

Series: 1 John
Title: Brotherly Love or Brotherly Hate
Text: 1 John 2: 5-11
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Faith in Christ and love to brethren is in every sinner born of God. The reason is because that is the end-goal to which God, in his love to his elect, brings his people.

1 John 2: 5: But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected:

“Perfected” means God’s love for his child has brought us to its end-goal. Faith and love are sure to be in those born of God because *in him verily is the love of God brought to its end goal.*

We see the same Greek word that is here translated “perfected” in other places in the new testament. For instance, the end goal of the law is to bring God’s people to Christ.

Romans 10: 4: For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

“End” is from the same word Greek word which is translated “perfected” in our text. The perfect, complete, end-goal to which the law brings God’s elect is to faith in Christ.

Galatians 3:24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25: But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

When one who Christ redeemed has been brought to faith in Christ by the Spirit of God they are no longer under the law because the end-goal of the law has been reached. Fleeing to Christ for Righteousness is the end-goal of the law to everyone that believes.

Another example is concerning holiness. The end-goal of God’s sanctifying work of holiness is to separate his elect from darkness into the light of Christ. God said that light and darkness have no communion, wherefore come out and I will receive you and be a Father to you and you shall be my child.

2 Corinthians 7: 1: Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

When God has sanctified his child and separated us out of darkness into his marvelous light then the end-goal of God’s work of making us holy has been accomplished. Therefore, God’s saints give

Colossians 1: 12:...thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

So our text declares “*whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God brought him to its end-goal.*” Both faith and love (agape) are of God, not of us.

Ephesians 2: 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

1 John 4: 7:...love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

Therefore, since God's love is irresistible, if we believe on Christ and love our brethren, "*Hereby know we that we are in him.*" Brethren, while dead in sins, we did not believe on Christ and our heart was enmity against God and enmity against those born of God. So if we believe on Christ and love our brethren, it is to the praise of God's grace alone. That is why the Spirit of God says "*hereby know we that we are in him.*"

For the same reason, if we say we believe yet, hate our brethren, it manifests that we are still in darkness.

Our subject is: Brotherly Love or Brotherly Hate

Proposition: When God creates love in his child, God produces love for brethren and this is how we know that it is of God and we are in him.

OUR WALK OUGHT TO MATCH OUR PROFESSION

1 John 2: 6: He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

"Ought" means as a debtor to Christ. Our constraint is Christ's love for us whereby he redeemed his elect, in whom we have forgiveness. A few verses from here, John declares the reason why he is declaring that we ought to walk as Christ walked is because of Christ's love for us by whose blood we are already forgiven.

1 John 2: 12: I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

Be sure to get this! The difference between legal works and works of grace is God giving us this pure motive of love by giving us free, full, complete righteousness in Christ.

AN OLD COMMANDMENT

1 John 2: 7: Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

This commandment from Christ to love one another is not new. "Brotherly love" is the word Christ preached to us from the beginning when he first gave us ears to hear the gospel.

1 John 3:11: For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

2 John 1:5:...not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

The first time the Spirit planted the word in our hearts, we heard the gospel of "brotherly love", of "*him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*" (Rev 1: 5)

From that first hour that God gave us faith and love in our newly created hearts, Christ commands each believer to "*walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*" (Eph 5: 2)

So this commandment is as old as the everlasting love of Christ for his brethren—the gospel message is concerning brotherly love—the love of Christ, the Firstborn among many brethren. God chose his people and predestinated us to be conformed to the image of Christ that Christ might be the Firstborn among many brethren. It was the love of Christ for his brethren—God's elect—that made him come into the world and lay down his life to redeem us by his blood. So this word is as old as the love of Christ for his brethren.

Likewise, this message, this commandment, is as old to us as when he first planted this word in our hearts so that we had it. It is as old to us as when he first made us hear the gospel in spirit and in truth.

A NEW COMMANDMENT

1 John 2: 8: Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

This same commandment is also new. We see why it is new by looking at each phrase in John 13 where Christ gave this command to us.

One, this commandment is new because Christ himself, our Lord and our Savior, gave this commandment—*John 13: 34: A new commandment I give unto you.* Moses gave the law at Sinai. Christ himself gave this new rule of life. He himself worked out our example of love, saved his people by his love of brethren then gives us the commandment to follow his example.

Two, this message is new because it is only one command—*John 13: 34...That ye love one another.* Christ's law over his regenerated, believing people is a light and easy yoke as opposed to the ministration of death given at Sinai which included over 600 commands. Those under Christ's rule of life are under grace but those under the law of Sinai are under the curse.

