THE CHRISTIAN AND SOCIETY
Romans 13:8-14

“...What a gift it is to be a part of these babies’ lives, to have the ability to ease their suffering, to cherish and love them even though they aren’t able to give anything tangible back or even smile in return for our efforts... We invest deeply, and we ache terribly when these kids die, but our hearts are like stained-glass windows. Those windows are made of broken glass which has been forged back together, and those windows are even stronger and more beautiful for having been broken.” - Cori Salchert

[4] “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: [5] Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. [6] Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. [7] But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. - Jeremiah 29:4-7, ESV

Big Question: How does the Gospel call us to live differently in society?

I. The Gospel Calls Us to Live Selflessly (vs. 8-10)

Origen (3rd century church father in Alexandria): “The debt of charity is permanent, and we are never quit of it; for we must pay it daily and yet always owe it.”

John Stott: “Now that Paul repeats in chapter 13 his statement about our fulfilling the law, he changes the emphasis from the means of fulfillment (the Holy Spirit) to the nature of it (love).”

John Stott: “The truth is that love cannot manage on its own without an objective moral standard. That is why Paul wrote not that ‘love is the end of the law’ but that ‘love is the fulfillment of the law’. For love and law need each other. Love needs law for its direction, while law needs love for its inspiration.”

II. The Gospel Calls Us To Live Urgently (vs. 11-12)

Tim Keller: “Karl Marx and others have charged that religion is the opiate of the masses... Properly understood, Christianity is by no means the opiate of the people. It’s more like the smelling salts.”

John Stott: “The picture is that, because of the hour, we must not only wake up and get up, but get dressed as well. We must take off our night clothes, the deeds of darkness, and put on instead, as suitable daytime equipment for the soldiers of Christ, the armor of light. For the Christian’s life is not a sleep but a battle.”

III. The Gospel Calls Us to Live Differently (vs. 13-14)

Ephesians 4:17-32
Discussion Groups

1. How does the long-term perspective of the “church in exile” transform how you engage your surroundings? How is your work/life connected to the welfare of the city in which you have been placed? What are some specific things you can do to seek the welfare of others in your community?

2. What are some tangible ways that you are “loop-holing” your love for others? How does the image of God never looking for a loophole in his love for you refresh your heart for the Gospel of grace?

3. How are you being lulled to sleep spiritually? Why should the day of Christ’s return give us urgency in our efforts to pursue Christ and reach out to others?

4. How has this Bible study community been a blessing to you in your fight against sin?