

Let Brotherly Love Continue

Hebrews 13:1-8

One of the great calls to the church is not just sustaining but expanding one's love for your brothers and your love as a brother or sister in Christ in a world that is increasingly critical, intolerant, suspicious, and shrinking in its love for others. In our sermon text this morning as we continue in our study on the biblical doctrine of love, the writer to the Hebrews writes "Let brotherly love continue."

Regularly, the Scriptures call Christians not simply to continue in brotherly love but to increase brotherly love.

Listen to the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:9,10 – *"Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. **But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more.**"*

Listen to Peter in **1 Peter 1:22-23**,

"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;"

The question that needs to be asked of every Christian is this: "Am I living in such a way to extend and expand brotherly love?" Do I understand that the continuation and expansion of brotherly love demands intentionality?

Francis Schaeffer wrote: "Through the centuries men have displayed many different symbols to show that they are Christians. They have worn marks in the lapels of their coats, hung chains about their necks, even had special haircuts... But there is a much better sign. . . . It is a universal mark that is to last through all ages of the church until Jesus comes back."

He also wrote, "Evangelism is a calling, but not the first calling. Building congregations is a calling, but not the first calling. A Christian's first call is to . . . return to the first commandment to love God, to love the brotherhood, and then to love one's neighbor as himself."

How do you live in such a way that instead of your love shriveling through life's experience as a believer your love is continually and intentionally expanding?

I. Pursue Hospitality: Foster an ever-expansive view of brotherly love.
Expand your brotherly love network. (Hebrews 13:2)

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” (Hebrews 13:2)

Hospitality means to love the foreigner or stranger.

Christians are not to be xenophobic – fearing strangers. Christians are to be philoxenic- showing love to strangers.

The writer says you may even be entertaining angels unaware.

Richard Phillips: “The point is that there may be more to the people we meet than meets the eye. It is possible that when you sit in church, the person next to you will really be an angel, but he or she is likely something even more wonderful. There beside you in the pews is probably a saint of God in light. Across the room are those destined to serve as priests and kings in the very presence of the living God, who are now being prepared for their glorious raiment. To meet an angel might be wonderful, but in the church are those whom angels are ‘sent out to serve’ and ‘who are to inherit salvation’ (Heb. 1:14). There is a work going on in their lives that angels wonder at and rejoice to see.”

Showing hospitality to strangers is the means by which we not only build relationships but build the kingdom of God.

Live with a view to continually and expanding the circle of your friendships from those you know to those that you don’t.

Expanding our brotherly love displays the coming kingdom where brotherly love will uniformly fill the earth with people who have great ethnic distinctions but share one thing in common : a deep love for the truest of brothers, our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Be Intentionally Merciful: Cultivate an increasingly compassionate heart of mercy for the forgotten and the suffering. See the suffering and move towards them.

“Remember those who are in prison as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated since you are in one body.” (Hebrews 13:3)

That word “remember” is important here.

Again to quote **Richard Phillips**: “the difficulty is that we forget to love other people, probably because we are too wrapped up in ourselves.”

Remembering such people demands intentionality.

- **Remembering such people makes the act of remembering isolated people a priority.**
The call here is not to simply hope that you will remember them when they are brought to mind but to take the responsibility for remembering them on your own shoulders. In other words, make sure you remember them.
- **Remembering them requires the prayerful act of developing sympathy.** Feel their pain, the writer says, “As though in prison with them.”

How?

- **Communicate directly and regularly.** That’s what Paul’s letter was about. Letters and people went directly. This is what we need in our missions’ heart.
- Read biographies that cultivate a deeper awareness of the struggles that suffering Christians face.
- Pray habitually for those who are often forgotten as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Show up personally. The more directly you can see and minister to those who are hurting, the more likely you are going to remember them.

How intentional are you in cultivating a heart of compassion for suffering brothers and sisters in Christ?

III. Treasure Purity: Foster a passionate commitment to protect your marriage and the marriages of others from sexual sin. (Hebrews 13:4)

“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.” (Hebrews 13:4)

Don’t prey upon people. Protect people and marriages.

So, how do you that?

- **Attitude – Marriage is to be held in honor among all.** This is a view of marriage that we universally agree on and affirm. Marriage is the union of one man and one woman under Christ to love and to honor each other until death do us part. Marriage is

God-given and God-ordained and is one of God's means for modeling how Christ loves the church.

- **Activity - Protect the marriage bed.** This simply means that we as believers are to remain sexually pure before marriage. We are meant to remain sexually pure within marriage.
- **Awe - Fear God – “For God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”** There should be a holy and reverent trembling around one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

- 1 **Corinthians 6:9-11** - “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

IV. Foster True Financial Freedom: Learn to trust God more and more with your finances.

“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So, we can confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me.’” (13:5)

- **Contentment: Cultivate financial freedom through contentment in Christ.**

“But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.” 1 Timothy 6:6-10

- **Confidence: Cultivate financial freedom through confidence in Christ.**

“Behold, God is my helper;
the Lord is the upholder of my life.” – Psalm 54:4

V. Gospel Fidelity – Focus on being faithful to the Word of God which will fuel a faithfulness to the God of the Word, Jesus Christ, the perfect example of eternally expansive love.

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.”

Let the unchanging message of an unchanging Savior transform your heart and your life with His expansive.

- **Meditation:** “Remember those *who spoke the Word of God to you.*”

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13

- **Imitation:** “Consider the outcome of their lives and imitate their faith”

- **Adoration:** “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever.”

Good biblical teaching and good biblical living point to the One whose love endures forever.

Jesus' love is expansive. His love for his brethren led him to take on our humanity. His love for his brethren took him to the cross. His love for the brethren led Jesus to rise to be our high priest who intercedes for us forever.