in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.***

Romans 12

Last Week: How The Body Cares For Itself. (Rom. 12:9-13)

... What happens inside a healthy Church.

Note: Paul is not writing to individuals ... he is writing collectively to the Christians living in Rome (*The Jesus Community of Rome*), through whom Jesus wants to express Himself.

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 12

Last Week: How The Body Cares For Itself. (Rom. 12:9-13)

... What happens inside a healthy Church.

- 1. We learn how much we need each other ...** and that God has intentionally made it so. Health happens in relationship.
 - God has hard-wired interdependence to spiritual vitality. No Christian has the ability to live a healthy, self-sufficient life.
- 2. Together, we become a healthy, strong & beautiful Body – the Bride of Christ.**
 - We make up for each other's short-comings and contribute to one another's strengths.
 - No part has to overexert itself for other parts that refuse to function.

Last Week: How The Body Cares For Itself. (Rom. 12:9-13)

... What happens inside a healthy Church.

3. The surrounding culture is exposed for what it is ... empty & broken.

- Secular humanism, emphasizing individual autonomy, is bereft of meaning ... there is nothing holding it together but self-centeredness.
- Churches that conform to individualism create religious consumers, begin to lose their zeal & spiritual fervour, and stop serving the Lord.

4. Our Valley sees all of Jesus ... not just parts of Him.

- and what they see will never be mistaken for anything else.

This Week: How The Body Cares For Others. (Rom. 12:14-21)

... How the Church expresses Jesus to a broken world.

- **If** the world is broken and bereft of meaning ...
- **If** the Church is the strong, healthy & beautiful Body of Jesus ...
- **If**, through His Body, Jesus wants to express Himself to the world ...

What is the foundation of His expression?

Key: It won't be a natural expression ... it will be supernatural.

- **It will reflect the heart, mind & character of Jesus.**
 - unnatural and unexpected.
 - not an expression of a sinful, fallen world.
 - an expression of the Kingdom of God.

This Week: How The Body Cares For Others. (Rom. 12:14-21)

... How the Church expresses Jesus to a broken world.

A simple, powerful message repeated four times:

- *14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse ...*
- *17 Never pay back evil with more evil ...*
- *19 Never take revenge ...*
- *21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good ...*

The world will see that the Christian is a different person because he cares for those who do not care for him.

T.H.Epp

14 Bless those who persecute you. Bless them; do not curse them. 15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't act conceited - thinking you know it all!

17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

19 Never take revenge, dear friends. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Bible says, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. 20 The Bible also teaches: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them, and if they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads."

21 Don't let evil overpower you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Romans 12

This Week: How The Body Cares For Others. (Rom. 12:14-21)

... How the Church expresses Jesus to a broken world.

²¹ *Don't let evil overpower you ...*

- Gk. - *niko* - to be overrun by the enemy;

“Don't let evil overrun your position in Christ. Overrun evil by doing good.”

To repay evil with evil is immediately to lose the battle to evil. The only way to defeat evil is by doing good to the one who has done harm ... If we hate a person who has wronged us, the evil destroying the soul of that person has won.

Keller

How the Church overruns evil by doing good:

1. Like Jesus, we recognize people apart from their sin.

- Evil is something a broken person does. It is not who they are.
- Even the most evil acts are committed by people created in God's image and given the opportunity to respond to His mercies.

³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified Jesus there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.

*³⁴ **Jesus said**, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.*

Luke 23

*⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ **But I tell you**, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven.*

Jesus – Matthew 5

How the Church overruns evil by doing good:

2. We remember God's response to *our* evil behavior.

- mercy, not judgement; forgiveness, not revenge.

⁶ When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. ⁷ Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. ⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5

How the Church overruns evil by doing good:

3. We respond in God's kindness, concern & self-control.

- Demonstrating the culture of the Kingdom we belong to.

³⁸ *"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'*

³⁹ ***But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.*** ⁴⁰ *And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.* ⁴¹ *If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.* ⁴² *Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you..*

Jesus – Matthew 5

How the Church overruns evil by doing good:

4. We reject the temptation to judge others.

- Knowing that only God is qualified to judge anyone.

For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ He will judge everyone according to what they have done ...¹¹ For God does not show favoritism ... ¹⁶ And this is the message I proclaim—that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life.

Romans 2

What does this mean practically: (Swindoll)

a. We counteract our natural, sinful instincts. (v.14)

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you. Bless them; do not curse them.

- following Jesus requires relearning habits that have been conformed by our culture prior to knowing Christ.

What does this mean practically: (Swindoll)

a. We counteract our natural, human instincts. (v.14)

b. We put ourselves in our enemy's place. (v.v. 15-16)

¹⁵ Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't act conceited - thinking you know it all!

- many times, those who persecute us are acting out of prior hurt and brokenness that has nothing to do with us.
- the Lion & the Mouse.

What does this mean practically: (Swindoll)

- a. We counteract our natural, human instincts. (v.14)
- b. We put ourselves in our enemy's place. (v.v. 15-16)
- c. We look for our enemy's good & support it. (v.v. 17-18)**

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

- we search for the good in our enemy's lives and encourage its development.
- we express kind words and actions.

What does this mean practically: (Swindoll)

- a. We counteract our natural, human instincts. (v.14)
- b. We put ourselves in our enemy's place. (v.v. 15-16)
- c. We look for our enemy's good & support it. (v.v. 17-18)

d. We leave all revenge to God, forgiving instead. (v. 19)

¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

- we replace retaliation with self-control.
- we embrace God's assurance that He will deal with every injustice, including those we have received and those we have perpetrated.

What does this mean practically: (Swindoll)

- a. We counteract our natural, human instincts. (v.14)
- b. We put ourselves in our enemy's place. (v.v. 15-16)
- c. We look for our enemy's good & support it. (v.v. 17-18)
- d. We leave all revenge to God, forgiving instead. (v. 19)

e. We respond in our transformation. (v. 20)

²⁰“If your enemy is hungry, feed them, and if they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their head.”

- Our refusal to retaliate demonstrates the power of Christ.
- Love is the one response that finds favour with God.

Conclusion: When Christians respond to evil in the power of God's mercy:

- We are transformed.
- Others are confounded.
- Our enemies are brought before Jesus.
- Satan is exposed.

Notice: there is no persecution so great that God makes an exception ... no hurt so deep that He excuses us from living any other way.