

BROTHERLY LOVE

Sunday Morning: July 14, 2002

Text: Hebrews 13:1 "Let **brotherly love continue** [μενω, present active imperative]."

Hebrews 13:1-5 "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. 4. Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. 5. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

We have an exhortation in verse one. The translation of the verb in this verse does not emphasize its intensity. The verb is in the present tense and it is an imperative or a command. Brotherly love needs to continue so that our love for the brethren will be evident. Not to the lost but to the brethren, especially those that are in bonds in verse three. "Remember them that are in bonds." Those who are in trouble. Paul was one who was in trouble because he was a brother that was preaching a message that brethren enjoy listening to. "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." In other words, when we have a tooth ache, the whole body knows about it and suffers with that tooth until it has been repaired. We need to relate to each other so that when one hurts, the others can respond in help to that individual. When one hurts, how many should feel it? All! That is what brotherly love is emphasizing in this passage.

DWELL IN BROTHERLY LOVE

John 1:38 "Then **Jesus** turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, **Rabbi**, . . . where **dwestest** [μενω, present active, abideth] thou?"

The verb **continue** carries the idea that is found in John 1:38. They asked in "Where dwellest thou?" "Where do you live?" "Where do you abide or continue?" When we are practicing brotherly love we are to be dwelling or living there. The word **continue** and the word **dwestest** are the same Greek word. Brotherly love is a place where we be living our daily life being concerned the living conditions of other brethren.

We need to define who a brother is. I am not persuaded that every child of God is a brother. I hope to make that distinction clear by looking at the following verses.

A BROTHER

Matthew 12:50 "For whosoever shall **do the will of my Father** which is in heaven, the same is my **brother**, and sister, and mother."

A brother is one who is interested in and has a desire to doing the will of the Father.

WHO WILL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM

Matthew 7:21 "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall **enter into the kingdom of heaven**; but he that **doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven."

A brother is one who desires to do more than just see the kingdom of heaven, but to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. There are many in the family of God that are satisfied with just being saved. They are not interested in ruling and reigning with Christ. They are glad that they are going to escape the lake of fire and that is good enough for them. A brother wants more than just being saved.

THEY HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Luke 8:21 "And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which **hear the word of God, and do it.**"

Brethren are those who hear the Word of God. The word **hear** is in the present tense. The word **do** is also in the present tense. What is significant is what they hear and what they do with what they hear. It is the **word of God**. The "Word of God" is not all of the Bible. The Bible is referred to as scripture where "Word of God" is a smaller part of the scripture. 2 Timothy 3:16 "All **scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" The "Word of God" is different. It is defined as "the seed."

MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM

Luke 8:11 "Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God.**"

Luke 8 deals with the parable of the sower. The parable of the sower is a message pertaining to the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

SEED

Luke 8:10 "And he said, Unto you it is given to know the **mysteries of the kingdom of God**: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."

Brethren are those who love the *Word of God*. They love to hear the message of the kingdom and the hope of glory that is given in that message. They not only hear the Word of God which pertains to the mysteries of the Kingdom of God but they are eager to obey it. They find out what the will of the Father is and they do it. These are brethren.

1 Thessalonians 1:4 "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." This passage gives further insight as to who are brethren. They are *beloved* and they are *elect*.

WHY BROTHERLY LOVE?

Hebrews 13:1 "Let **brotherly love continue.**"

Why those that are seeking to enter into the kingdom need to continue in brotherly love? They need this care from other brethren because others in the family tend to reject and exclude you. They do not want you around. I am reminded of how Joseph's brother hated him because he had a dream of one day ruling over them.

OBEYING THE TRUTH

1 Peter 1:21-23 "Who by **him** (Jesus Christ) do believe in God, that raised **him** up from the dead, and **gave him glory**; that your **faith** and **hope** might be in God. 22. Seeing ye have **purified your souls** [lives] in **obeying the truth** through the Spirit unto unfeigned [without hypocrisy, sincerely] **love of the brethren**, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23. Being **born** [begotten] **again**, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever."

