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Sermon Notes

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## **Living the Supernatural Life—Part I**

### **Romans 12:9-21**

#### I. The Supernatural Life

A. The thrilling news Christ came to bring us: You were called not just to experience a miracle but to BE a miracle... a daily miracle

1. Christ actually has the power to lift even the ordinary encounters of everyday life... life with physical objects and life with other people, both Christians and non-Christians... Christ has the power to lift everyday life into the realm of the supernatural... He has the power to MAKE YOU A MIRACLE EVERY DAY!! A Display of His supernatural power!

a. In the way you work...

b. In the way you think

c. In the way you speak

d. In what you love and what you hate

e. In how radically powerfully you can change even the most core tendencies of your daily patterns and make them totally different

f. Christ has the power to hand you each moment and say, "My child, live supernaturally! Live like a miracle!"

B. You Are Called to Live a Supernatural Life!

1. Christ in us, the hope of glory

2. Called to be more than normal people

▪ Supernatural Character

▪ Supernatural Zeal in Service

▪ Supernatural Joy in Trials

▪ Supernatural Love for the Family of God

- Supernatural Love for Outsiders
- Supernatural Love for Enemies

## II. Supernatural Character

### A. It All Begins with the Heart

***Romans 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil***

### B. Supernatural Love

### C. A Matter of Hate

***Romans 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil***

## III. Supernatural Zeal in Service

***Romans 12:11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.***

### A. The Fire of God in the Soul

1. Zeal is like a fire that burns within your soul for the glory of God
2. Zeal is passion displayed outwardly in intensity of action with SINGLE MINDED FOCUS

### B. Cold-Hearted Service is No Service at All

***Cold prayers always freeze before they reach heaven.  
--Thomas Brooks***

So does cold hearted service to the Lord... He desires His servants to serve Him with zeal, with passion, with heart

### C. Laziness: The Plague of Wasted Opportunity

## IV. Supernatural Love for Christians

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

### A. The Supernatural Family of God

1. Upon being saved, we enter the worldwide family of God
2. This Family is Supernatural in Origin

- a. God is our eternal Father...we are His adopted children
- b. Christ is our Head and our Elder Brother

### 3. The Family is United by the Spirit and by Truth

#### B. A Key Mark of Regeneration: Love for Christians

#### C. The Work of the Spirit

#### D. Devotion, Honor, and Humility

##### 1. Brotherly devoted

- a. Some families characterized by feuding, alienation, estrangement
- b. Others are extremely close... totally committed to each other

##### 2. Africa: AIDS orphans

- a. One of the great tragedies of our time

There are more than 34 million orphans in sub-Saharan Africa today and some 11 million of them are orphaned by AIDS. Eight out of every 10 children in the world whose parents have died of AIDS live in sub-Saharan Africa. During the last decade, the proportion of children who are orphaned as a result of AIDS rose from 3.5% to 32% and will continue to increase exponentially as the disease spreads unchecked. As a result, the disease is in effect making orphans of a whole generation of children

These orphaned children are often cared for by older brothers or sisters long before they are able to provide for them

- b. aa

##### 3. Perhaps the best Biblical example of both is Joseph and his brothers

- a. Joseph was hated by his older brothers... they despised his special relationship with Jacob their father; they despised his special multi-colored coat; they despised the fact that he was the oldest son of Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife
- b. They wanted to murder him; instead they sold him as a slave into Egypt... there he suffered greatly and was in prison
- c. Yet through all of this, his heart was miraculously free of bitterness
- d. When the great famine struck Egypt, Jacob sent all his remaining sons except Benjamin. He spared Benjamin because he was the only son left of his beloved wife Rachel, who had died giving him birth

- e. Jacob concealed his identity from his brothers, and spoke harshly to them in disguise, but his real motive was to test their sincerity
- f. He forced them to bring his natural brother Benjamin to Egypt, and when he saw him, his heart overflowed with brotherly affection for him... it is one of the most moving stories in the Bible

***Genesis 43:29-30 As he looked about and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son, he asked, "Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." <sup>30</sup> Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there.***

- g. But then, he also extended his brotherly love to his guilty half-brothers as well

***Genesis 50:19-21 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. <sup>21</sup> So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.***

That is one of the most heroic statements in the entire Bible

It is also the best display of the brotherly love Paul commands of us here

- A theological love full of understanding of God's eternal purposes
- A gracious, Christ-like love full of mercy for sinners who hurt us badly
- A relational love full of gentle reassurance and kind speech
- A practical love that meets the needs of the brothers and cares for them in daily life

