

NEW TESTAMENT READINGS

Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

If God is for us, who can be against us? Is it possible that he who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for the sake of us all will not grant us all things besides? Who shall bring a charge against God's chosen ones? God, who justifies? Who shall condemn them? Christ Jesus, who died or rather was raised up, who is at the right hand of God and who intercedes for us?

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Trial, distress, persecution, hunger, or nakedness, or danger or the sword? Yet in all this we are more than conquerors because of him who has loved us. For I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor powers, neither height nor depth nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 (or 12:1-2, 9-13 for shorter version)

Offer to God your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to him.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Brothers, I beg you through the mercy of God to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind so that you may judge what is God's will, what is good, pleasing and perfect.

Your love must be sincere. Detest what is evil, cling to what is good. Love one another with the affection of brothers. Anticipate each other in showing respect. Do not grow slack but be fervent in spirit; he whom you serve is the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient under trial, persevere in prayer. Look on the needs of the saints as your own; be generous in offering hospitality.

The Word of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

Your body is a temple of the Spirit.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians

The body is not for immorality; it is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. God, who raised up the Lord, will raise us also by his power. Do you not see that your bodies are members of Christ? But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun lewd conduct. Every other sin a man commits is out side his body, but the fornicator sins against his own body. You must know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within the Spirit you have received from God. You are not your own. You have been purchased, and at what a price! So glorify God in your body.

The word of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a

If I am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Set your hearts on the greater gifts. I will show you the way which surpasses all the others. If I speak with human tongues and angelic as well, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and, with full knowledge, comprehend all mysteries, if I have faith great enough to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give everything I have to feed the poor and hand over my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind. Love is not jealous, it does not put on airs, it is not snobbish. Love is never rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not prone to anger; neither does it brood over injuries. Love does not rejoice in what is wrong but rejoices with the truth. Therein no limit to love's forbearance, to its trust, its hope, its power to endure. Love never fails.

The word of the Lord.

Ephesians 5:2a, 21-33 (5:2a, 25-32 for shorter version)

This mystery has many implications, and I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians

Follow the way of love, even as Christ loved you. He gave himself for us.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church. He gave himself up for her to make her holy, purifying her in the bath of water by the power of the word, to present to himself a glorious church, holy and immaculate, without stain or wrinkle or anything of that sort. Husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. Observe that no one ever hates his own flesh; no, he nourishes it and takes care of it as Christ cares for the church for we are member of his body.

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cling to his wife, and the two shall be made into one.” This is a great foreshadowing; I mean that it refers to Christ and the church.

The word of the Lord.

Colossians 3:12-17

Above all have love, which is the bond of perfection.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience.

Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same.

Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love.

And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God;

And never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The word of the Lord.

1 Peter 3:1-9

You should agree with one another, be sympathetic and love.

A reading from the first letter of Peter

You married women must obey your husbands, so that any of them who do not believe in the word of the gospel may be won over apart from preaching, through their wives' conduct. They have only to observe the reverent purity of your way of life. The affectation of an elaborate hairdress, the wearing of golden jewelry, or the donning of rich robes is not for you. Your adornment is rather the hidden character of the heart, expressed in the unfading beauty of a calm and gentle disposition. This is precious in God's eyes. The holy women of past ages used to adorn themselves in this way, reliant on God and obedient to their husbands, for example, Sarah, who was subject to Abraham and called him her master. You are her children when you do what is right and let no fears alarm you.

You husbands, too, must show consideration for those who share your lives. Treat women with respect, they are heirs just as much as you to the gracious gift of life. If you do so, nothing will keep your prayers from being answered.

In summary, then, all of you should be like-minded, sympathetic, loving toward one another, kindly disposed, and humble. Do not return evil for evil or insult for insult. Return a blessing instead. This you have been called to do, that you may receive a blessing as your inheritance.

The word of the Lord.

1 John 3:18-24

Our love is to be something real and active.

A reading from the first letter of John

Little children, let us love in deed and in truth, and not merely talk about it. This is our way of knowing we are committed to the truth and are at peace before him no matter what our consciences may charge us with; for God is greater than our hearts and all is known to him. Beloved, if our consciences have nothing to charge us with, we can be sure that God is with us and that we will receive at his hands whatever we ask. Why? Because we are keeping his commandments and doing what is pleasing in his sight. His commandment is this; we are to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and are to love one another as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him and he is them. And this is how we know that he remains in us; from the Spirit that he gave us.

The word of the Lord.

1 John 4:7-12

God is love.

A reading from the first letter of John

Beloved, let us love one another because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten of God and has knowledge of God. The man without love has known nothing of God, for God is love.

God's love was revealed in our midst in this way; he sent his only Son to the world that we might have life through him. Love, then, consists in this; not that we have loved God, but that he has loved us and has sent his Son as an offering for our sins. Beloved, if God has loved us so, we must have the same love for one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another God dwells in us. And his love is brought to perfection in us.

The word of the Lord.

Revelation 19:1, 5-9a

Happy are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.

A reading from the book of Revelation

I, John, heard what sounded like the loud song of a great assembly in heaven. They were singing: "Alleluia! Salvation, glory, and might belong to our God."

A voice coming from the throne cried out: "Praise our God, all you his servants, the small and the great, who revere him!" Then I heard what sounded like the shouts of a great crowd, or the roaring of the deep, or mighty peals of thunder, as they cried: "Alleluia! The Lord is king our God, the Almighty! Let us rejoice and be glad, and give his glory! For this is the wedding day of the Lamb, his bride has prepared herself for the wedding; she has been given a dress to wear made of finest linen, brilliant white." The angel then said to me: "Write this down: Happy are they who have been invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb."

The word of the Lord.