Love the Brethren

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INTRODUCTION

- Sadly, though it should not be this way, sadly, sometimes God's people don't get along. Strife and discord exist among even God's people. And division results.
- Based upon God's love for us, we of all people should be people of love. And above all people, we should be people of love toward one another.
- This morning I want to talk to you about my brethren. And I want to talk to you about love.

1 What Am I Talking About: My Brethren

- The first category is simply my brethren in Christ. These are people. We're talking about what we sometimes call the universal church.
- The second category is simply my brethren in the local church.
- There's a third category, those my brethren otherwise, people whom I otherwise endorse their beliefs and practices, and to whom I would extend a right hand of fellowship.
- When I talk about my brethren, I'm talking about categories number two and three, primarily number two, my brethren in the local church.

2 Sometimes My Brethren Thrill Me, Sometimes They Disappoint Me

Acts 4; 1 Thessalonians 3:6–8

- Sometimes my brethren thrill me. But sometimes they disappoint me. And that's nothing new. It must have been that way in the first century.
- Now that Timothy has come to us from you and brought us good news of your faith and love, we were comforted concerning you by your faith. For now we live if you stand fast in the faith.
- But let's not forget about Ananias and Sapphira. To take such an exciting, thrilling moment and to have it marred with this deceit and greed.
- And so it is today. There are thrilling moments, aren't there? But disappointments come.

3 I'm Not Ashamed to Acknowledge My Brethren

2 Timothy 1:8; 2 Timothy 1:16; Hebrews 2:11–12

- I'm not ashamed to speak in defense of my brethren. To put it another way, I'm proud of this church. And I'm proud of my brethren.
- Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.
- He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare your name to my brethren, and in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to you.

- Jesus is not ashamed to call me his brother. So how dare I ever be ashamed to acknowledge you with all your faults.

4 Love Born Out in Action: Tell Your Brethren

2 Corinthians 6:11

- It's not going to be empty words or just some passive emotion, but it's going to be love born out in action.
- We have spoken openly to you. Our heart is wide open.
- Tell somebody. Tell your brethren that you love them. Say it. Now that's hard sometimes, isn't it?

5 Appreciate and Magnify Their Good Qualities

Hebrews 12:14–15

- One of the key elements of love is that we appreciate and magnify the good qualities in someone.
- Nothing wears upon people who are trying to serve God more than constant overbearing negativity.
- Pursue peace with all people and holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble.
- One of the first signs that somebody is going to fall away is a bitter spirit.

6 Help Them, Expecting a Good Response

Hebrews 6:9

- I'm going to do everything that I can to help them. Pointing out the dangers. Warning, pleading, encouraging.
- But beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you. Yes, things that accompany salvation. Though we speak in this manner.
- Did they need to be admonished? Did they need to be corrected? Yes, but it was done so in a spirit and an intent that I know you're going to do better.
- Paul taught us that love bears all things, believes all things, and hopes all things.

THE CHALLENGE

Would you obey him this morning? Would you become a part of his body this morning and encourage and be encouraged as you make your way to heaven?

MY NOTES