

“Love for the Brethren”
Romans 12:9-10, 13
(Preached at Trinity, January 16, 2011)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After **Verses 1-2** Paul turned his attention to the local church. He describes the great diversity in the church. In particular, Paul says God has gifted each member distinctly for their particular ministry within the body of Christ so that the entire church might benefit. **Romans 12:6** – “And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *let each exercise them accordingly.*”
2. After describing several of the diverse gifts Paul then gives us the only motive for their use.
Romans 12:9 – “Let love be without hypocrisy.”
3. Without love your greatest labors in the Kingdom of Christ are futile. Every Christian act must be motivated by our love for Christ.
Paul tells us that without love our greatest religious activity is vain. This was his point in 1 Cor. 13:
1 Corinthians 13:1-3 – “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have *the gift of prophecy*, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”
4. In other words, you may have the gift of giving to such a degree that you give *everything* away, and yet if it is not mingled with love it is nothing.
5. Love is our chief duty. It is the sum of the Law. Love is the anchor that keeps us firmly planted in the faith.
Our love for Christ, His people, and His church must serve as our motivation for using our gifts.
As Christians we are not identified by our spiritual giftedness but by our love,
John 13:35 - "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
1 John 3:14 – “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.”
6. Paul says our love for one another must be without “hypocrisy.” The word means our love must be genuine, sincere.
Then Paul tells us our love must be discriminating. In other words, true, genuine, non-hypocritical love hates what is evil and loves what is good.
“ Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.”

7. In **Verses 10-13** Paul sets forth several virtues that flow forth from love. This is one of the reasons love is so essential in our lives. Everything else depends on it! Paul will consider in these verses our love for Christ and our love for our brethren. Then from **Verse 14** to the end of the chapter Paul summarizes the charge of our Lord in **Matthew 5** – “Love your enemies.”
8. As Paul considers these virtues he begins with our duty to our brothers and sisters in Christ. “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love”
1. The word for “devoted” is interesting - φιλόστοργος
It is a compound word:
φίλος, η, ον—1. adj. *kindly disposed, devoted*
The noun form is translated “friend”
στοργή (*family affection*)
 - a. KJV – “Be kindly affectioned”
ESV – “Love one another”
CSV – “Show family affection”
 - b. It points to a tender heartfelt love or strong affection especially of close relations
 2. The word for “brotherly love” – is φιλαδελφία
9. In this verse Paul is speaking of the love that Christians have for one another. It is a family love. It is a relationship. It is the fruit of regeneration. Paul is reminding his readers of that which is of the essence of their conversion.
NAS **1 Thessalonians 4:9** – “Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;”
In other words, love is what we are. It marks us, defines us.
10. As Christians our hearts have been transformed enabling us to love all men, even our enemies. Jesus clearly taught this.
But we have a unique love for our Christian brothers and sisters. This distinction is also clearly taught in Scriptures.
NAS **Galatians 6:10** – “So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”
- A. This love is made possible by our unique union with Christ.
 - B. In **Verse 5** Paul says we are not only united with Christ, this union has resulted in our being united with one another.
Romans 12:5 – “so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”
NAS **1 John 4:20** – “If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”
 - C. We have earthly families but these relationships are not as great as our relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
Jesus taught this distinction:
Mark 3:32-35 – “And a multitude was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.”
³³ And answering them, He said, “Who are My mother and My brothers?”
³⁴ And looking about on those who were sitting around Him, He said, “Behold, My mother and My brothers! ³⁵ “For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

- D. This doesn't mean we reject our earthly family. NO! But it does stress the unique relationship we have with our fellow believers, the body of Christ.
11. This is the meaning of **Verse 10**. We are to express family affection, brotherly love towards our fellow believers. What does this love look like?
Paul says that this love demonstrates itself in sacrifice of self:
Romans 12:10 – “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;”
12. In **Phil. 2** Paul says,
Philippians 2:3-4 – “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”
13. What does this look like? In **1 Corinthians 13** Paul describes several ways that this brotherly love demonstrates itself. They can be reduced to four categories:
1. Love is gracious when offended by our brother
 2. Love rejoices in the blessings of our brother
 3. Love is sacrificial towards our brother
 4. Love watches over our brother
14. I want to look briefly at each of these.
- I. Love is gracious when offended by our brother
1 Corinthians 13:4 – “Love is patient”
1 Corinthians 13:5 – “is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong”
1 Corinthians 13:7 – “bears all things”
- A. The brethren are full of imperfections in this life.
1. Sin still plagues all of us – all of us are in a great battle
 2. The beauty of grace is that God sees beyond our imperfections. He gazes beyond them looking upon the righteousness of Christ
 3. Our imperfections sometimes result in harming other people, usually unintentionally
 - a. Love gives us a mind bear with each other in compassion and patience
The word for patience is translated in the KJV – “longsuffering.”
Love causes us to suffer long with the offenses of our brothers.
 - b. Love creates forgiveness
Ephesians 4:32 – “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”
 4. How wicked it is to withhold forgiveness from our brother when God has forgive our infinite debt
- B. Offenses are bound to come
1. Someone may say an unkind word. They may do something that you consider offensive.
 2. Most often it is unintentional. Will you take offense?
What if you know it is intentional. Do you become filled with indignation?
Paul says love “ is not provoked” – does not take into account a wrong”