Our lives are purified in obeying the truth. The word **truth** has the definite article **the** before it and I believe it is a reference to the **Word of God**. When we **do** the *Word of God* we are going to have a sincere love for the brethren.

The corruptible seed is, I believe, a reference to the traditions of the fathers found in the law. Colossians 2:20-22 "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21. (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22. Which all are [ei], leading to] to **perish** [corruption] with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men (more than what was given in the Law of Moses)?" Galatians 4:23 "But he (Ishmael, a type of the Law) who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; . ." Galatians 6:8 "For he that soweth to his flesh (law) shall of the flesh (law) reap **corruption**; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

The incorruptible seed is the *Word of God*. The incorruptible seed is the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens that will produce a life of honor and glory during the kingdom age.

The love of the brethren encourages holy living. It requires **obeying the truth** found in the **Word of God**. Associated with the love of the brethren is the hope. 1 Peter 1:3-4 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath **begotten** [again, verse 23] **us again** unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you," by faith, that continues, verse 5.

HIS COMMANDMENT

1 John 4:20-21 "If a man say, **I love God**, and **hateth his brother**, he is a **liar**: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath **seen**, how can he love God whom he hath **not seen**? 21. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."

The moral law has not been done away with. This commandment to love your brother was given to us from the Lord and it has been added to the moral law. John gives us a way for us to test our love for God. Our love of God, whom we can not see, is based upon our love for the brethren who we can see. To say that we love God and mistreat our brother makes us a liar.

BRETHREN IN TRIAL

Hebrews 11:36-38 "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38. (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

Those who experienced these difficulty are those who were pleasing God. Because they were pleasing God, I identify them as brethren.

The test of brotherly love is not how we feel and treat a brother who is living without stress and not struggling because of trouble in his life. It is easy to love a brother who does not require our attention and ministry. Where the test comes is how we respond to a brother that is under the stress of Hebrews 11:36-38. Verses 36-38 describe conditions that are not very desirable. If we loved and ministered to these brethren it might cause us to be mocked scourged. To be identified with these brethren might mean imprisonment for us. Who wants to be killed with a sword. Who wants to have a goatskin suit or be destitute, afflicted or tormented. For us to love the brethren it could cost us dearly.

NOT ASHAMED OF PAUL

2 Timothy 1:15-18 "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes."

Was Paul a popular servant of God? NO! All Asia had turn away from Paul. Can you imagine that those you have discipled and spent many hours helping them to grow in the *Word of God* just turn away from you in rejection. That could cause one to quit and do something else.

16. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he **oft refreshed me**, and was **not ashamed of my chain**:

Onesiphorus is a prim example of a brother loving another brother, Paul. Onesiphorus probably knew that ministering to Paul might mean that he could be charged with the same offence then be incarcerated himself. Onesiphorus knew Paul might need a bar of soap or clean clothes. Onesiphorus was not shamed of Paul nor the fact that Paul was in prison. Onesiphorus

demonstrated brotherly love and we need to practice this as well.

17. But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

Onesiphorus ministry to Paul was not by chance. He was diligently sought and found Paul. His love and ministry to Paul was on purpose.

18. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well."

The expression "In that day" is, I believe, a reference to the judgment seat of Christ. It is at the judgment seat of Christ that we will need mercy. Onesiphorus ministered unto Paul, not only at Ephesus but at Roman as well. Here was a man that was not afraid to suffer with Paul.

Onesiphorus did not talk about how much he loved Paul. He made no comments about how he loved to hear Paul preach and teach. Onesiphorus love the Lord and was obedient to the commandment to love the brethren.

LOVE IN DEED AND TRUTH

1 John 3:17-18 "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.**"

If you have the means to help a brother whom you can see and you don't, how can you say that you love God whom you can't see. Telling a suffering brother that you love him with the tongue and not ministering to him by the hand and from the pocket, you lack bowels of compassion. Deeds and truth are missing.