Three, this word is new because Christ shows us how to love—*John 13: 34...as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* This is why John says this word is *true in him*. It is how *the true light now shines* and *the darkness is now past*. Christ himself has shined his light showing us how to love as he loved his elect. Beholding how Christ loved us the darkness is removed concerning how we are to love. And this commandment is new because by his love for us, by his irresistible grace in the new birth, this commandment *is true in us*. By his great love for us, we have been born again and given love in our hearts and light to behold the great love wherewith Christ loved us. This is our example and our constraint which moves us in power to love one another. The law at Sinai required love. But it never loved us, it never showed us how to love and it never worked love in our hearts.

Four, this commandment is new because now it is the love of brethren that distinguishes us as Christ's disciples—*John 13: 35: By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* Under the old covenant of works the children of Israel were distinguished from all other people on the earth by fleshly circumcision. But under the everlasting covenant of grace, God's true Israel is distinguished from all other people on the earth by God circumcising our hearts and creating love us in us to love one as Christ loved us. Our distinguishing mark of love, which makes us different from all other religions and people on earth, is manifest in that "*we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.*" (Php 3:3)

HOW DID CHRIST LOVE US?

1 John 2: 6: He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

The Spirit of God says that if we profess to abide in Christ—to believe on Christ—then we ought, from a debt of gratitude, our own self also so to walk, even as he walked. Christ said the same thing when he said, "*As I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*" So how did Christ love us, how did Christ walk? We find the answer in Philippians 2.

One, Christ loved his people by being of one mind with the Father—*Philippians 2: 1: If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2: Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

Christ was likeminded as God our Father to redeem and save all God's elect. It was the same love between God the Father and God the Son that choose a people to save, by which Christ entered covenant to lay down his life for us, the same love by which the Father sent his only Son to make satisfaction for us and by which the Son laid down his life and made that satisfaction. They were of one accord in the everlasting covenant.

Believer, he makes us likeminded with him and with our brethren by being born of one Spirit. By one Spirit, by one gospel, we are of one mind and one accord to give God in Christ all the glory for our salvation. So if we say we abide in him then as brothers and sisters born of the same Spirit, let us *love one another, as Christ loved us*, by being of the same mind and same love in the gospel of Christ and for one another and in all that we do.

Two, Christ loved us by esteeming his brethren better than himself—*Philippians 2: 3: Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

Christ never did strive with his brethren. He never sought vain exaltation over his brethren. Our Redeemer was lowly of mind, esteeming his brethren better than himself. This is why he laid down his life. He esteemed God his Father and his brethren better than himself.

If we have ill thoughts of a brother, we are walking in darkness and stumbling because we are striving with one for whom Christ died, exalting ourselves over one Christ has made a royal priest unto God, we are highminded, esteeming ourselves better than our brethren—and doing so we esteem ourselves better than Christ! The devil loves us to continue in that. So let us love one another as Christ loved us by "*Being kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*"—for Christ's honor and the honor of our brethren. (Rom 12: 10)

Three, Christ loved us by serving God his Father and his brethren—*Philippians 2: 4: Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

The GodMan never did one selfish thing, he served God his Father and his people. It required him to go out of his way, even, from heavens glory all the way to being made in the likeness of men. He had reason for being made of reputation. But Christ made himself of none. Christ is the sovereign God over all yet he took the form of a servant for his Father and his brethren.

When I know this, how can I not serve Christ and my brethren? How can I not give my brethren my time, my labor, and my money? If we say we are Christs, let us love as Christ loved, by serving rather than being served.

Four, Christ loved us by denying himself in obedience to the Father—*Philippians 2: 8: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

Self-denial, humbling himself in obedience to the Father, filled his ministry in serving his people. He said, "*I must needs go through Samaria.*" Why did Christ go out of his way to that place where no Jewish born person wanted to go? He did it for his sheep. When it came time for him to go back to Bethany, the apostles said, "*Master, they tried to kill you in Bethany!*" But Christ said, "*I must go; I have sheep; but he*

that walks in the light, obeying his Father, shall never stumble.” He loved his own in this humble, self-denying obedience to this Father, even unto the death of the cross

Brethren, as we love our brethren *as Christ loved us* there will be plenty of obstacles. There will be obstacles from our sinful flesh. But there will also be some obstacles set by Christ our Head himself. It is to teach us to “*run with patience the race set before us, looking to the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross despising the shame.*” The joy set before him was the joy of exalting his Father and saving his people from our sins.

