

Romans 12:15-16 *“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.”* We continue our description of a genuine born-again Christian. This description is wrapped up in a series of commands that are laced with grace, for only members of the body of Christ can truly fulfill them as Jesus lives His life through them. Three words summarize the series of commands in our text this morning: (1) Empathy, (2) Harmony, and (3) Humility.

I. EMPATHY *“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”* Why did the Holy Spirit inspire Paul to put the command to rejoice prior to the command to weep? Possibly because it's more difficult and less natural

A. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Our sinful nature does not rejoice when others rejoice; rather our sin nature is jealous and envious of the success and happiness the other is experiencing. Cain killed Able because he was jealous and envied Abel's relationship with God. Jesus was killed by the religious authorities because they envied his success. **Matthew 27:17-18** *“Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” 18 For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.”*

(1) Therefore, we are to rejoice with those who rejoice. How are we to obey this command? First, remember, if it's a brother or sister in Christ, we are members of the same body. **Romans 12:4-5** *For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another”* **Romans 14:7** *“For none of us lives to himself, and no man dies to himself.”* When a brother or sister is rejoicing, then the good has happened not just to that individual, but to you, and to the head of the body, Jesus Christ.

(2) We fulfill this command reminding ourselves...“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives within me, and the life I live, etc...”

B. Weep with those who weep. This command also requires the supernatural life of Jesus Christ within. Why? People have a tendency to avoid those who are truly suffering – like the plague. Their suffering reminds us of our own vulnerable situation. It reminds us of our own mortality and our own precarious perch in this vain world. How are we to weep with those who weep?

(1) Remind ourselves we are part of the body of Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:25-27** *“that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.”* Paul tells us of his suffering and mentions the empathy he feels for his brothers and sisters in Christ: **2 Corinthians 11:27-29** *“in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?”*

C. Showing true empathy is the secret to effective parental discipline of a child....it is the secret to a fulfilling church experience

II. HARMONY *“Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble.”* **1 Corinthians 1:10** *“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”* How are we to fulfill this command? It is a command that addresses our thoughts. The command in verse 15 addressed our emotions, and since emotions arise consequentially from our thoughts, the Lord is telling us how to rejoice and weep with others. We do this by guarding our thoughts. First, don't set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Second, don't be wise in your own eyes.

A. We need to make sure we do not set our minds, our preferences on the high things of this world. It could be people or things: **James 2:1-7** *“My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? 7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?”*