

**HEBREWS 47  
(Hebrews 13:1-3)**

**Let Brotherly Love Continue  
By Ron Harvey  
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**INTRODUCTION**

The book of Hebrews has been a most wonderful study on the vast superiority of Christ over the old rituals of Judaism. Christ is better in every regard. The old heroes of Judaism were only heroes because they believed in that Christ who was to come. Moses was not the Christ, Aaron was not the Christ, Joshua was not the Christ, Abraham was not the Christ, but Jesus was the Christ.

That old religion of Judaism was a most beautiful picture of Jesus Christ and his great work of redemption. Judaism was instructive down to its minutest details. Great studies have been done to unravel the types and the shadows under this old covenant. But in the end it can only be said that Judaism was just the picture and not the substance.

The book of Hebrews teaches us that salvation in all ages has always been wrapped up in one person – Jesus Christ. Judaism came along late in the history of the Old Testament and it never made the people free, it put them in bondage. Judaism never gave the people the joy of a clean conscience, rather it brought them back day after day and year after year to make more sacrifices. Ah, but the sacrifice of Jesus put an end to all of those ineffective sacrifices of Judaism.

The death of Christ on that great altar, the cross of Calvary, rendered the altar in the Jewish temple absolutely useless. You might as well knock that old altar down and carry it out of the temple because there is no use for it any longer. When Jesus passed into the heavens and offered his once-for-all sacrifice at the throne of God, it made that symbolic mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, in the Jewish temple, an old relic of past times.

You see, sins are forgiven at the throne of God in heaven. They are not forgiven in a little Jewish cubicle on the earth.

And effective mediation is done at the throne of God. And we have a mediator who passed into the heavens to have a little conversation with God himself on our behalf.

*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the son of God . . .*

Hebrews 4:14

This book of Hebrews should have a serious effect on you. It should cause you to love your Savior all the more. When you see how excellent he is and how excellent his salvation is, it should cause you bow the heart to him.

This book of Hebrews should cause you to run the Christian race with a good deal more patience and endurance. We run the race being encouraged by those faithful saints who have gone on before and we press on in hopes of receiving the prize in the end.

The book of Hebrews sounds the death bell for that old religion of Judaism. If you weren't here last time, I urge you to get on our web site and listen to the message entitled, [The Passing Away of Judaism](#). You see, after Christ has come, there is nowhere for Judaism to go but away. When I am lying on the beach watching the waves come in, I have no use for the pictures of the beach in a magazine. And we have learned that Judaism ran its prescribed course. It was never intended to be permanent. It was intended as a temporary economy until the seed should come. And when the seed came, Judaism came to its natural end.

For those who found it difficult to accept the end of Judaism, God made sure to destroy the instruments of Judaism. The moment Jesus died, the veil of the temple was rent in two signifying an end to that old ritual practiced on the Jewish Day of Atonement.

Fewer than 40 years later, God sent the Roman army led by Titus into Jerusalem and tore the temple down. There was not one stone left upon another – just as Jesus predicted.

When Judaism ended, so did the exclusivity that was characteristic of Judaism. Judaism was for Jews only and those who became Jews by accepting the Jewish practices. But then, God called Paul to be the apostle

to the Gentiles – and the exclusivity vanished away. The Bible puts it this way. The middle wall of partition was broken down between the Jew and the Gentile. (Eph.2:14) And, there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. (Romans 10:12)

Hebrews puts a final stamp upon that old religion and it says “expired.” The writer uses the word “removed” in Hebrews 12:27.

But no one should be sad about the removal of the things under that old economy. The things that are brought in are infinitely better. There is a new kingdom that has come in with Christ. (Hebrews 12:28) That old Jewish kingdom was temporary, but this new kingdom is permanent. That old Jewish kingdom was earthly but this one is heavenly. That old kingdom was exclusively Jewish, but this one is universal. That old kingdom led to bondage, but this one leads to freedom. That old kingdom was a ministry of death (II Cor.3:7) but this one is a ministry of life. That old kingdom was outward but this new kingdom is inward. That old kingdom was Mt. Sinai but this new kingdom is Mt. Zion. The old kingdom was shadows but this kingdom is substance. The old kingdom was Moses and Aaron and Joshua but this kingdom is Jesus Christ. And ladies and gentlemen, the irrefutable message of Hebrews is that Jesus Christ and his kingdom are far better.

You may not even be aware of it, but when we finished chapter 12, we finished the didactic portion of Hebrews. We have finished with the wonderful theology of this book, and now, we come to the postscript in Chapter 13. But the postscript is not an afterthought, it is a summary of our duties in this new kingdom of Christ.

There were many, many laws under that old Jewish kingdom. Moses came down off the mountain and told them all that they must do. You see, Israel was under a very unique and exclusive economy. They were required to perform rituals and ceremonies that no other nations on earth were required to do.

