

Romans (12:10)

Family Devotions

Part 66 – March 26, 2006

STRANGERS ON A PLANE



I watched a documentary on Air Transat flight 236. It's a huge two-engine jet that left Toronto (Aug. 2001) carrying 306 people over the Atlantic Ocean. 5½ hours into the flight, the right engine flamed out.

Q: Now, if you're in a *two-engine* jet, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and one engine goes out, how nervous are you?!

What they didn't know was that they had a massive fuel leak. Thirteen minutes later, the left engine flamed out. On that particular aircraft, the engines run the electrical generator – with no battery back-up. So, when they lost the engines, they lost all their power ... and it was still night sky.

Just imagine what it must've been like in that darkened, silent plane with just the soft whistle of wind against the wings.

- The passengers were prepared for an open-ocean crash-landing.
- The pilot lowered a wind-generator, to power the instruments.

Then the pilot located a tiny Island (with a military base) in the middle of nowhere, 70 miles from where they were. And he managed to glide that jet for twenty minutes.



And with no flaps, no power, no brakes, no reverse thrusters, they hit the runway at 230 mph, instantly blowing out 12 tires.

When it finally came to rest, everyone was saved!



And the folks who boarded that plane as strangers, embraced one another, and wept, and cheered. Different ages, races, and income brackets, but with one voice they hailed the pilot as their hero.

This is a picture of how we are to regard one another.

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. – *Romans 12:10 NIV*

BROTHERLY LOVE

Paul is talking about *believers*; that's why he says: "one another"

Paul believes that those who have salvation in common should express a special kind of affection and respect for each other. When someone's been saved (whether from disease or fire or air disaster), everything is suddenly precious ... especially people.

- So Paul expects the church to be a rich example of this.
- We have one Savior who has brought us into God's family.
- We have one Father, which makes us brothers and sisters.



Notice the term Paul uses: "brotherly love"

Q: Do you know the Greek word that Paul used?

A: Philadelphia ... the city of *brotherly love*.

Q: But, what is "brotherly love"; are we doing it?

A: "Philadelphia" refers to a tender family affection.

The deliverance of those folks on flight 236, temporarily transformed them into more than friends, they became a family.



As rescued children of a loving Father, we're called to more than just helping out, praying for, and speaking well of one another.

- We're called to *feel* a family affection.

This goes for believers in other churches, weird believers, wild believers, immature believers, and obnoxious believers. Which makes me immediately want to ask: What are the loopholes?!

There's an old poem that cuts to the heart of the issue:

To dwell above, with the saints in love - that will indeed be glory.
To dwell below, with saints we know, now that's a different story!

BROTHERLY LIKE

Q: Do you have to *like* someone in order to *love* them?

Q: Haven't you ever said: I love 'em but I don't like 'em!

The problem is: Paul isn't talking about a disconnected type of politeness that offers only the mechanics of Christian love.

- There must be a heart component - love *must* be sincere!

There'll be people we're not attracted to, folks we don't share common interests with, and personalities we don't relish. But, we must affectionately care for those we don't enjoy.

And not only that, Paul takes it a step farther and says:

"Honor one another above yourselves"

Q: How do you honor a believer who does dishonorable things?

Q: And, how do you like a believer who is in fact unlikable?

A: You choose to.

- We choose to count them worthy, the way God counts us righteous.

You see, loving others has far more to do with a sincere recognition and a profound realization of my own salvation.

Two fires broke out when flight 236 skidded to a stop. The flight crew got all 306 people out of that plane in 90 seconds! And then the fires were extinguished.



Q: Could you imagine one of those survivors saying:

- The flight attendant wasn't very courteous when I exited.
- See that bleeding woman? Her shoes clash with her blouse!
- Let's not cheer next to the bald guy, he seems a bit odd.

These are ludicrous thoughts for people who recognize and realize that they've been rescued from death, and given new life.

It doesn't mean we don't see their faults. Showing honor is not always a response to something or someone being honorable.

You and I are profoundly dishonorable to God. Yet, while we were dishonoring Him, He bestowed honor on us through His Son. We have been so immeasurably honored, that *not* to extend the gesture is to betray a lack of treasuring our own redemption.

HOLY KISSES

Our affections are what attest to the truth that we've been redeemed and rescued and received into the family of God.

Five times in the New Testament, Christians are called to:

Greet one another with a holy kiss. - *Romans 16:16 NIV*

This is how the book of Romans ends.

Affectionate families kiss. So this morning, I want us to really stretch outside of our culture and our comfort zone.

When we're excused, I want you to find someone you don't know (or don't know well), and I want you to give them a kiss!

Q: Doesn't this sound fun? Just a little kiss that says, "You're *family*".

Ushers, please come forward with the kisses.

Let's pray over our kisses:



Lord, we ask you to transform these chocolates into little foil-wrapped blessings that communicate authentic affection for our fellow survivors and Heavenly family members. Amen.

Now they're "Holy" kisses! Take one and put it under your chair for later ... otherwise we'll be handing out a holy mess. And no one likes a messy kiss!

If you find it hard to feel affection for certain believers, remember these four things:

1. We're called to care, not to cure.

If the only thing our affection and care accomplishes is representing the Son, and honoring the Father, that's okay.

2. We can't offer what we don't have.

We have to soak up, celebrate, and plug into God's infinite love and affection for ourselves, in order to recharge *our* supply.

3. We can appreciate God's patience.

Yes, they do bad things and they have rotten attitudes. But they are forgiven for all those things that drive us nuts.

And finally, the most important thing to remember:

4. I'm someone's application to this sermon.