

THE POWER OF ONE ANOTHER: LOVE ONE ANOTHER

Romans 12:9-10

Kids letters to God - Dear God,...

- It rained our whole vacation and is my father mad! He said some things about You that people are not supposed to say, but I hope You will not hurt him anyway. Your friend (but I am not saying who)
- Is it true my father won't get to Heaven if he uses his bowling words in the house?
- Maybe Cain and Able would not kill each other so much if they had their own rooms. It works with my brother.
- Thank you for my baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy
- I bet it is hard for You to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I can never do it!

One thing our two churches share is a common name: Brethren. Why? It is because of passages like Romans 12:9-10.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

The founders of our movements intended for the people sitting in the church pews to be people of love, brotherly love. This is love so sincere that we act like family. We act like brothers and sisters where there is a deep intimacy between us and a deep passion for each other. That is why the name "Brethren" was chosen for our denominations.

When you say that you are part of a Brethren church, you are saying that you are striving to be a person of love.

Both of our churches has recently taken surveys that have been asking God to show us where He is leading our two churches. Both have been asking the question, "How can we become more healthy? How can we deepen our members' faith & reach the lost?" I want to tell you that neither church will become healthy or grow without love.

The Apostle Paul took an entire chapter (1 Corinthians 13) to convince the Christians in the city of Corinth that they could have the best of everything – the best preachers, the best worship leaders, the best supernatural gifts

like healing and speaking in tongues – but if they didn't have love their church was a flop! They were just making noise!

In the NIV Bible there are 55 Commands to love one another. You can find this list on our website at www.cerrogordocob.com. The Bible tells us in these commands to be at peace with one another, to love one another, to accept one another, to admonish one another, to wait for one another, to greet one another, to serve one another, to bear one another's burdens, to show tolerance for one another, to fellowship with one another, to be kind to one another, to forgive one another, to encourage one another, to spur one another on, to confess our sins to one another, and to pray for one another.

The Apostle Paul did the same thing in the book of Romans that he did in Corinthians. He took a whole chapter, chapter 12, to teach the Roman Christians how to love one another!

Romans 12, and especially versus 9 & 10 teach us to what the love in our churches should look like!

Romans 12: 9 & 10 tells us:

1. OUR LOVE SHOULD BE SINCERE

- a. Romans 12:9a - *Love must be sincere*
- b. There is a song that goes, "They will know we are Christians by our..." backstabbing, gossip, hatred, cliques, separation, unforgiveness, put downs. NO! It says "They will know we are Christians by our LOVE!"
- c. IN fact, Jesus didn't just sing this, He said it. Listen to what He said in John 17:21 - *Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.* Jesus tells us in His prayer that if we are united in love, the world (which includes Cerro Gordo and the Decatur area) will know that Jesus was sent for them!
- d. The visitors in our churches need to know that our love is real and sincere and authentic!
- e. James Hewitt – Our doctrine may be Biblical, the singing inspirational, the sermon uplifting, but when a visitor finds nobody who cares whether he's here, he is not likely to come back.
- f. Too often we come to church with masks on. We're not real with people. We might be here in the body, but emotionally, we are

disconnected. Like wearing Halloween Masks, we come to church with smiles. We hide our pain, our frustration, and we hide our hearts. When we hide our hearts, our love can not be real and authentic. God is calling our churches to have real love for one another!

Romans 12: 9 & 10 tells us:

1. OUR LOVE SHOULD BE SINCERE

2. OUR LOVE SHOULD RESTORE

- a. Romans 12:9b - *Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.*
- b. If you love someone, you despise anything that is a threat to his or her well-being. If you love your grandmother, you hate Alzheimer's. If you love your mate, you hate cancer. If you understand that sin is lethal, you also hate sin, while you still love the sinner!
- c. The postmodern world insists that we shouldn't judge any action as right or wrong. "Let everyone do their own thing." In many people's minds the only sin is intolerance. They refuse to tolerate intolerance!
- d. The church seems to have forgotten its call to restorative love. Just look at what it asks of its members. The leaders sometimes say:
 - "Come if you have time. It's all right to skip church."
 - "Talk about problems and don't focus on joys. Gossip if you want to."
 - "Respect everyone's opinions. Don't correct any one."
 - "Never criticize."
 - "Leave quietly if you become dissatisfied."
 - I ask you, "Is that love?"
- e. Even our loving God hates sin. Proverbs 6:16-19 - *There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.*
- f. God hates sin because He loves those who are hurt by it.
- g. Love takes a look at a person's situation and calls out what is wrong. By doing so, true love restores. Love cares enough to

- say, “Hey, that’s wrong. I hope you’ll stop. I’ll be there for you no matter what, but you’re hurting yourself.” Love calls us to go the extra mile when someone is engaging in sin.
- h. Ella Wilcox – “A pat on the back is only a few vertebrae removed from a kick in the pants, but it is miles ahead in results.”
 - i. Galatians 6:1 - *Dear brothers and sisters, if another Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.*
 - j. James 5:20 - *Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.*
 - k. Robert Schuller – “Love is my decision to make your problems my problem.”

