

Christian Behavior: The Love For Others

Part 1

Hebrews 13:1-3

“Let brotherly love continue. 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. 3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.”

INTRODUCTION:

CIT: How is a Christian Supposed to Live Out His Faith Before Others?

I. He is to Live Out His Faith by Loving the Saved (vs. 1)—“Let brotherly love continue.”

A. The Greatest Characteristic of the Believer—Love

NOTE: Every point in our message tonight will deal with the believer’s faith being demonstrated in his love.

- His love for the believer
- His love for the lost
- His love for the afflicted

Love is the greatest characteristic that a believer should have on display—that evidences his faith.

James deals with this characteristic all through his 2nd chapter.

James 2:1-4—“My brethren, have not the *faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.* (Don’t call yourself a Christian—while at the same time favoring one kind of people over the other) 2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 3 and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 4 are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?”(when you show favor to the rich—and treat the poor with disgrace—just because he is poor—then you are demonstrating an evil heart of unbelief)(It is inconsistent with the claim of faith that you say you have)

- James later points out that one who shows respect unto persons—showing favor to the rich—and despising the poor—becomes a transgressor of the Law.
- And the law that he has broken is the “*thou shalt not kill*” law. He is guilty of murder before God.
- The point that James is making is that those who claim to belong to Christ will not be characterized as murderers.
- They will be characterized by a love for all men—**just like our Lord.**

James 2:14-17—“*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?*”

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

- Again, using the example of love—James points out that with a genuine faith in the Lord—**there will come with it works**. And one the **works that will accompany genuine faith is that of loving those who are afflicted** (those in need).
- And if love for the needy is continually lacking—then the profession of faith that that person is making is a dead profession.
- They are claiming something that is not theirs.

(Love is to be what characterizes the believer)

Jesus said in John 13:35, “*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*”

1 John 3:14-15—“*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*”

ILLUSTRATION: One man continually tried to convince me that he greatly loved God and the people of

God. Yet when I challenged him about serving others in the church (and with them)—the answer he continually gave me was, “I’m too tired. I work a long week. And I need my own personal time.”

He was telling me he loved the brethren. But in action—there was no love.

QUESTION: *What is love?*

1 John 3:16-18—“*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*”

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” (telling people that you love them—with no action that follows—is not the kind of love that characterizes the believer).

- Paul describes “love” as well
- But the answer he gives—is not a short definition of “love”
- He lays out *not what love is*
- But what *love does* and what *it doesn’t do*
- How it behaves itself toward others

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a—

- “*Charity suffereth long (it demonstrates patience with others),*

- *and is kind (demonstrated by acts of kindness);*
- *charity envieth not (it isn't jealous of others);*
- *charity vaunteth not itself (it's not braggadocios towards others),*
- *is not puffed up (it's not arrogant with others),*
- *5 doth not behave itself unseemly (it's not rude or unbecoming before others),*
- *seeketh not her own (it's not selfish),*
- *is not easily provoked (it doesn't explode with anger upon others),*
- *thinketh no evil (it doesn't hold accounts of peoples' wrongs—it forgives others);*
- *6 rejoiceth not in iniquity (it doesn't find joy when others mess up),*
- *but rejoiceth in the truth (it finds joy in what is right—especially when it is manifested in others);*
- *7 beareth all things (it is concerned with protecting and shielding others),*
- *believeth all things (it believes the best about others—not cynical),*
- *hopeth all things (it refuses to accept defeat for others),*
- *endureth all things (it is willing to accept all things that come (hardships)—while bearing, believing and hoping for others)*
- *Charity never faileth (Love never stops loving) ”*

The greatest characteristic of the believer is that they love

B. The Specific Kind of Love (vs. 1)—“*Let brotherly love continue.*”

1. Brotherly Love

a. What is brotherly love?

