

The New Covenant Part 8

Love Different

Hebrews 13:1-6

Memory Verses: Hebrews 13:1

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

We have a New Covenant in Jesus Christ. And this new Covenant gives a new promise. Where the Old Covenant promises and eye for an eye and damnation for disobedience, the New Covenant offers eternal life simply by faith. Where the Old Covenant was written on stone tablets, the New Covenant is written on our hearts. The difference is simple. We've traded rules for a personal relationship. And the difference is seen clearly in how we draw nearer to Him. It's seen in how we live out our faith. We live what we say we believe. And it's seen in how we run the race. The New Covenant changes us... it changes everything.

But since the New Covenant is all about relationship, it stands to reason that one of the greatest ways it should change who we are is in the way we love. When I was a teenager I had two long term relationships with a few short term girlfriends here and there. And I said I love you to all of them. Looking back on it... I didn't love them. I don't what know what it was. Perhaps it was the fact that they were a companion or someone on my shoulder when I walked into youth group. Maybe it was the fact that I was scared to be alone. But none of that is love... in fact, what the world calls love, for the most part is simply selfishness disguised as love. But then I met Lisa. We dated for four years and then we got married. And I knew what love really was. Love was sacrificial, selfless, giving, communication, compromise, and a lot of patience. You see, when I met the right one I learned to love differently. When we find Jesus we love differently. We can't help it. Look with me if you would at **Hebrews 13:1-6**.

The point is simple, **Living under the New Covenant means loving different**. We must love differently. We must learn to love strangers like brothers. We must learn to love the forgotten and disenfranchised like guests of honor. We must learn to love our spouses with honor and respect. We must learn to love God more than the pleasures of sin and this world. The point is simple... our love must look different if we are to show the world the greatest love; Jesus Christ. **We must love differently because a watching world is desperate for the true love of Jesus Christ.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first way we love different according to the passage this morning is... **We Love Strangers Like Brothers**. Look again at **Hebrews 13:1-2**. Brotherly love; phileo love, isn't a casual love. It's a deep, sacrificial, and committed love. It's a love that is noticeably different. And that's important because those of us under the New Covenant should be known for a different kind of love. **Where the rest of the world only seems to show love to those who love them or treat them kindly, we are called to love the unlovable, the stranger, and our enemies**. Look at **Matthew 5:43-48**. This kind of love looks radically different than that of the world.

When putting this type of love into practice, the first place is with strangers. According to **vs.2** we must love strangers. And we are to love them with hospitality. That's different. Usually when we think of hospitality we often think of putting on a good night for people we want to impress. We want to impress certain people... but not strangers. But for us as believers, we should be rolling out the red carpet for people we don't even know well or at all... This means our love should be surprising. We love strangers like we should only love brothers or family or other important people.

Other important people like... angels! What? This changes the game. It shows that we should love strangers with a supernatural responsibility. This has big implications; angels will take on the form of humans at times to test our love for strangers. They will go undercover to see if we will actually care for strangers the way God demands we should. With this we realize that no one, anywhere, or at anytime, when put in our path, is unimportant. **Could you imagine an angel showing up and wanting to hang out with you? You'd be bowing on your face, I'm not worthy, etc...** But with a beggar on the street we try our best to not even make eye contact. What if that beggar is an angel?

The point is simple... strangers deserve our love because Jesus deserves our love. When we love the least of these, we are loving our Lord. The stranger needs Christ. He needs the love of God. He may not know it, but he does. If you don't show him the love, how will he even know it exists? You are the love of Christ to the strangers of this world. **We must love differently because a watching world is desperate for the true love of Jesus Christ.**

The next way we can love different is... **We Love The Forgotten Like The Famous**. Look again at **Hebrews 13:3**. We must love the marginalized and mistreated **vs.3**. A category which encapsulates this whole group best could be the category of prisoners. That might be why the Bible focuses in on this specifically. We are called to remember the prisoner. Think about the word remember. Just like with being hospitable, remembering is something that is often reserved for people you care for or hold fond feelings for. Here we are called to remember prisoners; people we

may not even know and if we did we would be tempted to forget as quickly as we could. Why should I remember someone who is a criminal, a drug addict, a sinner! But while the world has forgotten these people, we are called to remember them. Again, this is a different kind of love. People who the world have discarded and thrown away and see as enemies and outcasts.... we are to be the ones who step in the gap and love them. We remember them when no one else does.

And, like we said, this is not just for prisoners but all people who are forgotten, mistreated, or marginalized. **James 1:27** would include both orphans and widows to this list, but we could include a long list of people some would call outcasts. Jesus sought out the outcasts, the unimportant, the hurting, the damaged, the unclean... and he loved them like they were royalty... we are called to do the same. The point is this; **when you welcome the stranger and remember the outcast, you're living out your faith in tangible, risky, and beautiful ways.** The world says protect your space, keep your circle tight. God says, love radically with an open door.

Two to three Monday's a month, Gary Gray, and sometimes me and Don, will go to the city Jail. It is a miserable place. Its a dungeon. It smells, it's gloomy, its scary. But we go. Why? Because those men need to see the love of Jesus. They need to know they aren't forgotten. The Elders and Deacons have all been assigned a widow in our church to look after. If they miss a service or can't make it we make a visit, or reach out in a tangible way. If they can't pay their bills, we step in to help. If they need help mowing their yard we will do that for them. Why? Because they are not forgotten! Our church takes part in Care Portal where we help families stay together and hopefully find faith in Christ. Why? Because the orphan needs to know they are not forgotten! These people need to see the tangible love of Christ. If we've been changed by his love then we must show it to others. **We must love differently because a watching world is desperate for the true love of Jesus Christ.**

The next way we love different is... **We Love Our Spouse Body And Soul.** Look again at **Hebrews 13:4**. We must love our spouses **vs.4a** and we must love them with honor. **Unlike strangers and prisoners, this one seems like a no brainer.** Unfortunately in our culture love within marriage has deteriorated to the point that 50 percent of all marriage ends in divorce. Not only that, those deciding to not marry at all has increased by a staggering 18% in just a decade. If we continue like this, marriage will become rare thing only reserved for the most religiously conservative.

