

Attitude Towards Our Brethren

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October 6, 2011

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Psalms 100:2-4

The right attitudes are absolutely necessary. They are necessary for unity in a local congregation.

Religiously we can have an attitude that brings blessings from God, or one that brings disfavor from Him.

We studied our attitudes towards God, Jesus Christ, the gospel, and the church; now we shall study our attitudes towards our brethren.

Over the years (even from the first century) the church has suffered because of the wrong attitudes brethren have had toward one another. Today we want to discuss the right attitude toward one another, so that the Lord's work will be blessed.

Let's give our hearts to having the proper attitude.

Attitude of Love.

Jesus taught us the necessity of loving our brethren. John 13:34-35, *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

Love as defined in Phil. 2:3-4, *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."*

Christians that have the love of Christ look out for one another.

We have been born again that we might love one another fervently. 1 Pet. 1:22-23, *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."*

Love involves sacrificing ourselves in giving our time to others — and sometimes even that involves risk. We sacrifice ourselves to help others in whatever ways we can according to need. We sacrifice ourselves to encourage others. We sacrifice ourselves to edify others (teaching them). We sacrifice ourselves to rebuke others (in love and meekness)

Eph. 4:15, *"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."*

Gal. 6:1, *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”*

If we truly love one another, we will be willing to put each other first.

Attitude of Cooperation.

This involves a willingness to work together, as God intended.

1 Cor. 12:21-27, *“And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”*

We need to be able not only to work, but also to work together. Eph. 4:16, *“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”*

When it comes to cooperating with others, (particularly pertaining to the work of the church) do you see yourselves as one of the following?

- A broken cog in the wheel?
- Friction in the gears?
- Extra weight?
- Grease?
- Gasoline?

Unless every member fulfills their role the church will be hindered in its work.

Attitude of Submissiveness.

We are to be servants.

- Matt. 23:11, *“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.”*
- Luke 22:26, *“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.”*

We are to submit to one another. Eph. 5:21, *“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”*

Especially, we are to submit to those in positions of leadership. Heb. 13:17, *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”*

Bad example. 3 John 1:9, *“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.”*

Diotrephes obviously abused his position.

Submissiveness (servitude) keeps the church progressing smoothly.

Attitude of Peaceableness.

We must pursue peace with one another. Rom. 14:19, *“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”*

It is walking worthy of our calling. Eph. 4:1-3, *“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

Endeavouring – striving, working hard.

James 3:17-18, *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”*

When everyone is striving for unity, the fruit is peace.

Psalms 133:1, *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”*

But not peace just for the sake of peace. Be united on the truth of God’s word. We are never to sacrifice His word for the sake of unity, but

there is much that brethren can be united on — such as making decisions on a building project, or making plans for a meeting.

The alternative to peace is self-destruction. Gal. 5:15, “*But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*”

When this happens nothing gets accomplished and it shows that the love of God and of our brethren is not within us.

Attitude of Hospitality.

Christians are to be hospitable. Rom. 12:9-13, “*Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*”

This includes hospitality to strangers and to brethren.

- Heb. 13:1-2, “*Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*”
- 1 Pet. 4:8-10, “*And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*”

It doesn't do us any good if we feel we have to be hospitable — we should want to be hospitable.

A factor in the rapid spread of the church in the first century was the hospitality extended by the Christians. 3 John 1:5-8, “*Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.*”

Hospitality is the product of a giving heart.

Attitude of Warmth, Friendliness, Openness.

We see this expressed by those in the church at Jerusalem.

Acts 2:44-47, *“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”*

And it continued with the saints in Antioch.

Acts 11:27-30, *“And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”*

When someone is in need because of an accident, fire, or national disaster, are we willing to give them whatever is needed. Sometimes that may mean sacrifice on our part.

Attitude of Forgiveness, Forbearance, Patience, Longsuffering.

All of these attitudes overlap, and are very important.

- Eph. 4:2, *“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love,”*
- Eph. 4:32, *“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”*

We all need to be forgiven. We all need others to forbear with us. We all need others to be patience with us. We all need others to be longsuffering with us.

Just as we individually need these things supplied to us in our lives, remember that others need these same things from us as well.