But when Christ came, this old covenant that God made with Israel expired and a new covenant came in. All of the old rituals came to a sudden and natural conclusion because the Messiah finally came. Jesus Christ was the light at the end of that long tunnel of the Old Covenant. And when that light appeared it swallowed up all the shadows.

Jesus Christ came into this world and he brought with him a new and better kingdom. And when we by faith receive Jesus Christ, Hebrews 12:28 says that we receive a kingdom. If we receive the King, then we receive his kingdom. And there are things that he asks of his subjects in his kingdom.

You see, Jesus is much more than a rabbit's foot to get us to heaven. Jesus is not an insurance policy. Jesus is not to be named as though we are performing a ritual or a ceremony. He is not a token that we drop in a slot to go to heaven. Jesus is our King. Jesus is not only our Savior, he is our Lord. He is not merely a good example, but he is our Master.

Now when Christ saves you he drags you out of the kingdom of darkness and into his kingdom. And in his kingdom you will have many duties. And in many ways the duties in his kingdom exceed those under the old covenant.

Listen to what Jesus said.

*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. (Mt.5:21, 22)*

*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Mt.7:27, 28)*

And Jesus went on in that passage and made the requirements under the law even broader.

Now when we come to Hebrews 13 we will see that there are various duties enjoined on Christ's subjects in his kingdom. And we will look at those duties one by one. These are the rules of the kingdom that we find here in Hebrews 13.

You know, so many times we come to church and we hear doctrine and theology and biblical theory from the preacher and I am sure that often you must leave the church building wondering, "What does all that mean?" I

am sure that many times you probably say, “I wish that preacher would just tell me in plain language what Jesus wants me to do.”

Well, we have come to a passage of Scripture that will just tell you what Jesus wants you to do. And the question is, “Are you interested?” The question may be, “Are you really serious about doing what the King says to do?” The writer of Hebrews is about to tell you how you must conduct yourself in his kingdom.

### Let brotherly love continue

*Let brotherly love continue. (v.1)*

Now this is the principle commandment in Christ’s kingdom. And it is to love one another. This duty stands as the chief duty in the kingdom of Christ. This duty stands as the overriding duty. This duty swallows up and comprehends all other duties. Loving one another is the sum and substance of the law of Christ.

You know, serving Christ is not that complicated - it is loving one another. The rules of His kingdom are not some complicated set of rituals – the rules of his kingdom are really only one rule - love one another.

It seems to me that a Christian is distinguished from the world by this one characteristic – he has brotherly love. It is the most supreme characteristic of Christians. It is the most beautiful characteristic of Christians. It is the most striking characteristic of a true church. And therefore the writer of Hebrews mentions it as the first and primary duty. He says,

*Let brotherly love continue.*

**Example: In Matthew 22:36, Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment in the law. And he quoted Deuteronomy 6:5. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And he said, This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.***

Look at another passage in Romans.

*Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

Romans 13:8-10

Obviously rule number one in Christ's kingdom and in his church is that we love one another. If we never learn another Christian precept, we must learn this one. This rule of Christ must be followed and it must be followed not in theory only but in practice. It must be followed by all of us here at Grace Baptist Church. We don't have any jurisdiction over other churches, but we have jurisdiction over our church. We don't have the responsibility over backbiting and pettiness and anger and hate and jealousies in other churches, but we have the responsibility here.

It seems to me that our number one goal in our church is to love one another. We may come short in many ways, but we should never come short in loving one another.

I think it appropriate this morning that we do a little study on loving one another. And we can call it Love 101. And there will be three points to our study. First we will establish the importance of loving one another. Second, we will formulate a definition of loving one another. And third, we will talk about the proper motivation for loving one another.

I. The importance of loving one another.

A. It is the command of Christ.

*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another. (John 13:34)*

If we are his subjects, then we follow his commands. And Christ commands that we love one another. It is not a request. It is not mere preference. It is not optional. It is a command. And therefore we must love one another.

B. It is the very nature of a Christian.

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. (1 John 4:7, 8)*

Listen to the words of Charles Spurgeon. "I am told that Christians do not love each other. I am very sorry if that be true, but I rather doubt it, for I suspect that those who do not love each other are not Christians."

I think what Charles Spurgeon was suggesting is that loving one another is an inherent part of the new nature. It is an essential Christian quality. And when a person does not have such a quality, we suspect that he is not a Christian.

It is very easy to profess to be a Christian. It is harder to actually be one.

C. It is the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22)

D. It is the quality that verifies the other Christian graces.

*Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing. (1 Cor.13:2)*

*And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. (v.3)*

Love is the essential ingredient that verifies everything else in your life. Without love your very faith is empty. (v.2) Faith and love are like Siamese twins that share the same vital organs. They cannot be separated without killing the other. Both faith and love flow from the Spirit of God. And you cannot have a viable faith without a corresponding viable love for others.

