

# Brotherly Love

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[0:00] Let brotherly love continue, Hebrews 13, 1.

I'm talking about relationships tonight. Relationships with each other. They're very important! We all know we've got relationships with loved ones, family, friends.

Brothers and sisters in Christ. Relationships matter. And I wanted to cover three areas where you could say we as believers need to learn how we can relate together with one another. How we can relate together with one another.

And they're three B words. The first one almost sounds a bit funny when you first hear it, but I'll explain that. Bows. Philippians 1, verse 8.

The first area I'd like to put to you as to how brotherly love can continue. How we can make it happen and keep it happening. And Philippians 1, verse 8. Paul writes, he says, For God is my record, how greatly I longed after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

[1:17] He said that he longed for the fellow believers at Philippi with the bowels of Jesus Christ. Kind of a strong word. Sounds a bit odd to us today to think of such an expression. But you know, that word bowels, literally in the Greek, means bowels. That's what it means.

It means the intestines. It means the guts, if you like to use a colloquial term. It means the very depths of sympathy, of mercy, of feeling. Gut-wrenching passion. We could think of it, of our saviour. Of how his very innermost being was moved. And we see reference to that, which will come to it. Strong terminology, isn't it? To think of the bowels of a person. I don't know if you're like me when I go for a job interview. And you get those butterflies. You know, you get that feeling of nervousness. You get that feeling of your stomachs, you're just strained and stretched and contorted. And the inside of you is affected. Or if you're facing something that's a bit challenging to do. Something that's a bit daunting for you to do. It's like that, isn't it? We feel that feeling on the inside of us. It's those feelings from deep within. That's what Paul's writing about here. He says he longs for these fellow believers at Philippi with the bowels of Jesus Christ. It's like the passion of our saviour.

With the innermost being. With the depths of compassion. With those feelings and affections. And that deep tenderness. You know, nowadays, I don't know how you might see it, but sometimes relationships, and I know that I'm probably one guilty of this, relationships can be a bit superficial. A bit shallow. A bit kind of passing on the surface. You know, sometimes it can be like that with the church scene. Let's face it. Or you might just have a fleeting contact with people, and you don't see them for another seven days. You know, it's like things can be very superficial with our fellowship. We don't want to settle for helloship. We want to have that being knitted together in love. If God's helping us, we can achieve that. We can see more of that. That's why we encourage a bit of after-fellowship time, after the service time, so we can mingle and get to talk to one another. There could be some prayer needs here. You might have a need on your heart that you want to share with someone today. And look, we don't have to have anything formal. We don't have to have some altar call for you to get prayer. You might want to just say to a brother quietly, or a sister, I've got a need. I'd like you to pray for me. And you can pray for one another. You don't have to ask for the pastor to do it all, or whoever else might be presiding. As fellow believers, you can pray for one another. We want to encourage that as a church, to have that kind of closer fellowship. And we see Christ, with that churning on the inside of him, you can imagine that feeling that our Saviour had. He was moved with compassion. Numbers of times. We know that, I know it was referred to of late, how he had tears, how he was a real man, a real man, a man with feelings and emotions. And we see those gut-wrenching emotions referred to in this expression, the bowels of Jesus Christ, the heart of our Saviour. The tenderness, the compassion, the deep love.

And the verb form for this word, bowels, is translated in the King James, moved with compassion. Moved with compassion. And we see that in a number of references, and it refers to the emotional

life of our Saviour, the person of Christ. He was an emotional man. He was a man with like passions, such as weak, like emotions that he had, that he can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. In Matthew 9.36, it says, but when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them. He saw them as sheep scattered. He saw their need of a shepherd. He wanted to reach out and minister. Matthew 14.14, and Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion towards them. Matthew 15.32, then Jesus called his disciples unto him and said, I have compassion on the multitude. Matthew 20.34, so Jesus had compassion on the two blind men, and he touched their eyes. Mark 1.41, and Jesus moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched the leper. Luke 7.13, and when the Lord saw the widow, he had compassion on her. These same words, it's that kind of innermost being, the bowels of our Saviour, if you like. We see that compassion demonstrated too in the account of the Good Samaritan.