i. The Greek word is *Philadelphia*

- It comes from 2 different words

○ *Philos*

- Tender affection

○ *Adelphos*

- Brother
- Near kinsman

ii. This word can have 2 different applications

- It can refer to a family type of love (or national)
 - Which for the Jews—would look like a tender affection for fellow Jews
 - A family type of love for those who are connected to the “seed of Abraham”

- Paul described this kind of family love that he had for fellow Jews

Romans 9:1-4—“*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, 2 that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: 4 who are Israelites*”

- Paul also said that the last days would be characterized by people being “*without natural affection*”
 - Parents not loving their children
 - Children not loving their parents
 - Both of which are natural affections
 - Natural loves
- But the context of the passage demands that it is not talking about *family love* or even *national love*
- It is dealing within the context of love for the people of God

- When a person gets saved—they enter into a new type of family
 - Not just a physical family
 - But a spiritual family
 - The family of God
 - And it’s not just the church—or people in the church
 - All those who are genuinely saved are connected into this life with one another
 - All those who are connected to the life of Christ—are connected one to another

1 John 1:1-3—“*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the **Word of life**; 2 (for the **life** was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal **life**, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, **that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.**” (the life of Jesus Christ connects believers one to another—in a fellowship)*

- And in most cases that connectedness is even closer than the connectedness of natural family
- Why?
 - Because of the division that comes for believing in Christ
 - Jesus described what would often happen to those who believe in Him

Matthew 10:34-36—“*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.*”

Matthew 10:21-22—“*And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake*”

NOTE: These passages remind us of some of the things that these Hebrews were already going through for their faith in Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 10:32-34—“*ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock*

both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods ”

- The natural affection for fellow Jews—was probably greatly lessened just because of the hardship they were now facing
- But they were connected to a new family
 - A family not based on pedigree or lineage
 - But a family based on the life of Christ that had been placed in them

b. The brotherly love is Christian love

i. The natural love for fellow believers

C. A Natural Kind of Love (vs. 1)—“*Let brotherly love continue.*”

1. Notice that Paul doesn’t tell them that they are to let this brotherly love *start*

a. NO!

- b.** He tells them that they are to let it continue
- c.** If it is to continue—that means it is already happening
- d.** Why would it already be happening?
- e.** Because it is a natural type of love

2. The nature of natural

a. I don't mean that it is natural for anyone to love Christians—in that family type of way

- i.** We have already seen in the Scriptures how the lost respond to the saved
- ii.** And it's not with love

b. This is a love that comes naturally to the believer

- i.** Because of the common life they have in Christ
- ii.** It is not necessarily because they go to the same church
- iii.** It is because they have the same life living in them

- Which means they have the same desires for righteousness
- The same hatred for sinfulness

- The same hunger for God's Word
- The same love for obedience
- The same frustration with disobedience
- The same love for God and His Son Jesus Christ
- The same craving to know God at a more intimate level

ILLUSTRATION: When I got saved

- The connection I had instantly with fellow believers
- Spending lots of time with them
- And the further distanced I felt with my personal family
 - Because they did not receive what I had received
 - I had a new family that began to be closer than my biological family
 - And it wasn't that I desired that to be so
 - It broke my heart to see how distanced my family became from me—because of my faith in Christ
 - And I wanted desperately to see them come into the same life that I had come into—the life of Christ
- iv.** That's why when believers come together that there should be this family-type of love

- v. And when it's absent—it points out that there is really something wrong with the people
- vi. And that's what Paul warns about here

D. Guard Against the Destruction of Brotherly Love (vs. 1)—“*Let brotherly love continue.*”

1. There are things that can destroy brotherly love
 - a. The biggest one—is SIN
 - i. Sin is the most destructive thing in the world
 - ii. And it's what will divide and destroy the brotherly love that should be manifested in the church

ILLUSTRATION:

- **The Corinthian Church**
 - **It was the most messed up church found in the Bible**
 - **It was a church that was completely divided**
 - **Divided over the “rich and the poor”**
 - **Divided over the “roles of men and women”**
 - **Divided over “Spiritual gifts”**
 - **Divided over “Spiritual leaders”**

- **Divided over beliefs about the resurrection**
- **Divided over sinful behaviors in the church**

- **The reason why they were so divided—was because they allowed a little sin in—a *little leaven*—and it leavened the whole lump**
- **They allowed sin to make its way into the church—make its way into the life of believers—and it destroyed the love that they naturally had for one another**

b. Being too distracted—can damage that love relationship

- i. When God's people don't make coming together important—then that love relationship will begin to dwindle
- ii. When serving Christ together is not important enough for them to do it—that love relationship will start to fade

NOTE: Try doing that in your own family.