GOD GAVE!

John 3:16 "For **God** so **loved** the world, that **he gave** . . ."

This is a classic example of what love will do. God loved and he gave. When God gave His Son that was a deed that only God could do, so he gave, knowing in truth that the need was great. God did not just talk about the need, but knew the need and responded to that need in the deed of giving His Son.

PREFERRING ONE ANOTHER

Romans 12:10 "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;"

Brotherly love is demonstrated when we give preference to a brother, giving him the honor of being first and we accept being next or last.

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

1 John 2:9-11 "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

I think I should insert the fact that the words *hate* and *love* are really relative terms. They also carry the thought of preference. Luke 14:26 "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;" In Luke 14:26 we are told to hate our wives, yet in Ephesians 5:25 we are told to love our wives. It is easy to see that we are to prefer the Lord over any in our family. The word hate carries with it a very harsh thought as in the case of Cain and Abel.

In 1 John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, . . ." we see that we need to walk in the light of His word to have fellowship with the Lord. If we hate our brother it is impossible for us to have fellowship with the Lord.

10. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

Verse 10 is clear that if we love our brother we are going to abide in the light and we will be less likely to stumble and fall. The word **abide** is also translated *continue*, *dwell*, and *endure*. Loving our brother will encourage us to stay faithful to the *Word of God* which is the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens.

11. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."

Walking in darkness because our attitude toward another brother can cause us to go astray. Paul prayed for those in Ephesians 1:18 "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," If we are not kindly affectioned one to another the eyes of our understanding or heart will be darkened leading to blindness so that we may lose sight of the hope of His calling and inheritance.

RELATIONSHIP OF BRETHERN

1 **John 3:11-19** "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous [just].

The Lord has given us an example of brethren, in type, in the story of Cain and Abel. Cain and Abel should have loved each other as brethren, but Cain was Jealous because the Lord had respect unto Abel's offering. Genesis 4:4 "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:" That jealousy produced a bitter spirit in Cain that continued until he killed Abel.

HATRED

13. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world **hate** [present active indicative] you. 14. We know that we have passed from **death** [qanato] unto [the] **life** [agelasting life in verse 15], because we **love** [present active indicative] the **brethren**. He that **loveth** [present active indicative] not his brother abideth [present active indicative] in death. 15. Whosoever **hateth** [present active indicative] his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath **eternal** [agelasting] **life** abiding in him.

I am persuaded that thanatos death in verse 14 is not a reference to being dead, nekro", in trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2:1; but a reference to loss of life in the coming kingdom of the heavens. The word **perish** is a reference to this death. Only saved people have a life to save and if we perish the life of our own we will lose the life that we desire. The word *life* is defined as agelasting life in verse 15. Loving and ministering to brethren will give us the assurance that we are not losing the life of honor and glory in His coming kingdom that we desire. If we hate our brother who is striving to enter into the kingdom of Heaven we will perish and enter into **qanato**" death and loss of **the life** in the kingdom. To perish is to be denied positions of honor and glory in the coming kingdom.

INDIFFERENCE

16. 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?

When you ignore a brother's needs you have become indifferent. This verse is call us to task if we turn from a brother in need. If we have compassion for a brother it is going to cost us time and money. If we do not have the money, we can spend time with him to encourage him.

COMPASSION

18. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 19. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

When we are ministering to the brethren we are establishing our hearts in the truth. Through ministry to a brother in need we are assuring our hearts before the Lord.

MINISTERING TO THE LORD

Matthew 25:34-40 "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, **Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35. For I was an **hungered**, and ye gave me meat: I was **thirsty**, and ye gave me drink: I was a **stranger**, and ye took me in:

36. **Naked**, and ye clothed me: I was **sick**, and ye visited me: I was in **prison**, and ye came unto me.