- h. THIS is the brotherly love Paul has in mind here

#### 4. Humility or glorious competition?

***<sup>NIV</sup> Romans 12:10 Honor one another above yourselves.***

***<sup>ESV</sup> Romans 12:10 Outdo one another in showing honor.***

- a. NIV emphasizes humility
- b. Prefer others ahead of yourself... think of them as better than you are, seek to meet their needs ahead of your own, think of issues from their points of view

- c. We see others as they will be eventually, and we see ourselves as we are now... they will someday be glorious and we are presently sinful

Illus. Pilgrim's Progress, Part 2: Christiana and Mercy at the Interpreter's House with Christiana's children;

**THEN SAID THE INTERPRETER AGAIN TO THE DAMSEL THAT WAITED UPON THESE WOMEN, "GO INTO THE VESTRY, AND FETCH OUT GARMENTS FOR THESE PEOPLE." SO SHE WENT, AND FETCHED OUT WHITE RAIMENT, AND LAID IT DOWN BEFORE HIM; SO HE COMMANDED THEM TO PUT IT ON. IT WAS FINE LINEN, WHITE AND CLEAN. WHEN THE WOMEN WERE THUS ADORNED, THEY SEEMED TO BE A TERROR ONE TO THE OTHER; FOR THAT THEY COULD NOT SEE THAT GLORY EACH ONE ON HERSELF WHICH THEY COULD SEE IN EACH OTHER. NOW THEREFORE, THEY BEGAN TO ESTEEM EACH OTHER BETTER THAN THEMSELVES; "FOR YOU ARE FAIRER THAN I AM," SAID ONE; "AND YOU ARE MORE COMELY THAN I AM," SAID ANOTHER. THE CHILDREN ALSO STOOD AMAZED TO SEE INTO WHAT FASHION THEY WERE BROUGHT.**

- d. Especially important in a church... which is the most complex and diverse organism in the world; different ages, different social backgrounds, different cultures, different genders, different needs, different expectations... a recipe for disaster if not for supernatural humility
- e. ESV emphasizes almost a holy competition in doing good
- i) Let's see who can serve the most

## V. Supernatural Joy in Trials

***Romans 12:12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.***

### A. The Most Bitter Lesson

Michael Card, "Maranatha": the word means "Come, Lord!" a song about the cry of an afflicted heart going through trials

"It's certain that waiting's the most bitter lesson, a believing heart has to learn."

1. God has ordained that we wait here on earth for our reunion with Him
2. In that time, we are to be faithfully advancing the Kingdom of God
3. We are also to be growing in grace internally

4. Both of those infinite journeys involve suffering and pain
5. HOW we suffer, what kind of attitude we have in the trial is huge
6. God is calling to a supernatural joy, a supernatural patience, a supernatural faithfulness

#### B. Joyful in Hope

1. Hope is a major theme in the Book of Romans... but the ordinary kind of hope
2. Natural hope is a common and feeble thing
  - a. Excited child: "I hope the ballgame doesn't get rained out!"
  - b. Unemployed person: "I hope I get the job I'm interviewing for"
  - c. A single person: "I hope I meet someone at church"
  - d. Nursing home: "I hope someone visits me today"

All are feeble because they are uncertain... many may not happen; we get used to disappointments

3. Biblical hope is different: a sure and certain blessing that is promised to believers based on the finished work of Christ

***Romans 8:23-25 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.***

4. The center of it all: that someday we will be in heaven with Christ, glorious, in resurrection bodies, free forever from all death, mourning, crying and pain
5. This is the bedrock foundation of JOY... it never moves because it is based on the purposes and promises of God... His omnipotence is under your joy
6. Note: our hope is founded on doctrine... the ELEVEN CHAPTERS of doctrine that Paul gave us in Romans 1-11... the eternal purposes of God in Christ, unshakeable because of the sovereignty of God

Now we see the value of eleven chapters of solid Christian doctrine

Some practical minded people want to skip the doctrine and get immediately to practical advice miss the root of the beautiful flowers of hope

***“Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus, to the church of Christ at Rome... Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Amen.” End of book!***

Cut flower hope will wilt... hope rooted and grounded in the promises of God will survive any trial

### C. Patient in Affliction

1. Longsuffering... not caving in and questioning; demanding from God an explanation for why you are suffering what you are
2. God sometimes drags us through the most horrendous circumstances imaginable and people are tempted to question God, to murmur against Him
3. They forget that God is the same one who will to crush His own Son and cause Him to suffer on the cross for us and for our salvation... He TORTURED HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON... His perfect Son in whom was all His delight... made Him scream in agony so that our sins could be atoned for
4. And we think God will not bring us through cancer or the death of a child or financial ruin or failure or unanswered prayer
5. Yet by His power He gives us a supernatural patience through the trial
6. I have seen this at work in our church... as several people with cancer have walked through that severe trial with unwavering trust in Christ
7. It was one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen in my life, and it strengthened my own hope
8. BUT it is supernatural... it cannot be faked or imitated... it comes directly from Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit

### D. Faithful in Prayer

George Mueller, the great prayer warrior said it well, when he said, "The great fault of the children of God is, they do not continue in prayer; they do not go on praying; they do not persevere!")

