

Let Love Be Genuine

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, June 28, 2026
PASSAGES	Romans 12; John 15; Galatians 6; 2 Corinthians 3; Ephesians 5; Matthew 25
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:12:13 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Romans 12 describes a life of radical service, generosity and genuine love — and most of us can feel the distance between that and where we actually live. Matt's argument is that the distance does not close by easing off the grace message or by preaching harder at people. It closes by drinking grace deeper: letting Jesus all the way in, relationally, until love does what obligation never could.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ The living sacrifice of Romans 12 is not a sin sacrifice — Jesus already is that. It is an honor offering, a gesture of respect made freely because we get to.
- ◆ Transformation is not spiritual technology. It is not new steps or better techniques applied to the same old self; it is a miracle of the heart, worked from inside union with Christ.
- ◆ The gifts were given, not earned or self-issued, which makes bragging about them incoherent and comparison pointless. You are running your race, answering to God.
- ◆ The gospel of grace cannot be blamed for anyone's inactivity, and no alternative message could possibly bear better fruit than God's own.
- ◆ Knowing the Bible does not automatically transform you — the devil quoted it accurately at Jesus. Academic study can become a way of keeping Christ at arm's length.
- ◆ What people call hyper-grace is really not enough grace: proud of the cup, showing it off, barely tasting it.
- ◆ Loving genuinely includes learning to abhor evil — while blessing the people who do it to you.

- ◆ When someone is grieving, the assignment is to weep with them, not to explain.

► 1:12:13

Matt picked the Romans series back up in chapter 12, and spent the first stretch of the message rebuilding the foundation under it — because the chapter opens with *therefore*, and everything it asks of us is leaning on the eleven chapters behind it. He mentioned the small commentary that shaped him on this chapter in middle school, Jay Adams’ *How to Overcome Evil*, and recommended it mostly on the grounds that it is short.

What the “therefore” is carrying

► 1:15:40

In Adam we sin, and on our own we sin, and either way the standard is not better-than-average but the glory of God. Then Christ died for us — and, Matt pressed, *as* us. We are co-crucified with him and hidden in him. “God’s not doing community service that’s somewhat at a distance from us relationally,” he said. The inheritance is not merely the kingdom; it is the King.

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

ROMANS 12:1–2 ↗

► 1:18:15

Because the concept is hard to hold, Matt laid other passages beside it that say the same thing in different keys. Abide in me and I in you — we do not bear fruit by studying Christ’s example from across the room. What counts is a new creation, which is something God does, since none of us birthed ourselves. And with unveiled face, beholding his glory, we are transformed degree by degree. Paul puts it bluntly to the Ephesians: you did not merely behave darkly, you *were* darkness, and now you are light in the Lord. The response is real, but it is natural rather than heavy-handed.

Nothing here to brag about

► 1:21:30

Paul writes the next section “by the grace given to me” — the man who planted the most churches was not the best and brightest, but the one Jesus hired and then empowered to do the job he was hired for. Matt reached for an old commercial to land it: “Just shake and bake, and I helped.” Jesus is the active ingredient. He is making dinner; you were shaking a bag.

► 1:22:34

Which is also why comparing yourself sideways is a dead end. The members do not have the same function by design, and you are answering to God for your race, not to the person next to you for theirs — of whom, Matt noted, you have at best a Facebook version, while the Lord looks on the heart. Compare upward against where Christ is calling you and the pride evaporates on its own. And our belonging to one another is downstream of belonging to him: reconciliation runs first to God, and we find each other hidden in the same Lord.

Gifts you did not issue yourself

► 1:26:23

“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”

ROMANS 12:6–8 ↗

Anyone can give a lesson; some people are graced to teach, and you know the difference, because you had one teacher whose words were something like a magic power and another who read from the text. Anyone can encourage; some people encourage in a way that knocks something off you and leaves you reanimated. Anyone can give — and the most generous person in the room may well be dirt poor, like the widow with two copper coins, in acts of secret generosity you may never hear about. Use the grace you were handed. Do not boast about the size of it. “It’s not like you made that gift and then gave it to yourself.”

The gap — and the wrong diagnosis

► 1:30:02

Here the message turned to what Matt called the perennial question among people in his job: there is the glorious ideal — radical service, mercy, deep generosity, hospitality, devotion, prayer — and then there is where we actually are, on almost any metric you pick. Giving. Hospitality to the widow, the

orphan, the sojourner. Sharing our faith. Attendance. How do you get a congregation from here to there?

► 1:33:17

Point one: it is not the message's fault. God's message does not bear bad fruit, and looking around for an alternative one is not an option — Paul is fierce about it. Even an apostle or an angel preaching a different gospel is to be accursed. So the real question has to be answered inside the household of grace.

Two amateur theories

► 1:36:19

Matt flagged this stretch as his own analysis rather than exposition. First theory: much of the church knows a great deal *about* Jesus without knowing him. The American church excels at Bible study; our problem is not a shortage of information. Knowing the Bible does not transform you by itself — the devil quoted it accurately at Jesus in the wilderness. “Studying the Bible just academically is a distancing maneuver,” he said. “It’s a way that we can feel like we’re close enough to Christ, but we’re kind of keeping our stiff arm.”