So, we have seen the importance of loving one another. Now, we consider,

## II. The definition of loving one another.

Now I would suggest to you that love in the worldly sense is loving someone with a certain degree of emotion because of what that person can give to you in return. That kind of love is a selfish love. That kind of love says, "What can I get out of this and what will it cost me?" That is a human kind of love.

It always amazes me how a man and a woman can "love" each other with an "infinite" love in the beginning when they have such expectations as to what they are going to get out of it. But when they realize they are not getting so much out of it, love turns to hate very quickly.

The kind of love that God requires of us is a different kind of love than that. It is not primarily an emotion, but it is primarily an action.

Now when people are courting, love is conveyed many times by a flood of words. Men write long, flowing letters and poems about the excellencies of their lover. And women keep these letters and poems forever locked away in their secret chambers.

And romantic love is also carried along with hugs and physical affection. So, you can see that this kind of love is characterized by words and hugs.

But the kind of love that God requires of us when he says, "Love one another," is seen in I John 3:17, 18.

*But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

Now you can easily see here that the kind of love that God requires of us does not expect anything in return. It is not the kind of love that is motivated by selfish desires. It is not motivated by any beauty in the other person. But it is the kind of love that sees a brother in need and moves the Christian to help that other person. So, godly love for others is not so much words and hugs but rather it is actions.

**Example: This kind of love is the kind of love that is in God himself and is seen in how God acted toward us.**

*In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

I John 4:9

You see here that God showed his love to us by taking action. We had nothing to offer God. There was nothing in us to arouse affection in God for us. But God chose to send his Son for miserable wretches who were in need. And so, it seems that the kind of love that God requires of us is the kind of love that acts toward a need. God saw our desperate need and he took action.

Secondly, the kind of love that God requires of us is a self-sacrificial kind of love. It is the kind of love that looks for nothing in return. It is giving and not taking.

Example: The perfect example of such a love is the love of Christ for us. Listen to what Jesus said,

*This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man that this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

John 15:12, 13)

So, putting this all together let me offer a simple definition of the kind of love that God requires of us.

**Love is a self-sacrificing determination to do good for another.**

Now, we have seen the importance of love and the definition of love. Lastly, let's consider,

III. The proper motivation for love.

True Christian love is not motivated by the object of that love. True Christian love does not say, "I love you for what you can do for me." It does not say, "I love you because you are pretty or handsome." It does not say, "I love you because you are sweet and adorable." It does not say, "I love

you because we have so much in common.” It does not say, “I love you because you love me.” True Christian love is not motivated by the object of that love.

**Example: God loves me. There was nothing in me that gave God the warm and fuzzies. He saw nothing in me that generated a loving feeling in Him. Rather, there was every reason not to love me. God’s love came to me in spite of me.**

**Example: Jesus told his disciples, “For if you love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? For sinner also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? For sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” (Luke 6:32-35)**

So you see that true Christian love is not motivated by the object of that love. We are to love those in whom there is nothing lovable. We are to love our enemies.

So, what is the motive for loving others? It is not for self-gratification. It is not because of something lovely in them.

The proper motivation for loving others is love for Christ.

*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*  
John 14:15

It is love for Christ that constrains us. It is a wholehearted appreciation for him that causes us to obey his commands. It is being in love with Him that motivates us to love others as he commanded.

It is very pleasing to please your lover. And Christ is the lover of our souls. He is our suitor. He has wooed us with an everlasting love. And our desire to do his bidding is what will cause us to have a self-sacrificing determination to do good to others.

A specific example of loving others is given in Hebrews 13:2 where it says,

*Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (v.2)*

Now when it talks about entertaining strangers, the word that is translated entertaining is a Greek word meaning lodging. It is talking about exercising hospitality to strangers who happen to come across our path. Most likely, the writer had in mind Christian strangers.

In those days there were many Christians who were scattered abroad from their homes by persecution. And these Christians many times had no shelter and no food and they wandered about the countryside trying to stay alive. And if such a Christian was to cross your path, then it was your duty to show him hospitality.

Now notice that this would be a person that you would not even know. He would be a stranger to you. And therefore, your hospitality toward him would not be based on anything in him. Rather, it would be based on your love for Christ.

And in verse 3,

*Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.*

This verse has specific reference to those Christians who have been imprisoned for their faith in Christ. And if we find any such persons then it is our duty to love them as well.

Let brotherly love continue especially for those who have been imprisoned for the gospel's sake.

Let me say in closing that loving one another is a primary duty here at our church. It is something that we must continue to do. It is something that we should cultivate so that we do it better and more efficiently. It is something that we should joyfully do out of obedience to Christ.

Let's continue to look for ways to help one another. Let's be alert to those in need. When we find those in need let's be compassionate and ready to help them in a sacrificial way.

This seems to be the message of our text for this morning.