

GALATIANS - SERMON 28

GALATIANS 5:22 — THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - LOVE - ἀγάπη
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INTRODUCTION: Read Galatians 5:19-23

Those who characteristically follow after the imbalanced desires of the flesh are not saved people. In verses 22 and 23 we have some answer to the question 'how do we know if we are saved people?' It is not simply enough to avoid the sins of the flesh (vv19-21). There must also be some positive fruit produced. [Abstinence from sin is not sufficient evidence of salvation.] A summary of those fruits which the Holy Spirit will produce in the life of the believer is found in verses 22 and 23. The one who manifests these things manifests that transformation of person which is part and parcel with divine salvation.

In examining these fruits individually it is important to know that every believer will not manifest each of these fruits to the same degree as another believer. Some believers will be more mature in the expression of these fruits. Nevertheless, to some extent each of these fruits in some degree should be manifest in the life of the true saint.

God is love and our Lord Jesus Christ, being God, manifested love. He taught a great deal about love while here on earth. Perhaps the clearest statement of our Lord's on the subject of love is found in John 13:34-35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

In verse 1 of John 13 we learn that Jesus Christ was approaching His crucifixion and death and so He manifested His love for His disciples through to the end.

John 13:1

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

Jesus calls this particular fruit of the Spirit (love) a new commandment. Christ-like love is to be the distinguishing characteristic of every true Christian. We are to love one another *as I have loved you*. He says that this love should be visible and distinguishable so that *all will know that you are My disciples*. The love which is a fruit of the Spirit stands out and is observable.

OUTLINE:

- I THE NECESSITY AND DUTY OF LOVE: JOHN 13:34-35
- II THE GUIDE AND EXAMPLE OF LOVE: JOHN 13:34-35
- III THE FRUIT AND RESULT OF LOVE: JOHN 13:35

I THE NECESSITY AND DUTY OF LOVE; JOHN 13:34-35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

The command: note that love is not an option. In our Lords statement He begins by calling His words on love *a new commandment*. Love is a necessity and a duty. It is not optional for Christians.

- A It is an ABSOLUTE command. Love is commanded of the Christian. It is something that the Christian must do. It is an imperative; that a Christian love his fellow Christians. This clearly implies that this is a choice and not simply a feeling. A Christian is commanded to make the choice to love his brethren, regardless of feelings. A Christian must purpose to love his brethren.

Luke 6:27-28

"But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you."

It would be unnatural to love one's enemies, but we are commanded to love them by doing them good. It is a choice we make, not a feeling we stir up. Love in this verse is expressed, not by emotion, but by doing good, blessing, and praying for one's enemies. If we are to love enemies in such a way, then how much more ought we to love those who are our brethren and fellow heirs of the grace of life.

Our Lord repeats this same command.

John 15:12, 17

*"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."
". . . These things I command you, that you love one another."*

Our Lord has commanded us to love one another three times in just this portion of the gospel of John. Each time He uses the specific word *command*.

Believers profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly it is a necessity that we love the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 16:22

If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.

The true proof of our love for Him is the keeping of His commandments.

John 14:21, 23-24

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

. . . Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."

John 15:14

"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."

You cannot and do not love the Lord Jesus Christ if you do not and will not love the brethren. It is crucial that we not profess love for Christ without love for the brethren as well.

- B It is a UNIVERSAL command: The Lord said that we must *love one another*. We must not simply love some in the household of faith, we must love all who are in the household of faith.

One another - comprehends all that fall within the category of Christian community.

1 John 3:14

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

All brethren are included. None of the brethren are excluded.

- C It is a CONTINUOUS command: The expression in the original (*you love one another*) is in the 2nd person present tense plural subjunctive which means that you keep on loving one another.

1 John 4:21

And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

How continuous is our love for God to be? In a similar fashion of time are we to love the brethren - continuously.

1 Peter 1:22

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart...

Love of the brethren is an act of obedience to the truth through the assistance of the Holy Spirit. It is not merely a feeling.

II THE GUIDE AND EXAMPLE OF LOVE: JOHN 13:34-35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

The Lord inserts a qualifying point in this command. As a command it applies to everyone and it must be continuous, but there is a certain quality that must attach itself to this love. That quality is its resemblance to the love Christ has for us. Our love is to be patterned after Christ's love, *as I have loved you*. The standard of love we aspire to is the example of Christ loving His disciples.

What are some of the characteristics of Christ's love for His disciples?

- A Christ's love was an UNCONDITIONAL love. His love did not look to its object for either

motive or strength. Jesus loved people in spite of the way they treated Him. The motive was found in Himself.

