

Series: **Transforming Faith** – week 7
CDOBC – beginning on 7/3/16
Today's Title: **“Faith + Brotherly Kindness & Love”**

August 14, 2016 ~ 2 Peter 1:7

OBJECTIVE: To help people understand the importance of love.

Opening Prayer

Dissension...disagreements...arguments.

For some people, this is what they think of when they hear the word “church”.

A few months ago - it must have been in one of my sermons, I mentioned something about either an upcoming business meeting or I referred to our congregational form of church governance.

A few days later we received a note from someone who was new to the church - and the fact we have a congregational form of church governance gave them great concern as to whether or not they would continue attending because their past experiences in churches with congregational governance was so unpleasant due to the conflict in those churches.

Love ones...the church must not be known for conflict and heated business meetings. We're called to something much different...much better!

We're called to express brotherly affection and love.

What does this look like?

Why is this so important?

Turn to **2 Peter 1:5-7**. We have 2 more sermons in this series (today and next Sunday) before we begin a new series called: “**A Firm Foundation**”. This new series will continue our study through 2 Peter - and we’ll see how important the firm foundation of truth is in our personal life - and in the life of our church.

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.”

Over the past several weeks we’ve looked in-depth at each of these qualities Peter has told us to add to our faith. The last 2 items in Peter’s list - are our focus today: brotherly affection and love.

This morning I want to show you 3 ways in which brotherly affection and love are crucial for our life.

Love must be a priority in our life *Lev. 19:9-18; Matt. 22:36-40; Luke 10:25-27*

The Greatest Commandment: Love God...Love your neighbor as yourself. (**Lev. 19:9-18; Matt. 22:36-40; Luke 10:25-28**)

And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question to test Him.

36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”

37 And He (Jesus) said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

38 This is the great and first commandment. **39** And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **40** On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

There are 613 laws in the Mosaic Law - the Law God gave Israel at Mt. Sinai after their exodus out of Egypt. Jesus says your love for God and your love toward your neighbor captures the other 611 laws! You can keep the other 611 laws if you obey these 2!!

That's shows how much of a priority love and brotherly affection are.

We no longer live under the religious and civic aspects of Mosaic Law - that was for Israel.

We now live under the law of Christ, which we find taught throughout the Bible.

And, for the past 7 weeks we've been looking at part of this "*law of Christ*" - as Peter has written about our faith and what we should add to our faith.

Last week we talked about *godliness* - and I mentioned: Godliness is not about activity.

Morality and ethics is a result of godliness, not the way to godliness.

We only increase godliness in our life as we allow our heart and mind to be transformed by God's truth and His Spirit.

So... adding godliness to our faith means becoming more like God - not just behavior, but most importantly in thought.

So let's add another level to this.

John tells us “God is love”...so to increase our level of godliness; love must be a major priority in our life!

1 John 4:7-8 “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. **8** Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

Blend what the Apostle John says with what Peter said in vs. 3&4 of **2 Peter 1** - “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, **4** by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature...”

2 Peter 1:3-4 - We were born of God and received everything we need “that pertain to life and godliness”. At conversion we became partakers of the divine nature. Since God is love (**1 John 4:8**), this means if we are His and His Spirit is in us, then love must be a dominant and growing part of our character - our very nature!

Galatians 2:20

“...I no longer live but Christ lives in me”

2 Corinthians 3:18

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory...”

Romans 8:29

“...to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...”

If love is not a dominant and/or growing part of your character - what does that say about you and your faith?

Either you don't have saving faith in Christ...

Or...

You haven't grown since your spiritual birth...you are still a spiritual infant! (You haven't added these things to your faith.)

Or...

You are living in disobedience to God's clear command to love.

Which is it? Are there any other options available?

Any other excuses to explain a lack of love?

Love is a priority. It must be a priority in your life.

The evangelistic power of brotherly affection and love *John 13:34-35*

Our responsibility is not to force people to believe or argue them into the kingdom of God. Our responsibility is to share the gospel of Christ - to be ambassadors of Christ to the world. We must make sure our life is a picture of the gospel so we share Christ not only with our words, but also with our actions.

John 13:34-35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

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

The new aspect of Jesus' command was not to love each other (Leviticus 19:18), but to love each other as He has loved us.

Hate is incompatible with Christianity - it's a severe act of disobedience for the follower of Christ.

1 John 2:9

“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.”

1 John 3:11

11 “This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

Our love for each other is evidence of Christ in us - and our love has a tremendous evangelistic appeal to those who are without Christ.

But, instead of love, too often we Christians are known for other things - things which may be very important, but don't help us accomplish our primary mission to “make disciples” and often these things serve as obstacles to the gospel ministry.