So why are we not getting married and if we do, why are we get divorced? Well a big reason for this is because of a lack of honor. Let's just be honest. We have lost the idea of honor in our culture. We used to

seal deals with just a word or a handshake. And men considered that binding. My word is my bond, was a common phrase. Not today. Our culture doesn't put a high value on keeping our word. In fact, those who can lie, cheat, and outwit others through deceit and scheming are considered respectful. Good job man, you gamed the system. It's crazy. Honor is all but dead.

So if that is the case then why would we want to honor another person by giving them our lives in marriage? And if by some chance we did that... Why would we continue to honor them until we both shall die? Unless we learn to love different. Marriage is an honorable thing. This is why Christian marriage is more important than ever before. It is a light to the world of the love of Christ. When we honor and love our spouse for a lifetime we exemplify the never ending sacrificial love of Christ. We are to treat our spouses like they are a perpetual guest of honor. We did that when we dated, but now that our relationship is well established do we still try to wow, serve, and value one another. We should. But it's hard. Honor takes submission, love, and respect. Look at **Ephesians 5:22, 25, 33**. We must keep this at the forefront of our marriages. If we do our love for one another will set an example for other marriages and intrigue those in the world who are suffering through fruitless marriages or have given up on marriage all together.

But we don't just love our spouses with our souls and minds. We are also called to love them with our bodies. We love our spouses by both honoring them and by being intimate with them. I think its very easy for us to forget this, but God has given sex as a gift for marriage. This is a very specific and God ordained way that we can show our love for each other within a marriage. We must not deny each other this gift. 1 Corinthians 7:4-5 says that our bodies belong to our spouse and we shouldn't deprive one another of this gift, except for a time of fasting and prayer.

However, sex is reserved only for marriage. If sex transcends the marriage bed it becomes defiled. Thus faithfulness in marriage is huge. Again, **we show the love of Christ to the world by remaining faithful to one partner for one lifetime!** It shows an unbelieving world that Christ will remain faithful to us for our entire lives. Listen... our world likes to say, "but it's just sex." It's not just sex! This has biblical consequences. The way we approach sex in marriage and outside of marriage is a huge testimony to the reality of a loving God. **We must love differently because a watching world is desperate for the true love of Jesus Christ.**

Lastly we love different when... **We Love God Above The Lure Of The World.** Look again at **Hebrews 13:5-6**. We must love our God more than pleasure **vs.4b-6**. **Therefore we must show our love not only to our spouses by being sexually pure, but we show our love to our God by abstaining from sexual sin. When we commit sexual sin outside of marriage**

we are adulterers and fornicators. We stand in stark rebellion to God. It's not a little sin. It's not a by product of old religion. It's not okay simply because times change! The Bible is clear. Any sexual activity, even sexual things outside of intercourse, are utterly sinful. And yet, the number one sin, the number one habitual sin which Christians seem to ignore or act as if it's not an important thing... all deals with sex! Christians stand out in a major way when we refuse to give into the ways of the world, especially when it comes to sex! We love our God by being obedient to him. He desires to be loved through our obedience, and he has shown us the way... flee sexual immorality! Look at **1 Corinthians 6:18**.

But there's more here. According to **vs.5**, we show our love for God by refraining from greed. We don't chase money. We don't chase fortunes and stuff. When we chase that type of stuff we show God that we are trusting in other things to take care of us instead of him. We aren't content with him... we need something more. **Instead of chasing sex and money to be fulfilled, like the world does, we chase after an ever-sustaining God.** We say, as **vs.7** says, The Lord is my helper! We love God by trusting in him and not the pleasures of this world. We love God by reverently fearing him instead of man. We live boldly in the face of opposition because we know this; "greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world." The world has tried living for themselves. The world has tried to find love through sexual pleasures. The world has tried love through money and possessions. The world has tried to find love without God. And guess what... none of it has worked! They are looking for love in all the wrong places. And we have that love. **We must love differently because a watching world is desperate for the true love of Jesus Christ.**

Application

Our love for strangers, the forgotten, our spouses, and of course, our God... shows an unbelieving world that there is something to believe in! They don't know the love of Christ... but they are looking for it. They may be looking for it in all the wrong places but they are looking for it. We have it. All we need to do is display it to them. **We must love differently because a watching world is desperate for the true love of Jesus Christ.**

Conclusion

Look again at **verse 1**. Let brotherly love continue. When are we supposed to stop loving people the way Christ loves us? Never. We never stop loving people. We love our enemies, we love those we are uncomfortable around, we love those we are afraid of, we love those we've never met. And when we do that we can change the world.

I don't have to remind you again, but I will. The greatest example of Love all time is the love of Christ displayed on the Cross. As we've mentioned a couple of times lately, the love of Christ should be our primary motivation to live for Christ and love others. We love because he first loved us. Let me ask you a question; has the love of Christ changed your life? Now, do you know people who need the love of Christ to change them? Then go love them with the love of Christ. **We must love differently because a watching world is desperate for the true love of Jesus Christ.**