



## **"Serving the World at Your Doorstep"**

Vision Series, #6 | February 4, 2018 | Romans 12:14-22

### Gathering

1. When we hear the word generosity we usually think of money. Can you think of a time when someone was generous toward you in something other than money?
2. Think of where you live, work or go to school. How hostile or accepting are the people around you or your faith?

### Looking at the Text

We are looking at **Romans 12:14-21** as we consider how to "*generously serve a world in need.*" In this passage Paul continues to teach us what it looks like to center our lives on Jesus Christ. He has already talked about offering our bodies as living sacrifices to God, and he has described a community where the followers of Jesus serve one another in love and humility through their spiritual gifts. Now he turns his focus to our relationships with people outside the faith. This was a pressing matter for the church in Rome. It was a city devoted to the Emperor and to the pantheon of Roman gods. The community of Jesus followers was so small and politically unimportant that they were at best ignored and at worst scapegoated for problems in the city. Paul's readers were much like us. They needed to know how to think and act toward those outside the faith because they lived among them every day.

### Read Romans 12:14-21

1. These verses have two focuses. Some are about how we respond to people outside the church and some apply to people in the community. Can you point out an example of each?
2. How are we to respond to those who curse us in verse 14? What does it mean to bless someone, and what does it mean to curse someone? Look at verse 17. How does the notion of responding to evil with evil connect to blessing and cursing?
3. We are told directly not to take revenge. How can we do that when we know that people have hurt or persecuted us? How does verse 19 illuminate that?

4. Verse 20 has a quote from Proverbs 25 about dealing with enemies. It is notoriously difficult to understand both here and in Proverbs. What do you think it means? How do you think it helps us understand verse 17 and 21?
5. Look at verse 21. How does this help us understand verse 14 and 17?
6. Verse 16 urges us to live in harmony with each other. This phrase "each other" is a signal that he is talking about life in the church. What attitudes will help us do live in harmony? What does the larger culture think when a church fights or splits?
7. Look at verse 18. How can a church community apply this and what are the limitations?

### Applications

1. How would summarize the main themes in this section?
2. What are some of the ways that believers are tempted to respond to evil with evil?
3. What good can the church do that pushes back on the evil of our culture?
4. Who are the people in your life that do not know the Lord and how can you be a good witness to them?