Such things help smooth out the bumps and obstacles that Satan puts in our way in his effort to destroy the local church.

“Blest Be The Tie That Binds”.

A wonderful blessing we enjoy in Christ is our fellowship with other Christians. We are members of one another. Rom. 12:5, *“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”*

Thus we have a special bond or tie that binds us together.

A simple yet beautiful song that describes this bond is “Blest Be The Tie That binds”. The words were written by John Fawcett in 1782. The melody was by Johann G. Nageli, and arranged by Lowell Mason in 1845.

From the words of this song, let’s take this opportunity to reflect upon the special bond we enjoy as Christians.

First verse. “Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love”.

Consider then that the tie that binds is love which is not easily broken. Col. 3:14, *“And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”*

Love that comes from the God of love. 1 John 4:7-11, *“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”*

It is a love that serves as a mark of true discipleship. John 13:34-35, *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”*

The tie involves love that is uniquely Christian; and is patterned after Christ’s love.

“The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.”

This tie involves a unity for which Jesus prayed. John 17:20-23, *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”*

Therefore any threat to this unity is strongly condemned. 1 Cor. 1:10, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*

The tie seeks to emulate the unity between the Father and the Son. The tie that binds is based upon the love and unity which Christ makes possible; how it is manifested is illustrated in the remaining verses of the song.

Second verse. “Before our father’s throne we pour our ardent prayers.”

We are blessed to be able to approach God in prayer. This is a privilege we enjoy in Christ.

Heb. 4:14-16, *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

It is a privilege with great blessings. Heb. 4:16, *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

This song depicts frequent and fervent prayer.

Praying for one another.

James 5:16, *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”*

Praying with another.

Acts 2:42, *“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*

Acts 21:5, *“And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.”*

Such prayer is a benefit of the tie that binds, and also strengthens that tie.

“Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.”

We have similar concerns and desires. Some because we are simply fellow humans in this world. We desire to be healthy, we fear sickness and dying. We enjoy comforts of life, we fear joblessness and poverty. We have similar desires because we are fellow citizens of the kingdom.

We share the hope of the resurrection and eternal life. 1 Pet. 1:3, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”*

We share in the struggles against temptation and persecution. 1 Pet. 5:8-9, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”*

As Christians, therefore, we can have more in common; not just because of our human nature, but also because we are partakers of the divine nature.

Grace and peace are multiplied. 2 Pet. 1:2-3, *“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”*

We have exceedingly great and precious promises. 2 Pet. 1:4, *“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*

Our shared experiences, enhanced by our spiritual blessings, strengthen our tie. The next verse focuses on mutual problems we sometimes face.

Third verse. “We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear.”

As Christians, we are to bear one another’s burdens. Gal. 6:1-2, *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”*

In times of spiritual weakness, we are to pray for one another. James 5:16, *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye*

may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

In times of persecution, we are to remember one another. Heb. 13:3, *"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."*

In times of physical need, we are to provide for one another. James 1:27, *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."*

Manifested in such ways, the tie we have in Christ is truly a blessing.

"And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear."

Because that is how God composed the body of Christ! 1 Cor. 12:24-26, *"For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."*

That we might weep with those who weep. Rom. 12:15, *"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."*

It's an emotional but effective demonstration of the bond we share.

The final verse describes the impact of the tie that binds, when it comes time to separate, even temporarily.

Fourth verse. "When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain."

The tie is such that departure can be painful.

Note the example of Paul and the Ephesian elders. Acts 20:36-38, *"And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship."*

Never experience such pain? Perhaps one might need to examine his tie.

"But we shall be joined in heart, and hope to meet again."

We might be separated in the flesh, but can remain together in spirit. Col. 2:5, *"For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit,*

joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.”

We are comforted by a wonderful hope.

The hope of the resurrection. 1 Thess. 4:13-18, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

It is this hope which keeps our hearts joined together, when all other bonds fail.

Conclusion.

Let us again be reminded that all the talent in the world cannot overcome wrong attitudes.

Wrong attitudes cause more problems than doctrinal issues.

Let us each have an attitude of love toward our brethren, and strive for unity.