Romans 12: 9 & 10 tells us:

1. OUR LOVE SHOULD BE SINCERE
2. OUR LOVE SHOULD RESTORE
3. **OUR LOVE SHOULD BE LOYAL**

- a. Romans 12:10a - *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.*
- b. Loving people doesn’t come easy. You know that in your life there are those who are E.G.R.’s: “extra grace required.” These EGR’s include:
 - Coworker or a competitor who gets on your nerves
 - Neighbor who won’t stay off your grass
 - Member of your family – a teenager who is sarcastic, or a mother-in-law who won’t hold her tongue
 - Maybe it’s a person in your congregation:
 - A deacon or board member who is critical
 - A leader who has offended you
 - A member whose lifestyle isn’t consistent with their Sunday morning actions
 - The fact is that if you are a Christian, you have a new nature and a greater capacity to love the unlovable.
- c. I can criticize my brother-in-law Gary. I know his faults. I tease him a lot. But I will also go the mat for him when people talk about him. Brothers should be loyal.
- d. Proverbs 17:17 (NLT) - *A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born to help in time of need.*

- e. An American sociologist said, "People are flocking to smaller towns all across America. The problem is that they continue to live as if they are in the city or suburbs: a life of isolation."
- i. This is a life where no one is faithful to them! People are moving to towns like Cerro Gordo and are feeling lonely. They do not know God's love and do not know any one who would be loyal to them!
 - ii. Mother Theresa said, "The greatest poverty of all is the feeling of being unwanted, uncared for, deserted and alone."
 - iii. We need to be a church that is full of loyal love!
- f. Why are we loyal? Because God is loyal to us:
- Jeremiah 31:3 - *Long ago the Lord said to Israel: "I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself."*
 - 1 John 3:1 - *See how very much our heavenly Father loves us, for he allows us to be called his children, and we really are!*

g. Our love needs to be base on this love from God:

Love based on God makes you put up with someone's differing opinions
 Love makes you get to church and practice the music until it is excellent for the Lord

Love makes you reach out to a neighbor who may never come to church

Love makes you stand up for what is right even when it is not popular

Love makes you tear off the masks you wear to church and get real in worship

Love makes you forgive, even when it is painful

Love gives you hope, despite the situation you are in right now

Love allows you turn the other cheek

Love gives you the strength to give a word of encouragement to someone else even when you are down yourself

Love allows you to be patient with someone who may never get it right.

Love makes you the nicest person the block, even when people treat you wrong.

Love makes you content with what you have, and when God blesses you,

Love keeps your mouth quiet so you won't boast,

Love keeps your awareness of others people's needs in front of you.

Love gives you the strength to hold your tongue, to not demand your rights, to not get angry when a cool head is needed.

Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails.

LOVE BASED ON GOD IS THAT LOYAL!!!

Romans 12: 9 & 10 tells us:

1. OUR LOVE SHOULD BE SINCERE
2. OUR LOVE SHOULD RESTORE
3. OUR LOVE SHOULD BE LOYAL, and...

4. OUR LOVE SHOULD BE UNSELFISH

- a. Romans 12:10b - *Honor one another above yourselves*
- b. Instead of just coming out and saying "Honor one another above yourselves," the Message puts it this way, "*practice playing second fiddle.*"
- c. There were two little girls both trying to ride a mechanical rocking horse. One told the other, "If one of us would get off, there'd be more room for me."
- d. Philippians 2:3-4 - *In humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*
- e. The world's concept of love is self-centered: you make me smile, you make me feel good when I'm with you, you light up my life, and therefore I love you. When someone no longer does those things for us, the world says it's OK to stop loving. Christian love is different, it is unselfish!

CONCLUSION:

1. What should Christian love look like in the Church?
 - a. In your outlines is 1 Peter 3:8. Read it with me: *Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.*
 - b. Love that is in the Brethren churches should be:
 - i. Harmony love – the kind where we are making sweet music together.
 - ii. Sympathetic love – the kind where we really put ourselves in other people's shoes
 - iii. Compassionate love – the kind that comes from the heart, not out of duty.
 - iv. Humble love – the kind where we put ourselves last.
2. Martin Luther King Jr. – "I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."
3. Will you stick with love? The kind that God wants for you?

1 John 4:7-10 - Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

You see, we can love, because Christ has entered our lives. I want to make it clear. If you have never experienced the love of Christ; if you have never accepted Him as your atoning sacrifice, then you have not experience real love!

1 John 4:19 - We love because he first loved us.

If you want real love in your life, you need to let Christ love you first!

Jesus loves you! Jesus cares for you! He laid down His life for you! He rose from the dead for you! He paid for your sins! He points you to a new way to live! Jesus loves you!

Will you make a decision today to allow Him to love you? Will you accept this gift of love?

If you are already a Christian today, today is the day to get back on the road of love. Some of us have not been loving the way God wants us to, and He calls you to love!

If you have a decision today and want to share it with these two congregations, will you come forward during the next song?