

## Resist The Exist Part 3

Outdo One Another In Love

*Romans 12:9-10*

*Memory Verses: 1 John 3:18*

### MANUSCRIPT

#### Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Existing is not a virtue. It's really nothing. It's a state of being without motivation, purpose, or value. Rocks exist. Roaches exist. The Carolina Panthers exist. But none of these appear to have motivation, purpose, or value. Something that is not contributing, something that doesn't add value, something that is merely there... that's not real life... those things aren't really living... they're simply existing. They are just taking up space.

And if there was anything; anything that you would say would not be like that. That would bring life, and purpose, and motivation, and value to this world... it should be the church of Christ... it should be the body of believers... it should be Christians... right? And yet here we are in 2021 with a Church here in America that is for the most part stagnant, immobile, and unmotivated. Covid came and threw us a curve ball and now we don't know how to be the Church anymore. We are in a holding pattern waiting for who knows what or who knows who to come and give us permission to once again be who God has called us to be. Until then we seem fine to just run out the clock. As long as we can pay the bills, as long as we can still turn the lights on and call this a church I guess we're all good. We're not. I'm telling you we are not all good. If our mentality is to merely survive.. if our mentality is to simply exist... we will not survive and soon we will not exist. We have no choice but to resist the exist.

Two weeks ago I told you a quote from the movie Braveheart; "all men die, not all men really live." I told you a story about how a couple retired in their 50's so they could run out the clock collecting sea shells while two women in their 80's gave the rest of their lives to reaching the lost in Cambodia. I read you *Revelation 3:1* where Jesus says these words to the church at Sardis; "I know your works. You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead." And I said that my greatest fear is that Jesus may be saying it to us. And I challenged you with this statement; "The greatest tragedy in life is not dying, the greatest tragedy is not really living." And I asked you this question; "are you really living?" This series is for those of us who feel like giving up, running out the clock, throwing in the towel, or are going through the motions. This series is for those of us who are tempted to adopt the mentality of simply existing. I beg you, resist the exist.

So how do we resist the exist. Well, last week we began looking at the 5 exhortations in *Romans 12:9-13*. In *vs.9* we saw that we could resist the exist by holding fast to what is good. **Hold fast is a sailing term which means no matter what don't let go... don't give up!** For those of us struggling with merely existing... don't give up. Don't give up serving the needy. Don't give up on sharing the Gospel with the lost. Don't stop getting on your knees, don't stop getting in the world, don't stop coming to worship with your faith family... don't give up! And don't let go. Don't let go of your mission. Don't let go of your ministry. And, don't let go of your calling... hold fast!

Hold fast to what is good and hate what is evil. Never stop hating sin and striving for righteousness. If you fall into the mentality of existing you will inevitably fall into sin. Idle hands are the devil's playground. But when you hold fast to good with everything that is in you, you will no doubt conquer apathy and mediocrity in your walk with Christ. You will resist the exist. The first exhortation; Hold Fast to what is good!

The second exhortation we find is in verses 9 & 10. Look with me at *Romans 12:9-10*. The second exhortation God gives us to resist the exist is; outdo one another in love. When we are tempted to merely exist we must change our mentality. When we are tempted to put it in neutral and coast... Jesus tells us to push the clutch back in and put it into gear. And not just first gear... we need to punch it! The Bible has given us the prescription for the disease of mediocrity; excellence. You counter mediocrity with exceptional. You resist the exist by outdoing. And so we must outdo one another in love. Meaning we must love them so greatly, so exceptionally, that they can't categorize our love as anything other than extraordinary. They love you... you love them more. They love you more... you love them even more.

And before you know it the whole culture of your life, the culture of your family, and the culture of your church changes. Your life becomes a competition of who can love one another the most at any given moment. Can you imagine what that might look like here at Stone Creek? Can you imagine what that might look like in our community? We wouldn't have to worry about people showing up anymore... instead we'd have to worry about where to put them all. This world is attracted to people who show extraordinary love. This world wants someone to love them in a special, exceptional way. This world wants a love that outdoes all other loves... and they'd do almost anything to get it.

But it's not that easy is it? Or else we'd be doing it. Every church would be doing it... and trust me they aren't. We aren't. And so this morning we need to learn what it means to resist the exist by outdoing one another in love. And if we do I believe we will recognize that... **When we see how powerful our love towards others can be we won't ever want to quit.**

So how do we go about outdoing one another in love? Our verses give us three ways.

## Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first being... **Let Your Love Be Authentic**. We must outdo one another in love through authenticity. Why is authenticity important? Because people can always tell when you really love them or if you are just pretending to love them. There's a huge difference between a fake, pretend love and an authentic and genuine love. The former seems self-serving and insincere while the latter feels selfless and heartfelt. **1 John 3:18** tells us to love not in just talk but in deed. Our love must be genuine if it is to be received.