► 1:37:24

Second theory: we do know him, but there are rooms we have not let him into. You may know him as healer because that is where he met you, and still have never learned that the miracle worker is also your provider. High trust in one area, first-day trust in another — you have simply never tasted and seen that he is good there, so you are scared.

► 1:38:32

Paul is the test case for both. He had the Torah cold and he had enormous zeal; he was not persecuting Christians as a sideline. What he lacked was an encounter, and love incarnate knocked him off his feet. The radical grace preacher became the most fruitful man of his generation — not through a list of shoulds, but because he met the living God and then spent years on the receiving end of other people's ministry.

Hyper-grace is not enough grace

► 1:41:07

This was the sharpest turn in the message. People worry that too much grace preaching produces lazy Christians — a decision, a prayer, and no transformation. Matt refused the label. “I wouldn’t even

consider that hyper grace, because *hyper* implies a lot of. I feel like that's not enough grace." Forgiveness and a commuted sentence are a toe in the water. The wells go down to knowing God as friend and father.

"They're like pirates that go to the wedding feast and steal a dinner roll and brag to their friends: look what I got, it's for free. Bro, you were supposed to sit down and gorge yourself."

► 1:42:19

The counter-example is the woman at Jesus' feet with the perfume and her hair, drinking the cup down to the dregs. When the room was offended, Jesus told a story about two debtors and asked who would love more — not who was more obligated. The love came first and the action followed. It was the throwaway people of first-century Palestine, Matt observed, whose hearts burned in front of him and who then went to their deaths proclaiming the gospel, while "dudes like me were like, but could I just study you from a distance?"

► 1:45:21

His picture for the alternative: someone at a fancy party swirling the wine, smelling it, showing it off, barely touching it. "They're real proud of grace, but they're not even drinking it." Where our love has gone cold, the answer is not to lay off the grace. It is that we did the sinner's prayer and then set Jesus on a shelf — a ceasefire, when he was inviting us to a wedding supper.

Let love be genuine

► 1:46:44

"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality."

ROMANS 12:9–13 ↗

Love is the curriculum of the Spirit for our short, painful, meaningful lives — not accumulating wealth, which Jesus made fun of in the parable of the man with the grain towers, and not inner-circle games. And it is kindled rather than manufactured: we love because he first loved us.

► 1:50:12

Then the clause Matt admitted he has had to grow into. As a millennial, he inherited an emotional landscape where love means affirmation and soft smiles, and hating anything is automatically the vice. But Paul says *let love be genuine, abhor what is evil* in a single breath, and God, who is love, plainly hates things — a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood. Everything he does is an expression of love, including his wrath. So learning to hate deception instead of looking the other way is not a departure from love. It is part of the training.

► 1:51:36

The very next verse guards the boundary: bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Abhor the deed; bless the person doing it to you — and Paul wrote that to people under real persecution, not as a throwaway line. Then rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Grief makes us reach for *why*, so we can understand it or dodge it next time. “Paul didn’t say *explain* to those who weep,” Matt pointed out. “He said weep with those who weep. That’s your assignment.”

Overcome evil with good

► 1:53:49

“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

ROMANS 12:19–21 ↗, QUOTING PROVERBS 25:21–22 ↗

Not someone who annoys you — an enemy, which is a severe category. And it is exactly what God did with us: he died for us while we were his enemies. On the burning coals, Matt was honest that he once did a deep dive and came out still unsure — heat for transformation, light for illumination, or God accomplishing his own vengeance while you decline to. Whatever it means is good, because God does not ask us to do something bad, and vengeance is his department, not ours.

The question to sit with

► 1:56:50

Matt closed by reading verses 9 through 21 again over a silent congregation, with one question underneath it: *where is God inviting us to know Jesus better?* Perhaps you trust him completely with your giving and have never once prayed for healing. Perhaps you have no appetite for hospitality because

you have not yet tasted what happens when the needy and lonely person at your table turns out to be the presence of Christ himself. That is not an accusation. It is an unopened room.

“Without the relational depth of knowing Jesus, service doesn’t feel like a privilege. So step one may be to taste and see.”

► 2:01:05

His last word was that spending yourself as an honor offering for the rest of your life is a joy, and that looking back, the favorite things you ever did will be the times you said yes to Jesus. “I wish I did that even harder — that was awesome.”

FOR FURTHER STUDY**SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- Romans 12:1–2
- John 15:4–5
- Galatians 6:15
- 2 Corinthians 3:18
- Ephesians 5:8
- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Romans 12:6–8
- Mark 12:41–44
- Galatians 1:8
- Psalm 34:8
- Luke 7:36–50
- Romans 12:9–13
- Luke 12:16–21
- 1 John 4:19
- Proverbs 6:16–19
- Romans 12:14
- Romans 12:15
- Romans 12:19–21
- Proverbs 25:21–22
- Matthew 25:35–40

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Matt called the living sacrifice an honor offering rather than a payment. Where does your own service still feel like paying something back?
2. Which grace has God clearly given you — serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, mercy — and where have you been comparing it to someone else's instead of using it?
3. Matt suggested that studying the Bible academically can be a way of keeping Jesus at arm's length. Does that land as true for you, or does it overstate it?
4. Name an area where your trust is still at level one — a room you have not let him into because you have never tasted that he is good there.
5. "Where is God inviting you to know Jesus better?" What is one concrete action this week that would take you into that room?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lyOTh5ahT0&t=4333s>

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.