Christians are not supposed to be identified by social agendas, shared political ideology, dating preferences, marriage and parenting principles or financial strategies. There is certainly merit in all these things - but we are supposed to be identified by our love. (John 13:34-35)

Many people will never cross the threshold of the church doors - they will never read the bible or go to a worship service - which presents a great challenge to us Christians. Jesus' Great Commission to us - our primary mission is to *“Make disciples of all nations...”*, but how do we make disciples if they never open the

bible come to church? How will they ever see the invisible God?

By our brotherly affection and love. When this is what we're known for - when this is what people see in us and in our church, it will cause the invisible God to become visible to an unbelieving world!

Brotherly affection and love have great evangelistic power.

Apply it...

The application this morning is actually the 3rd point in the message.

Points #1 & #2 were rooted in knowledge or an understanding of brotherly affection and love.

The priority of brotherly affection and love in our life and the evangelistic power they have for us *if* they are evident and obvious in our life.

In the application, I want you to understand how we put this into practice - how brotherly affection and love can move from theory and idea to everyday reality.

The practice of love *Luke 10:28-37*

Love is a confusing word for our culture because we use it for all kinds of things.

We love everything from potato chips to cars.

Clothes to sports teams

TV shows to Restaurants

PC or Mac

So, when we speak of love, we often think of emotions or feelings - things we like and are drawn to.

But Christian love (agape) is different.

It's a love which regards the other person's needs and desires ahead of your own.

It doesn't mean you ignore your own life, but it means your priority is to serve them and help them before you serve yourself.

In **Luke 10**, Luke records a conversation when Jesus shared the Greatest Commandment - (what we looked at earlier)

Love God, Love your neighbor.

When Jesus said we should love our neighbor the natural question was asked...*who's my neighbor?*

Follow along as I read - **Luke 10:29-37**

But he (a lawyer), desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (He wanted to know who he could ignore.)

30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.

32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. (Same Greek word as Mark 6:34)

34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'

36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" 37 He (the lawyer) said, "The one who showed him mercy."

And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

Love is not only sharing truth, but often involves tangible help in a time of need.

The Priest and Levite - the two who practiced *religion* - didn't want anything to do with the injured man.

We're not told why they didn't help - and over the years many commentators have suggested various reasons, all of which fail to supply a valid reason for walking on the other side of the road.

Let's face it - if we were in that situation we might be in a hurry and not want to throw our schedule off for the rest of the day.

We may not want to deal with the mess - after all, we have nice clothes and don't want to ruin them.

For some reason we may think he deserved what he got.

The point is this: The Priest and the Levite should have helped - they were supposed to be closer to God than

everyone else - but their faith was more *religious ritual and prestige* than anything else. They had no love for others.

If you think this is only an ancient parable, think again.

The other morning, I heard a report on BBC radio:

“A man bleeding to death at the side of a busy road in the Indian capital, Delhi, was ignored for over an hour and later robbed, police said.

The victim was on his way home from a night shift when he was struck by a small van, reports said.

CCTV footage circulating on the internet shows cars driving by without anyone helping, before one man stops and takes the victim's phone.

The footage has also been aired by Indian TV networks, including the moment of impact when the victim is struck as he walks on the side of the road at about 5:30 in the morning. It shows the driver of the van getting out to see what happened before driving away.

Later, a man is seen approaching the victim from a rickshaw and stealing his mobile phone before walking off again.

It took almost 90 minutes before police took the heavily bleeding man to (the) hospital where he was declared dead.”

(Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37043744>)

Seems the Priest and Levite are alive and well today!
To the Jewish audience Jesus was talking with, the Samaritan would be hated and despised.

But Jesus uses a Samaritan to be the hero of the story. It's the Samaritan who loves the stranger on the side of the road. He not only helps in the moment, but is able to provide ongoing help as the man recovers from his injuries.

This is love in practice.

The message of love is not in words only - not in a sermon - but in practice - and it's a message which comes across loud and clear to the unbelieving world!

Second point to apply is this:

Don't be satisfied with your current expressions of love.

You may be someone characterized by love for others - our church may be characterized by our love for people - both Christian and non-Christian.

Don't settle and think we can coast.

1 Thess. 4:9-10 "Now about brotherly love...for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia.

But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more..."

You're doing a great job...you're loving your brothers in Macedonia...but don't be satisfied with the good you are doing...find ways to love them more!

How can we increase our love?

How can we love more and thereby reveal the invisible God in a visible way to an unbelieving world?

It's not my intent to list 10 ways for us to love more - but it's my intent to encourage you to love in ways that are tangible - ways that help meet a specific need in someone's life.

Ways that are selfless and don't have a direct benefit to you - but are valuable to the other person.

Love your fellow believers - and love those who don't yet believe - as Jesus has loved us and gave Himself for us.

“Supplement your faith with brotherly affection and love.”

Close in prayer