So what is authentic love? A good place to start would be **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**. This what authentic love does. It is easy to know what a genuine love looks like, it is much harder to put into action. To have a real authentic and genuine love one must look within one's heart. Take a look at **1 Timothy 1:5**, and **1 Peter 1:22**; love comes from a pure heart. And a pure heart is not a normal, natural, or self-taught thing. According to the Bible, a pure heart comes only from an unblemished and unmixed love for Christ. **Matthew 5:8** tells us that the pure in heart are blessed for they will see God, and the only way for us to see God is by believing in Jesus Christ in our hearts. Also, the definition of the word pure is to be un-mixed or unblemished with tainted particles. Put it all together and it is clear... we must have a singular, laser-focused love for Jesus if we are to have a pure heart. We can't love the world and Christ and have a pure heart... and we can't have an authentic love for people without a pure heart. **When we are unmixed with a singular love for Christ then we will have a pure heart with which to love others.**

But another thing to remember is that Authentic love has proof. **2 Corinthians 8:8** tells us that proof of genuine love is the earnestness of others you have loved. When you genuinely love people they will gladly tell others of your love. The word of your love will get around. It will be evident. And it will produce relationships. Authentic love creates and fosters relationships. Where as an act of false love can be worse than an act of aggression... or even betrayal, true love is the most attractive and most sought-after feelings in the whole world. When you love someone authentically it can change their life. It can change our life. **When we see how powerful our love towards others can be we won't ever want to quit loving them.**

The second way we outdo one another in love is... we **Love Everyone Like Family**. We must outdo one another in love by loving them like family... there is no other way to outdo one another in love. Why? Because... **while people will always appreciate genuine acts of love... what they desire most is a genuine relationship.**

According to **John 15:13** brotherly love lays down their lives for others. A genuine love cares about the livelihood of others and will do

whatever it takes to show it. And according to **John 13:34** brotherly love loves like Jesus loved us. It forgives as Jesus forgives us. It cares for others the way that Jesus cares for us. It loves unconditionally the way Christ loves us unconditionally. This is what it means to love others like we love family.

But this is a very hard concept for most American Christians because we've been conditioned to love our blood family one way and love others a different way. The greatest commandment tells us differently, we are to love strangers with an extreme love. Look at **Mark 12:31-30** the greatest command says to love others as we love ourselves. **Galatians 5:14** backs this up by saying that the whole law is fulfilled in loving your neighbor. **Romans 13:10** also says that love does no wrong to a neighbor therefore love fulfills the law. And of course the obvious question remains, who is our neighbor? Jesus answered this question with the parable of the Good Samaritan. A neighbor that you love like family is any stranger in need, or anyone God brings into your life. So who do we love like family.. everyone and anyone. **The world expects you to treat them like strangers... imagine what would happen if you love them like family.** So, a good question to ask when confronted with the prospect of loving a stranger is... how would I treat my brother, sister, mother, father, and then love that person like that. **When we see how powerful our love towards others can be we won't ever want to quit loving them.**

The final way we outdo one another in love is... we **Love Others Like Royalty**. We must outdo one another in love by treating others like royalty. The verse says to outdo one another in showing honor. **1 Peter 2:17** says that we are to honor others and honor kings. So, when I think of honoring people with the greatest honor possible, I think of how people treat royalty. They bow, they submit, they bring gifts. They fight for their king, they are faithful to their queen. We should honor everyone with the same honor we would show any dignitary.

When I think of honoring people with a great honor I think of how people would honor me, have honored me. When people speak highly of me to others. When people fight for me and have my back. You know it wasn't too long ago when after a church meeting half of the people I was called to lead wanted my resignation. But what happened.. some of my most faithful friends stood by my side and even though they did what they did for God more than for me... it was the most honored I've ever been. And this is how we should honor others. Why? You may say, how can I honor someone that I don't like, or don't respect. Simple. You know this... everyone is a prince or princess of the king of kings – we must see them as such and love them as such. We must honor everyone as though they were royalty – cause they are. **When we treat paupers like princes... we honor our father the king.** **When we see how powerful our love towards**

others can be we won't ever want to quit loving them.

### Application

When we outdo one another in love we not only draw people to Christ but we reignite a fire in our souls for reaching the lost, caring for the needy, and serving our neighbors. When we see how much loving others can change the world we are awakened from our slumber and we resist the exist. You can't get stuck in the mentality of surviving, or going through the motions when you are empowered by overwhelming and exceptional love for others.

So outdo one another in love by being authentic with them in love. Don't be fake, don't be self serving in your attempts at kindness... rather truly love people with a genuine love from God. A pure unadulterated love for God leads to a pure love for people and a pure love for people leads to real relationships.

Real relationships are cemented when we love one another like family. We don't treat one another like strangers but realize that every stranger is a neighbor that we've been commanded to love as we love ourselves. I am to see the beggar on the corner in the same way that I love my mother or brother.

Then we are to take it to the next level and honor them in such a way that we see them as a prince or princess of the king. We must see them as a child of the king and love them as such.

### Conclusion

A minister once told of a wife who came into his office full of hatred toward her husband. "I do not only want to get rid of him, I want to get even. Before I divorce him, I want to hurt him as much as he has me." The minister suggested an ingenious plan "Go home and act as if you really love your husband. Tell him how much he means to you. Praise him for every decent trait. Go out of your way to be as kind, considerate, and generous as possible. Spare no efforts to please him, to enjoy him. Make him believe you love him. After you've convinced him of your undying love and that you cannot live without him, then drop the bomb. Tell him that you're getting a divorce. That will really hurt him." With revenge in her eyes, she smiled and exclaimed, "Beautiful, beautiful. Will he ever be surprised!" And she did it with enthusiasm. Acting "as if." For two months she showed love, kindness, listening, giving, reinforcing, sharing. When she didn't return, the minister called. "Are you ready now to go through with the divorce?" "Divorce?" she exclaimed. "Never! I discovered I really do love him." Her actions had changed her feelings.

Motion resulted in emotion. The ability to love is established not so much by fervent promise as often repeated deeds. When we choose to outdo others in love... we realize that we really enjoy loving others...

and we resist the exist. When we see how powerful our love towards others can be we won't ever want to quit loving them