This is a man who had over 50,000 specific answers to prayer, but who also prayed for over fifty years for something without ever receiving it!!

1. How quick we are to stop praying when we don't get our way
2. How easy it is for us to get discouraged and faint in prayer and stop
3. Christ told parable after parable about prayer, teaching His disciples that they should always pray and never give up

#### 4. Yet He is the same God who will stretch our patience by making us wait and wait and wait and wait

A Parable:

A man was sleeping at night in his cabin when suddenly his room filled with light and the Savior appeared. The Lord told the man he had work for him to do, and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. The Lord explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might.

This the man did, day after day. For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all his might. Each night the man returned to his cabin sore, and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain.

Seeing that the man was showing signs of discouragement, the Adversary decided to enter the picture by placing thoughts into the man's weary mind: "You have been pushing against that rock for a long time, and it hasn't budged. Why kill yourself over this? You are never going to move it."

This gave the man the impression that the task was impossible and that he was a failure. These thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man. "Why kill myself over this?" he thought. "I'll just put in my time, giving just the minimum effort and that will be good enough."

And that is what he planned to do until one day he decided to make it a matter of prayer and take his troubled thoughts to the Lord. "Lord" he said, "I have labored long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing?"

The Lord responded compassionately, "My friend, when I asked you to serve me and you accepted, I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push. And now you come to me, with your strength spent, thinking that you have failed. But, is that really so? Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinewy and brown, your hands are callused from constant pressure, and your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have. Yet you haven't moved the rock. But your calling was to be obedient and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in My wisdom. This you have done. I, my friend, will now move the rock."

At times, when we hear a word from God, we tend to use our own intellect to decipher what He wants, when actually what God wants is just simple

obedience and faith in Him....By all means, exercise the faith that moves mountains, but know that it is still God who moves the mountains.

## VI. Supernatural Generosity

### *Romans 12:13*

#### A. The Most Bitter Lesson

## VII. Summary and Application

### A. Summary

1. God calls us to live a supernatural life by the power of the Holy Spirit
2. Unlike the mythical superheroes, this supernatural life is really to be lived
3. Unlike Buddhist monks, this supernatural life is fully engaged in the din and toil of everyday physical life, embracing the real world as it is... This supernatural life is to be lived out not in some remote Himalayan mountain temple but in the streets and workplaces and kitchens and airports and playing fields
4. Paul calls Christians to live out their supernatural lives in a variety of ways
  - a. Supernatural character: a genuine love for God and for the things of God and the people of God; a deep-seated passionate hatred for wickedness; a life of integrity that is consistent and not hypocritical; a character as otherworldly and supernatural as was Christ's perfect heart
  - b. Supernatural Zeal in Service: a burning passionate walk with Christ... delighted to serve Him, zealous in obedience... a fire as otherworldly and supernatural as the fire of Christ in the burning bush Moses saw
  - c. Supernatural Joy in Trials: a constant trust in Christ through trials... joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer... a steadfast joy based on the promises of God that can endure any trial; a joy in trials as otherworldly and supernatural as was the chariot of fire that swept Elijah up to heaven

Next week:

- d. Supernatural Love for the Family of God
- e. Supernatural Love for Outsiders
- f. Supernatural Love for Enemies

### B. Application

1. Assess yourself
2. Ask: Am I a supernatural being? Am I born again by the power of God into a supernatural life? Do I know Christ as Lord and Savior?
3. Ask again: Am I living this supernatural life?
  - a. Do I have a genuine love for God and the things of God? Or is it more fake and external... a show for friends and family
  - b. Do I genuinely hate the wickedness in the world by keeping myself from being polluted by it... or am I compromising by what I watch on TV, what I listen to in music, what I read, what I
  - c. Do I have a burning zeal for the Kingdom of God... or have I lapsed into coldness in my heart, and spiritual laziness... am I cold toward Christ and the things of His Kingdom

Cry out to God... work on your soul in prayer! Tell Him that your soul is cold, your heart is distant... let Him speak to you

John Piper: *When I Don't Desire God...* a book to help you rekindle your lost fire for Christ

- d. Have I let my trials afflict me so that I have complained against Christ, murmured against Him... OR ceased praying

Key diagnostic question: How is your joy in Christ today?

Lack of joy is to the soul what pain is to the body... evidence of sickness or injury

Allow the Spirit of God to find the chains that bind you... to cut them by His word and by your heartfelt repentance... and to lift you up to a supernatural life unlike any you have ever experienced before