

**Sermon Series**  
**The Superiority of Jesus Christ**  
**October 2, 2022**

**Title: Continue in Love**

*Subject: Brotherly Love, The Law; Perseverance, The Church, The body of Christ, hospitality, Angels, Support for those being persecuted, Doctrine/Duty, Jesus Christ*

**Theme Text: Hebrews 13:1-2 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup> Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.**

**Theme Illustration:** The first victim of a close vital ongoing affection of and communion with Christ is brotherly love first for the brothers and then our love for Christ begins to wane, our zeal slackens, our commitment to Christ and His people is substituted for self, pride, and then self-justification. Unless our hearts be constantly warmed by the love of Christ, you can be sure that our love for one another will surely suffer. We must today be mightily impressed as to the vital importance of the maintenance of brotherly love.

The three principal graces of the Christian, faith, hope, and love, can only thrive in a healthy soul. We are reminded of **1 John 3:14 (ESV) <sup>14</sup> We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.** If a person lacks assurance of their status with Christ as to their salvation, they only need to look at the fruit of the love of God in their souls, our love for our spiritual brethren must be present and active. If we are unconcerned with both the temporal and eternal interests and have forsaken our connection with God's people, then we have no right to claim ourselves as a child of God. We are but a dry branch void of the very life of God in us, our love for our brethren, **John 15:5-6 (ESV) <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you**

can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

**Read: Hebrews 13:1-3 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup> Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. <sup>3</sup> Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.**

**Introduction:** Our opening exhortation reminds us of all of our Christian duties. The Holy Spirit then points to some of the applications as to how brotherly love is evidenced in the Christian life. We must connect with a previous verse that sets the importance of our text. We need to connect the warning of this verse **Hebrews 12:29 (ESV) <sup>29</sup> for our God is a consuming fire, because our God is a consuming fire let brotherly love continue.**

To this point the first 12 chapters the apostle sets forth the glorious person, offices, and work of Christ. These doctrinal instructions then form a sure foundation for faith and obedience to our Christian duties and establish our understanding of the work of Christ and the attendant real affection we should have for Him and one another.

Real persecution by the Jews and Romans, this admonition is necessary. For the Gentile Christian, this is just as necessary. If we are all going to reflect the glory of God, then we must not in a heat of Christian warfare waiver in our brotherly love for the saints. To fail this would by definition place us back in the world, from which we have been delivered.

**Transition:** We have in our text the opening reminder followed by suggested applications. To put the exhortation positively we are to:

**1. Persevere In Love: Hebrews 13:1-3 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup> Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. <sup>3</sup> Remember those who are in prison, as**

though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

The default condition and attitude of the world is the self and all of the adjectives that begin with self. We need to be reminded again that these commands which are part of the divine mysteries are not abstractions addressed to the intellect, they are to be received by the soul, and there, empowered by faith, our hearts are drawn out towards God and result in the practical outworking towards our brothers and sisters in Christ. The gospel frees us from the law as necessary for salvation, but it does not free us from the duties required by law. The gospel takes those requirements and even lays down new obligations and instructs us as to their rights performance and supplies us with new and powerful motives for the discharge of these duties.

It is yielding ourselves to Christ, our friends and relations may have turned against us being stirred up by Satan they now mistreat us. We must still let brotherly love continue, **Romans 12:20-21 (ESV)** <sup>20</sup> **To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”** <sup>21</sup> **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Brotherly love refers to the special and spiritual affections which are to be actively cultivated among God’s children. It is a reminder that we cannot be Christian without loving our spiritual brothers. There is an assumption here, the text does not say let us have brotherly love but let brotherly love continue. It is a call to maintain that brotherly love continues. The apostle thought there was danger in their love because of the disputes among their fellow Jews concerning the ceremonies of the law and the gospel.

Her brotherly love has its foundation in the relationship. We all have one Father, Matthew 23:8 – 9, one elder brother, Romans 8:29, and we have one spirit, hope, and calling, Ephesians 4:4.

