

Sacrifices Pleasing to God: Brotherly Love, Part 2 (Hebrews 13:1)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (1/14/2018)

Introduction

Before we tackle this second part of our exposition of Hebrews 13:1, it would be beneficial for us to read together 1 Corinthians 13.

In his *last argument* (12:18–24) Paul summed up the privilege of the Hebrew believers. Their faith in Christ did not bring them to Mount Sinai with its awful and terrifying scenes. Rather, they had come to Mount Zion with its glorious hope realized in the Administrator of the New Covenant, Jesus Christ.

His *final warning* was against excusing themselves from hearing the Lord Jesus—not acting in faith and obedience.

A great shaking will occur in which all temporal things will be shaken (v. 26). Only what cannot be shaken, the eternal and holy, will remain. “*Therefore, let us be grace filled and let us offer to God proper service*” in this present age (v. 28). Thus, “*Let brotherly love remain, continue, and endure.*” As we noted last week, “faith, hope, and love remain eternally (1 Cor. 13:13). Love is the foundation of the Christian life. Jesus called brotherly love His new commandment.

Why is it so difficult for Christians to love the brethren? If loving the brethren is the church’s way to represent Christ in world, why does the church do so poorly in this duty (John 13:35)? I would like to offer—

I. Four root enemies to brotherly love

1. Selfishness or self-love: “*But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self*” (2 Tim. 3:1, 2; James 3:14, 16; Phil. 2:3).
 - a. Self-love is personified in the horseleech who has two daughters; self-righteousness (to regard one’s thoughts and actions as being right) and self-pity (to feel hurt and rejection when others do not regard one’s thoughts or opinions as the right ones; Prov. 30:15).
 - b. The antidote for self-love is serving others as Christ did (Phil. 2:5). Self-love is evidenced in *arrogance*.
2. Arrogance: “*Love . . . is not arrogant*” (1 Cor. 13:6).
 - a. Arrogance is being puffed up, having a very high opinion of oneself and insisting on one’s own way. This spirit is exemplified in 1 Corinthians 5 by the church members who were tolerating sexual immorality in their fellowship. Paul rebuked them: “*You are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?*” (v. 2).
 - b. The antidote for arrogance is love (1 Cor. 8:1–3: “*This ‘knowledge’ puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.*” See Matt. 11:29). Arrogance leads to impatience with others.
3. Impatience: “*Love is patient*” (1 Cor. 13:5).
 - a. Impatience is a lack of *forbearance*, which is defined as tolerating the actions of others by understanding them in their present situation. It is closely linked to *patience*, which is de-

defined as *longsuffering*, the grace to endure the actions of those who have not yet arrived to the level of maturity expected of them.

b. The antidote for impatience is forbearance. Impatience leads to a judgmental and divisive spirit.

4. Sectarianism: *“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment”* (1 Cor. 1:10).

a. A divisive spirit causes unwarranted divisions in the body of Christ based on personality or opinion favored over that of others’, not based on truth or Scriptural forbearance (1 Cor. 3:1–3).

b. The antidote for a divisive spirit is unity in Christ (Gal. 3:28).

II. One Glorious Example of Brotherly Love (Matt. 26:6–13).

1. The characters in the drama.

a. The disciples, whose judgmental spirit toward Mary’s act of devotion to Jesus, followed the desire of Judas, who lusted for the value of the ointment (a year’s wages).

b. The Jews, who remained outside plotting to destroy Jesus who was seen as a threat to their continued power and prosperity.

c. Mary, who alone understood the significance of her loving act in preparing the Savior for His burial.

2. The significance of the act and its connection to Psalm 133:2

a. Her selfless sacrifice was misunderstood by those who should have known better.

b. Jesus’ explanation was that the anointing prepared Him for His office as Messiah (prophet, priest, and king).

My prayer is that God would raise up an army of Marys in His church who sacrificially serve with understanding and commitment to purpose and will of God as demonstrated in the life and work of Jesus Christ.