3. This is so contrary to human nature. Human nature seeks revenge. Human nature wants personal satisfaction. But the meekness of Christ leads us to be patient with our brothers and sisters.
James 3:14-17 – “Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”
4. This demands maintaining diligent control of the mind
1 Peter 2:1-3 – “Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, ² like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, ³ if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.”

II. Love rejoices in the blessings of our brother – **Verse 3** – “love is not jealous”

- A. Envy is a dissatisfaction with what God has give you
 1. Jealousy wanting to have what God has given to others
 2. Jealousy is found throughout Scripture and it is never good
Cain against Abel, Joseph’s brothers, Rachel and Leah, Moses was often the subject of envy. Paul was envied.
 3. It flows from the desire of each of us to be greatest – to have the most wealth, talent, prestige, power, intelligence, etc
 4. In **Romans 12:10** Paul admonishes us to:
“give preference to one another in honor”
 5. The natural man desires all honor for himself and is envious of others who are honored. Paul says to give your energy to honoring others.
- B. Envy is particularly dangerous because of where it leads
 1. It flows forth from a heart of hatred and bitterness and ill will – it creates a desire for misfortune in the lives of others
 2. It will ultimately result in you seeking to harm others
 - a. Often through character assassination
 - b. Sometimes through hateful acts designed to bring others down
 3. Envy will act as poison for your soul
^{ESV} **Proverbs 14:30** – “A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.”
- C. Love, on the other hand rejoices in the blessings of others
1 Corinthians 12:26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.”
 1. Love will drive us to maintain careful control of our thoughts
A Christian may find envy in his thoughts but he despises it, he’s alarmed at it. He strives to gain control over it. He mortifies it.
 2. Devote your energy to honoring one another
Romans 12:10 – “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;”

- III. Love is sacrificial towards our brother – **Verse 5** – “it does not seek its own”
Romans 12:10 – “give preference to one another in honor;”
- A. This demands the humility of **1 Cor. 13:4**
1 Corinthians 13:4 – “love does not brag *and* is not arrogant,”
1. Love is not braggadocious.
 2. Love is not arrogant but meek, gentle, kind
- B. Love is not selfish”
1. With regard to this there are two types of contrasting persons in the world.
 - There are those who are selfish. Their very existence is wrapped up in themselves. They are miserly in their time and possessions. They seek everything to their own advantage. Paul states that love “does not act unbecomingly” This selfishness is unbecoming for a Christian
 - There are those who are generous. They are big hearted and openhanded. They freely share of their time and their possessions. Paul says they are not self seeking.
 2. Love enables us to take our eyes off ourselves. It removes all selfishness and creates within us a spirit of generosity - "does not seek its own"
 3. Selfishness creates a sense of smallness. If you are selfish your world becomes confined to the narrow sphere of yourself. You are concerned only about those things which have a direct effect on your own life. Everything is considered in terms of “I, Me, Mine.” Love enlarges our heart and causes it to extend to others.
 4. Selfishness has the attitude: “What is yours is mine”
 Love’s attitude is: “What is mine is yours”
 5. We must remember that we are uniquely tied together – we are one.
- IV. Love watches over our brother
- A. To love our brother is to desire his holiness
Romans 12:9 – “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.”
1 Corinthians 13:6 – “does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;”
1. It demands that we look first and foremost to our own heart
 2. We have a duty to encourage one another in holiness
 3. We are one in Christ
- B. Our church is only holy if each member is holy
1. Remember, we are a body. When one part of the body is sick the whole body is affected
 2. We must strive to press one another towards greater and greater holiness.
Hebrews 10:24 – “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,”

Conclusion:

1. This is what it means to be a part of the body of Christ.
 We are one with one another. We must love one another
Romans 12:10 – “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love;”
2. This demonstrates itself in patient forbearance with one another, with rejoicing in the blessings of one another, in sacrificially giving ourselves; in watching over one another.