- Don't spend much time at home—and see how it affects that love for one another
- Be out more than you are in—and see if that love grows or begins to wane
- And when you do finally show up—don't pour yourself into each other's lives
- Just be a quiet observer
- See if your love for each other will grow

Hebrews 10:24-25—“*let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*”

- **You can't help each other grow—if you won't be a part of each other's lives spiritually**

ILLUSTRATION:

- **The First Church at Jerusalem**

Acts 2:41-47—“*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*”

- **Everything about that church—pointed to its connectedness to one another**
- **They were divided**
- **They were trying to live out their own private Christianity**

- **It wasn't about pursuing their own life's goals**
- **It was about keeping the family connection strong within the church**
- **And it was a daily thing—not just once a week**

- **There was this unbroken connection that they had with each other**

(vs. 1)—“*Let brotherly love continue.*”

c. Divided over truth—can destroy brotherly love

- i. Some people can get frustrated and mad with each other—over doctrinal differences
- ii. Though that can be an issue—it's not common

2. We need to fight for “*brotherly love*” to continue

- a. Deal with sin in our own lives
- b. Come alongside those in the church who are struggling with areas in their life—and pick them up

Galatians 6:1—“*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness*”

- i. Don't just allow fear to keep you from truly loving someone

- ii.** Jesus said that when we confront sin in the church—and if the brother hears—YOU HAVE GAINED YOUR BROTHER
- iii.** In other words—that fellowship has been restored

c. Strive to make coming together important

- i.** Don't make it 2nd class to everything else
- ii.** This is important
- iii.** Fight for the fellowship

d. And when you do come together—don't come so drained spiritually that you can't be of any help to the rest

- i.** Come prepared to minister to one another spiritually
 - Spend some time before God—before you show up to the church
 - Be in the Word of God on a regular basis
 - Pray for one another
- ii.** Don't be so filled with the garbage of the world—that when you show up—that all gets spewed out on everyone else

- ii.** Take prayer requests—share prayer requests with one another
- iii.** Exhort one another
- iv.** Challenge one another
- v.** Spend time encouraging one another
- vi.** Share in your experiences

E. Why Is It Important That We Fight to Keep that Brotherly Love Intact?

1. It's not good that we "go" alone

a. From the very beginning of the world—God made man to be relational

i. He said that it is not good that man should be alone

b. And what God provides in the "fellowship of the believers" is the strength and the help to not do it alone

c. Those Hebrews who had believed in Christ needed fellow believers to come along with them

- i.** They had lost family
- ii.** They had lost their social standing
- iii.** They had lost jobs
- iv.** They had lost friends
- v.** Some even lost homes

d. There was a need for someone to come alongside and help them live out their new found faith

2. God works in the midst of unified believers

a. God doesn't work in a church that is divided or lacking natural love—like He would in a church that is clearly manifesting the love that they are supposed to be showing

b. The first church—it says that God added to that church daily such as should be saved

i. People were flocking to the church in a radical way—because of the love and fellowship of that church

ii. You know what will keep people out of the church—it is when they see that you are no different than they are

- That you have no love for the people
- Or the love that should be manifest isn't being put on display like it's supposed to be

CONCLUSION:

ILLUSTRATION:

Ralph Shortey Falling Away

II. He is the Live Out His Faith by Loving the Lost (vs. 2)—*“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”*

III. He is the Live Out His Faith by Loving the Afflicted (vs. 3)—*“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.”*