

**Text:** Hebrews 13:1

**Title:** The Brotherly Love Must Continue

**Truth:** Love for God and **Others** should be our controlling moral principle.

**Date/Location:** Lord's Table Service, Sunday

## Hymns

186 And Can It Be – verses 1,2,3,5

130 – When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

708 – Jesus Loves Me! – verses 1, 2, 3

709 – Praise Him, All Ye Little Children

390 – Love Lifted Me

## Introduction

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to **love one another**.

### I. The Command to Love Inherent in Christianity

Must / let is a command. Love and Christianity go together like bread and butter, or maybe I should say like bread and bread.

We are talking about affection for fellow Christians.

That quality must continue to exist. It has to continue on. It is to be permanent.

It is not automatic. You might have had it at one time, but it is not self-sustaining. You might subsequently have lost it. Maybe the Ephesian church's "loss of their first love" also refers to their loss of love for each other (Rev. 2:4). We understand this to refer to their loss of love for Jesus Christ--but what do you think shortly follows when that love dries up? Love for neighbor and everything else, most probably.

John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**; as I have loved you, that you also **love one another**." By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love for one another**.

John 15:12 "This is My commandment, that you **love one another** as I have loved you.

John 15:17 "These things I command you, that you **love one another**.

Romans 13:8 Owe no one anything except to **love one another**, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

- 1 Thessalonians 4:9 But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to **love one another**;
- 1 Peter 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere **love of the brethren, love one another** fervently with a pure heart,
- 1 John 3:11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should **love one another**,
- 1 John 3:23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and **love one another**, as He gave us commandment.
- 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us **love one another**, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
- 1 John 4:12 No one has seen God at any time. If we **love one another**, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.
- 2 John 1:5 And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we **love one another**.
- Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 'This is the first and great commandment. 39 'And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 'On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

## II. The Need for Love Illustrated in Our Church

1. Naomi, the pastor's wife, is standing next to person A. B comes along, says hi to Naomi, but not to A. A takes notice, and is hurt.
2. Person A brings child B to church. People greet child B but say nothing to A. A takes notice.
3. Lady A says hello to Lady B. B does not respond. Lady A says hello again. No response. Hmmm.

If we do not say "Hello," I doubt we love that person. Would we do anything else for that person? Could we love that person the way we should in this state?

We say we are a caring church, but that characteristic can wax and wane. We need to make sure it waxes strong!

Why am I handling the need this way, that is, by preaching at a Lord's Table service? There have been quite a number of occurrences of this in our church in the past months. Not just a single individual is to blame. I have not personally been affected. But this greatly affects the testimony of our church to outsiders. If we hope to grow in terms of people coming, we have to make sure we deal with this kind of problem. When we come to church, we should be seeing what we can do to serve others, not to be served.

### **III. The Balance**

I want to avoid legitimizing the over-sensitive type of person who takes everything "personally." That is self-centeredness. Sometimes, you just need to stop taking things the wrong way, or take them the way they were meant to be taken. Think no evil of the person that supposedly wronged you. In other words, do not be resentful against them (1 Cor. 13:5). That is love, not thinking "he must not like me and he is a bad person and that's terrible and ..."

After all, in some cases there is an easy explanation: you did not speak up enough to be heard. Some in our church family who have reached a certain level of maturity (hah!) have hearing problems and they cannot hear unless you are loud and clear.

But, on the other side of the balance, I am also trying to get the point across to our hearts that people do notice snubs like a simple lack of greeting, and that we cannot continue to bumble around in our insensitive selfishness and lack of love and do this kind of stuff.

Society behaves this way, it is true. But we should be different than society. We teach our kids (or try to teach them) that they ought to be courteous to others, and our kids teach our grandkids those values. But do we forget the most basic of courtesies ourselves—those our kids or grandkids are learning?

Have you behaved this way on purpose? You need to apologize. On accident? Apologize.

### **IV. Elevating the Need**

Now, elevate the need in our church to more than common decency. Elevate it to the level of "brotherly love," not just common human courteousness. (Where does the latter come from, anyway?)

Recognize that people are more important than yourself, and so you should greet them nicely. You should love them. They are not to be looked down

upon, either in our minds or in our practice. After all, they usually are more important than you (!), and even if they really aren't, then the Bible still tells us to regard others as more important than ourselves – Philippians 2:3 says “count others more significant than yourselves). Humility factors in here.

## **V. Reminding of Application – You Personally, Not Everyone else**

You might be sitting there thinking, “Yeah, pastor doesn't practice what he preaches. I remember a time when...” You know, that may well be true. While I strive to practice what I preach, I cannot possibly practice everything I have preached because I have preached through most of the Bible, and the Bible's standard is perfect, but I am still a sinner. If I do a wrong, you may feel free to speak to me about it.

But if all your focus is on how person X or Y has not followed through with this stuff and is a hypocrite, then guess what? You have missed the whole point of what I am saying. What you are doing is easy—we are all naturally masters at criticizing others and finding their faults. You have taken the text, and turned it against other people instead of applying it to yourself. Applying it to yourself is a much harder task, but one that I am asking all of us to do this morning.

Toward whom do you find it hard to fulfill this Philadelphia? Anyone you cannot stand or think you could never talk to or whatever?

So...look for someone who needs a greeting, a word of encouragement, someone to sit next to the them in potluck. (If there is one family or individual sitting by themselves, shame on us—they could go home and do that!)

## **Conclusion**

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