

“Be Devoted to One Another in Brotherly Love”
(Romans 12:10)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Last week, Paul broke ground on what should motivate all we do for the Lord: love.
 - a. A genuine love, sincere, without hypocrisy/not an act, doesn't say one thing but do another.
 - b. A genuine godly love that hates/despises evil/everything contrary to God's Law.
 - c. A godly love that clings/holds fast to what is good/everything consistent with God and His will.
 - d. This is one of the ways you can know you have the saving work of God's Spirit: you love what He loves; you love like He loves.
2. But please remember that love's opposite is still in your heart: sin.
 - a. Sin is not sincere, but hypocritical; it is an act; it seeks its own; it says one thing but does another.
 - b. Sin loves evil and hates good.
 - c. But don't let the fact that sin is in your heart mislead you: if the new principle of love is there, if there is warfare going on between the two principles/Spirit and flesh, God's grace is there/His Spirit is there/His love is there.

B. Preview.

1. Paul moves from the principle to the application.
 - a. Love is the power/electricity that moves the machinery; it moves us to serve God.
 - b. But how are we to express this love?
 - c. We know generally how through the Commandments.
 - d. But Paul now, like Solomon in Proverbs, gives us some of the specifics.
2. Remembering that we are members of one body and of the same family, he tells us we should devote ourselves to loving one another with a brotherly love.
3. Let's spend a few moments this morning understanding what he means and how this should affect the way we live.

II. Sermon.

A. Paul says, “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.”

1. “Be devoted” is an interesting word in the Greek.
 - a. It means to be “very loving, warmly devoted to, very affectionate” (Lowe-Nida).
 - b. It means to be “tenderly affectionate” especially to the members of your family or the society of which you are a part (Friberg).
 - c. This is the kind of heart we are to have towards one another.
2. The word “brotherly love” is also instructive.
 - a. In the Greek, it's *philadelphia*, from which we get the name of the city.
 - b. It means love for a brother or sister, affection for a fellow believer (Friberg).
 - c. It obviously doesn't refer to passion.
 - d. It refers to the kind of love a family has for its members.
 - e. The love that you have in your family is the greatest love of this kind you will ever experience in this world.

- (i) The love of parents for their children, and children for their parents.
 - (ii) The love of brothers or sisters for each other, or that of a brother and sister for each other.
 - (iii) Even the love of a husband for his wife, a wife for her husband. Though they come from different families, they are to embrace each other as though they are the same flesh (Eph. 5:28-29).
 - (iv) It may start differently and feel stronger, but it must include this familial love if it is to survive.
 - (v) This is the kind of love we are to have towards each other as members of the body of Christ: We are to love each other as family.
3. This is the kind of love that holds a family together, that will bind the members of the church together.
- a. Paul writes to the Colossians, “Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity” (Colossians 3:14).
 - b. It’s presence is not enough; it must flow out to others: this creates the bond of unity.
 - c. It’s the sharing or fellowship in this love that strengthens the bond and keeps us together.
 - d. As we’ve already seen, saying you love isn’t enough; it isn’t genuine.
 - (i) True love reaches out; it impacts others.
 - (ii) You know when someone loves you and when they don’t.
 - (iii) There are those who say they love, but their words and actions say different.
 - (iv) And then there are those who say they love and show it.
 - (v) How do they show it? As John Boys said, “Of love there be two principle offices, one to give, another to forgive” (*Treasury*).
 - (vi) Whom do you prefer to be around? It’s the desire to be with those like this that is the bond of love.
- B. The obligation to love like this can’t be overstated.
1. This is so important that we are commanded repeatedly and given many examples in the Bible. Let me give you just a few:
- a. Jesus says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).
 - b. “This I command you, that you love one another” (John 15:17).
 - c. Paul writes, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6).
 - d. “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (5:13).
 - e. He reminds us that this is the fruit of the Spirit. This is how you can know that the Spirit lives in you, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness” (5:22).
 - f. He write to the Ephesians, “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3).
 - g. And to the Thessalonians, “Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another” (1 Thes. 4:9).

- h. “We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater” (2 Thes. 1:3).
 - i. The author to the Hebrews writes, “Let love of the brethren continue” (13:1).
 - j. Peter writes, “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart” (1 Peter 1:22).
 - k. “Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king” (1 Peter 2:17).
 - l. John writes, “The one who says he is in the light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes” (1 John 2:9-11).
 - m. “Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth” (1 John 3:13-18).
 - n. “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).
 - o. And, “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also” (4:20-21).
 - p. If God says something once, it’s binding. How then should we look at this command?
2. We are called not simply to tolerate each other, nor merely to like each other, but to love each other.
 - a. Love helps us to think the best of each other.
 - b. It gives us the ability to overlook each others sins and faults.
 - c. It keeps us bound together in the bonds of peace.
 3. We’ve already seen what can happen when this love breaks down.
 - a. It has devastating effects.
 - b. That’s why the devil attacks in this area first.
 - c. If he can erode that love, make us look with suspicion, get us merely to tolerate, then dislike, then hate, then attack, he has won.
 - d. This has happened many times in marriages, in families, in this fellowship; we must guard our own hearts and help one another not to let it happen again.
 - e. We must be filled with the Spirit, filled with His love, the love Christ supplies by His Spirit.
 - f. And so let’s take seriously the admonition of the apostle Paul and “be devoted to one another in brotherly love.”
 - g. As Peter writes, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8). Amen.