Brotherly love is that gracious bond which sniffs the hearts of God's children in spiritual and affectionate solicitude which Christians have towards each other manifested by the desire for and works towards each other's mutual interest, **Galatians 6:10 (ESV)** <sup>10</sup> **So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.**

Thus, our love for the brothers must endure all of its enemies inward and outward. Brotherly love is like a tender plant that can quickly be affected by the frosty air of unkindness and harsh words. If brotherly love is to flourish it must be carefully protected.

We must remember the Lord's warning concerning the last days, **Matthew 24:12 (ESV)** <sup>12</sup> **And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.** What humbling words these are! When Cain murdered his brother did he not find our God to be a consuming fire? We Lot's herdsman kindled strife with Abraham's herdsman and Lot preferred to move to Sodom, did not the strife between the respective herds Lot live to experience God as a consuming fire?

**Transition:** As an application to the foregoing we are to:

**2. Persevere in Hospitality: Hebrews 13:1-3 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup> **Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.** <sup>3</sup> Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

We are to be diligent in using those means which are calculated by God to keep brotherly love in a healthy state. The root disease which attacks brotherly love is self-love. All the blessings and mercies of God are perverted by keeping them to ourselves. Just as Christ came to minister to others, and not himself, He left us an example to follow. He was tireless in seeking the good of others. And so we are enjoying the good of our fellow brothers and sisters.

The energy that fosters self-love is pride. Pride demands constant attention from others. Pride is sensitive to the slightest injury. It is our sacred duty to love all whom Christ loves. This is the duty of Christian hospitality. What was commanded under the law is repeated in the gospel. In the apostle's day, this matter was a special urgency and will again someday gain such importance as the Lord's coming beckons.

The need arises under the persecution of the Lord's people in different places when believers were driven from their own homes and were forced to seek shelter in a different place, **Acts 8:1 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.**

Did not our Lord command His people, **Matthew 10:23 (ESV) <sup>23</sup> When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.** Even though our times do not yet illustrate the danger to that degree, the world is enmity against Christians for long will it be until the Lords and the restraint will be lifted?

The revelation that we may be entertaining Angels supplies a possible motive. This information points back to the past when some believers were granted the opportunity to receive Angels appearing as men. I believe these references may point back to Abraham and Lot. The real point here is to remind us that God honors all who honor Him, when they do it directly or indirectly in the people who belong to him, **Hebrews 6:10 (ESV) <sup>10</sup> For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.** The word angel in Greek is translated as a messenger. Every encounter with a real believer is in essence entertaining an angel in a sense of a divine messenger. If we want a zinger, when we received one Christian, we received Him! **Matthew 25:35-36 (ESV) <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was**

**naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'**

**Transition:** Our third reminder is that we should:

**3. Persevere In Support: Hebrews 13:1-3 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup> Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. <sup>3</sup> **Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.**

The immediate references to those who have been deprived of their liberty for Christ's sake, like the apostle Paul. These are those who refused to buckle to Caesar and declared him to be a God. These are not those upon whom the stored have fallen in the operation of righteous laws and their enforcement. The greater application goes out to all who suffer at the hand of your divine providence, including what we may call natural disasters. To remember them means more than to think of them. It means to have compassion towards them and even take up their cause. We are to remember them in our prayers, seeking God's grace that their sufferings may lead to their sanctification.

This applies to those who have been mistreated like the believer who will not deny Christ under duress to lose their job. This applies also to the families of those still affected. Just as they were in the body of Christ and suffered, so also we may suffer.

**Conclusion:** The principles of these verses are of general application at all times to all cases of believers who suffer unjustly. We must remember **Galatians 6:2 (ESV)** <sup>2</sup> **Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.** May God give us grace so that we **Romans 12:15 (ESV)** <sup>15</sup> **Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.** These remembrances are particularly helpful these days when people's emotions are running high where politics is worn on the sleeves, and differences are reduced to enmity. May God give us grace as we steadfastly defend the

gospel in the long God on a lawless day. May God give us strength as we defend the truth against all errors. May we recognize there's a difference between a fellow soldier and an enemy soldier dressed in the uniform of the gospel? Let us be aware of friendly fire.