- B Christ's love was a CONSISTENT love. It did not grow stronger or weaker based upon circumstances or events. It was not based upon the objects of His love and their response to Him. Jesus Christ did not love Peter any less when he denied Him than when Peter defended Him.
- C Christ's love was a SACRIFICIAL love. Jesus Christ, in order to love people, was willing to make sacrifices on their behalf. The love of Christ sacrificed its own best interests for the interests of others. Christ sacrificed His honor, position, esteem, and life for others from the motive of love.
- D Christ's love was a FORGIVING love. Think of the times Christ's disciples offended Him and yet He loved them still. Christ's love was a choice and not a response. He chose to love His disciples. His love was not in response to their kindness towards Him.

Our love is usually based upon response. We love those who love us and who supply us with our needs. We love those who are nice to us. If those we love cease to be loving towards us, we stop loving them. Our motive for love is often corrupt and hence our love is corrupt. The true motive for love is the command of Christ and the example of Christ, neither of which has anything to do with the objects of our love. The reason for loving one another is not based upon 'one another' but upon Christ's command.

III THE FRUIT AND RESULT OF LOVE: JOHN 13:35

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

By this makes reference back to the love Christ has just described - love for one another.

My - this personal pronoun is emphatic in the original language. This kind of love will distinguish those who practice it as being the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ specifically.

A Three things are implied by this.

- 1 It implies that all the disciples of Christ will be distinguished by this kind of love. There will be no one who is a true disciple of Christ who does not have this kind of love. Men will know or have it demonstrated to them that this kind of lover is a follower of Jesus Christ. This kind of love will remove questions regarding whose disciple you are.
- 2 It implies that none but the disciples of Christ shall be distinguished by this kind of love. If everyone had this kind of love, no one would stand out. Only the disciples of Christ will be distinguished by this kind of love.
- 3 It implies that the visible effects of this kind of love will cause you to be readily recognizable. It will draw attention to you as a disciple of Christ. *By this all will know that you are My disciples.* In verse 35 we learn that we cannot claim to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ if we do not manifest this kind of love for one

another that is said to describe and distinguish Christ's followers.

B Love for the brethren is an inseparable attendant and fruit of the new birth.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. . .

Even as a new born baby has no need to be taught to breathe, even so one born of the Spirit needs no instruction that he ought to love the brethren.

1 John 2:9-11

He who says he is in the light [saved], and hates his brother, is in darkness until now [unconverted]. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

This is a clear indication that there are only two states of being. The acid test as to which category we are in is related to love for the brethren.

1 John 3:10

In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

If you do not love your brethren, then you are not of God. Someone who does not live in a disposition of love towards the brethren can be an example of one not saved.

1 John 3:11-14

For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

Evidence supporting regeneration (*passing from death to life*) is provided by the manifestation of love for the brethren.

1 John 3:15-16

Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Here we have Christ's sacrifice used as an example of how we are to love one another. Jesus is the pattern and example.

1 John 3:17-19

But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

Our acts of love demonstrate to us also that we are children of God. Those acts of love enable us to know and to assure our hearts.

1 John 3:23

And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

If love does not characterize one's attitude and acts towards the brethren, then we should abandon our claims to salvation.

If you are saved three things are true:

- 1 You cannot and will not hate your Christian brother.
- 2 You will positively love your Christian brother.
- 3 Your love will take the form of concrete, specific actions of love towards that brother. It will not be a love in words and tongue, but in deed and in truth.

When God so loved the world, it is not that He felt something for the world, but rather that He did something - *He gave His only begotten Son* (John 3:16). We have no grounds to say that we love a person until we do something for that person.

1 John 4:9-10

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

The manifestation of God's love towards His people is not said in this text to be demonstrated by the warm feelings God has for the people. What is clearly stated is that God's love for the people is manifested by sending His Son into the world - doing something for them.

1 John 4:16

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

We know God's love for us by the concrete specific acts of love He has done for us.

Conclusion:

We may state that we love the people of God. The appropriate question is 'when was the last time you did something for the brethren?' This would be how we can know that we love the people of God and this is how they can know that we love them. It boils down to having this world's goods, seeing someone in need, and supplying that need.

It is self-centered to ask if the people of God love me? The real question is do I love the people of God? By what have I proven that love for them? How have I blessed them?

Luke 6:27-28

"But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you."

If loving our enemies includes doing good, blessing, and praying for them, how much more should we be to our brethren?

It is not a question of first liking someone before loving them. God saw nothing in us to like before He chose and set His love upon us. Love is a choice, not a feeling.

Though we cannot equal the love of God, we can take it as a model and as a test of our love for others. We can use it to pray for the love of God for others. Christ's love for His disciples can teach us how to love our brethren. It will be a part of the judgment.

Hymn # 244