Therefore, brethren, for the joy of serving Christ by serving our brethren, let us deny ourselves to do whatever must be done that we might honor God our Father and his Son Christ Jesus and do that which is for the good of our brethren, *as Christ loved us.*

THE EXAMPLE CHRIST GAVE US

Back in John 13, Christ gave us an illustration which sums up how he loved us when he washed the disciples feet. Every word is instructive.

One, Christ showed us how to love by never forsaking us but loving us to the end—*John 13: 1: Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

As the apostles said, brethren, “*To whom shall we go.*” Wherever Christ has placed his gospel in spirit and in truth and assembled his people together in his name, Christ is there. Brother Fortner told us at the very beginning not to start a new work if there was any place around here we could hear the gospel. In 10 years, I have only found one preacher in the tri-state area preaching the gospel and the church that he pastored kicked him out the day before I called him. If God ever ends this work, there is no way I would sit under half-truth and there is no way I would live alone not assembling with my brethren under the gospel. Christ said of those who preach the lie of half-truths, “*Leave them alone!*” I have been one with the same brethren for over 30 years. Love of brethren and love of Christ, constrained by Christ’s love for me, would compel me to move my family where brethren are, where the gospel is. It is because loving as Christ loves us is to love our brethren unto the end. We are not of them that draw back to perdition but of them who endure to the end.

Two, Christ showed us how to love by washing his disciples feet clean—*John 13: 4: He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5: After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*

This pictured what the Son of God did for all God’s elect in washing away our sins. The Son of God laid aside his glory, girded himself with flesh, poured out his blood and water on the cross washing his people clean then girded us in his righteousness. He continues to cleanse us as we become defiled every day.

Oh, let me love as Christ loved us! Let me cover the sin of my brethren rather than exposing them to others. Let me bear the sin of my brethren when they stumble, loving them to Christ, rather than condemning them and deceiving myself that I am something when I am nothing. Oh, may God give me the grace to fulfill the law of Christ, loving my brethren, as Christ loved us. (Gal 6: 1-3)

Three, Christ shows us how to love by being patient with us—*John 13: 6: Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7: Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

Peter went on objecting. But Christ is so patient with our ignorance. He does not grow all brethren at the same pace. Therefore, loving our brethren requires patience to bear with those who do not yet know as they shall. This goes for pastor, spouse, parent, siblings who are brothers and sisters in Christ. We have a double bond who are a pastor or spouse or parent or siblings who are also brothers and sisters in Christ. Therefore, we have double reason to be patient with one another as we wait on Christ to grow one another in grace and knowledge of him.

Four, Christ showed us how to love by washing Judas' feet—*John 13: 11: For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.*

Judas was there. The devil has already put it in his heart to betray Christ. And Christ knew it. Yet, he washed Judas feet the same as he washed the feet of the others.

Believer, loving as Christ loved us is to love all who profess Christ by serving all who profess Christ the same, without doubting any of them. If Christ washed Judas feet the same as the others *knowing* he was a betrayer, then *not knowing*, you and I ought to serve our brethren the same, never questioning any brother or sister's faith.

Finally, John was there that night and here is where John got the word "ought" in our text—*John 13: 14: If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also OUGHT to wash one another's feet. 15: For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16: Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17: If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

Christ's message is John's message to us in our text: if we say we abide in him, then we ought to walk as Christ walked by loving them by washing their feet in all these ways we have seen; Christ said, "*Happy are ye if ye do them.*" Likewise, John said, If you do this then "*you abide in light and there is no occasion of stumbling or scandal to bring reproach on Christ.*"

LOVE OF BRETHREN IS THE TEST OF LIGHT

1 John 2: 9: He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10: He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 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.

Since love of brethren is the sure end to which God brings those who he creates anew and gives faith then love of brethren is the test of light.

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now." Due to our flesh, believers know what it is to go through seasons of darkness. When we become puffed up and strive with a brother or sister, we are in darkness. Doing those things that accompany hatred is stumbling in darkness as blind men. There is no happiness in that and it accomplishes nothing but to make us look like reprobates.

Oh, I pray the Lord keeps his people from professing to abide in Christ, if we do not possess faith and love that only he can give! God does not have to teach a sinner to hate those who love Christ and one another. "*Brotherly hate*"—hatred of one of Christ's own—is the manifestation of darkness, which usually ends in forsaking brethren they professed to love.

On the other hand, true "brotherly love" is the manifestation of God's love worked in his child by Christ the Light. Christ said that those who believe on him shall have the Light of life and shall not dwell in darkness

nor stumble. There is no stumbling for those in Christ's Light because we are upheld by the Master and walk after the example Christ has set before us! May God make us obey Christ to love our brethren as Christ loved us!

Amen!