37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, **Lord, when saw we thee** an hungered, and **fed thee?** or thirsty, and **gave thee drink?**

38. When saw we thee a stranger, and **took thee in?** or naked, and **clothed thee?**

39. Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and **came unto thee?**

40. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, **Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.**"

How do we know when we are ministering to a brother? I believe this passage in Matthew 25 is the best example.

When you are ministering unto the brethren you are ministering to the King, the Lord Jesus Christ. When you go to see a brother or sister that is sick, who are you going to see? You are visiting some one need, but you are doing it unto the Lord. I assure you that I told you that Jesus Christ would be down on the corner at 1 pm today, where would we be at 1 pm? I would want to be with him and minister to Him in any way that I could.

The phrase "The least of these my brethren" were listed in that last part of Hebrews eleven.

INCREASE IN LOVE

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 ". . . as touching brotherly love . . . we beseech you, **brethren**, that ye **increase** more and more;"

What the verse tells us that we never do love and minister to the brethren enough. You can always find ways to encourage a brother in Christ. If we increase in brotherly love, what are we doing for ourselves? We are adding to our ability to be fruitful in the deeper knowledge of the Word of God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

FRUITFUL IN THE KNOWLEDGE

2 Peter 1:5-8 "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6. And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7. And to godliness **brotherly kindness** [love]; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that **ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge** [epignwsiv, deeper knowledge]of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Notice that we are adding to **faith** in this verse. What this means that I am behaving my self in that I am obedient. The just live by faith. If we are adding to faith that means we are pleasing God before we able to add to our faith the attributes found in verses 5, 6, and 7. We add to faith moral excellence. To moral excellence, knowledge and self control. We are to add endurance and a godly point of view. We also need to add brotherly love, the same word in Hebrews 13:1. The last thing that we add is love and that is what makes faith work. Galatians 5:6 ". . . faith which worketh by love." Faith will not work without love. If we have faith and not love we will accomplish nothing. If we love the brethren we are going to demonstrate these characteristics of love in our lives. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

These things must be in us if we expect to be fruitful in the deeper knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This deeper knowledge pertains to the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens. For us to grow in the this knowledge we must have a love for and a desire to minister to those who are of like mind, that is, a desire to enter into the age-lasting kingdom of the heavens.

IF YE DO THESE THINGS

2 Peter 1:10-11 "Wherefore the rather, **brethren**, give diligence to make your **calling** and **election sure**: for if ye **do these things**, ye shall **never fall** [stumble]:

Notice that he is addressing brethren. Notice that he is encouraging the brethren to do the things in verse 5, 6, and 7. If you do these things you will not fall. A better translation is stumble. Just remember that those who stumble are walking in darkness. 1 John 2:10 "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." Those who are walking in the light are having fellowship with the Lord and their deeds will please the Lord.

11. For so an **entrance** shall be ministered unto you **abundantly** into the **everlasting kingdom** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The word **everlasting** is the adjective derived from the noun **age**. By making our calling and election sure by ministering to the brethren will assure us an abundant entrance into the millennial kingdom of our Lord. Every child of God that has been called and chosen is going to want to rule and reign with Christ. It is not a sure thing. Those who stumble will be disqualified to enter into the kingdom of the heavens because they did not do the will of the Father. Part of the will of the Father is to minister to the brethren.

WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN

Hebrews 6:10 "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, **in that ye have ministered to the saints**, and do minister."

This verse tells us that God is not going to forget anything that you do for a brother. God knows that you are ministering to His Son when you minister to the saints.

This is just a side note. Acts 13:1-2 "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and **teachers**; as Barnabas, . . . and Saul. 2. As **they ministered to the Lord**, . . ."

What these two verses are saying to me is that as they were teaching those in the Church at Antioch they ministered to the Lord. I believe I have been ministering to the Lord this morning by teaching the Word of God. I want to be faithful to minister to the Lord and I can do that by teaching the Word of God.