[6:15] When the religious ones passed here and there, crossed to the other side of the road, you know, averted their gaze. It was the Good Samaritan who had compassion and went and ministered to the need of the man. We see it likewise in the story of the prodigal son, of the prodigal as he wandered, and then as he turned homewards, the father saw and he had compassion and he ran towards his son.

It's the same word that we are speaking of. It's Christ's character. It's his very innermost parts. They were churned up inside as he saw lost humanity, as he saw the hurting multitudes, as he saw the individuals with needs that he could meet. He was churned up on the inside as he saw sinful man wandering without a shepherd. He was profoundly stirred to have mercy and love towards them. The bowels of Jesus Christ, they should be something that we, as God's people, should seek to also have. We referred this morning of Christ's likeness. It's one of the characteristics of our Saviour, is that innermost compassion, those innermost affections. And God's love should work in us likewise, towards brothers and sisters. For example, there's references we could give to the same word, bowels.

Again, 1 John 3, verse 17. It says, But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? What it's saying there is if you see someone in need, and you can help minister to that need, don't close up your feelings of love and care and consideration and compassion.

[8:02] Don't be a loveless Christian. Let's be people with compassion, people who care. And that should be seen in our care for others' feelings. Care for those that might be the disregarded ones.

Those least esteemed. We should have Christ's compassion towards them. We see in Philemon 1, verse 7. We have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Paul was concerned for Philemon. He wanted to ensure that people considered his feelings. Likewise goes on Philemon 1, verse 20.

Paul considered the feelings of the other brother. He wanted to see that consideration granted. We see the compassion in Philippians 2, verse 1.

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies. And for latecomers, we talk about bowels, sort of the innermost being of a man, of a woman, of our affections and of our compassion.

[9:13] Paul says to these people in Philippi, if there's comfort of love, if there's fellowship, if there's mercy, if there's that affection, let's give it.

Let's not hold back. Let's show our love to others around about. Let's show the very love of Jesus Christ. That's what it's saying. You know, churches, and we can be guilty of this, churches can get stuffy and not consider others' needs.

We don't want to be like that. We want to fight against that kind of Spirit and have the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of love, of compassion, of bowels and mercies, of that innermost affection and care and consideration.

The very love of Jesus Christ. The love that He extended to the most undeserving, let's face it. You know, the woman caught in the very act of adultery, if there's any that should have deserved His fiery judgment for being caught in such a compromising circumstance.

And yet, He showed such love and compassion towards her. I don't know when He said, Go and sin no more. He says, Neither do I condemn thee.

[10:26] Go and sin no more. Whether He had, He might have had tears in His eyes as He said that. You can imagine that the compassion of our Saviour. You know, He saw the ugliness of sin, the sinfulness of sin, the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

And yet, He saw the human being in the grip of that sin. And He extended His compassion towards her. And we need to do likewise. Colossians 3, verse 2, it says, We should have those bowels of mercies.

We should have that kindness, that meekness, that long-suffering. That's Colossians 3, verse 12. So we see brotherly love. Let it continue. We want brotherly love to mark our church, to mark our relationships with one another.

And that should be seen in those bowels, in that innermost affection and consideration and compassion towards another. So bowels is the first word. The second word is burdens.

Burdens. Burdens is the second word that we could consider tonight, to look at this subject of how brotherly love should continue. Galatians 6, verse 2, it says, Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

[11:40] There's likely some burdened down people here today. There's people feeling grief and loss at this time. There's people going through some challenging times in financial ways.

There's people who have got all kinds of family conflicts and trouble in their homes. There's people struggling with sin. People struggling to find God.

There's burdens here tonight. And it says in the word, Bear one another's burdens. Bear ye, all of you. It's a plural word.

He says, Carry one another's burdens. Help one another. See if there's someone here with a load you can help carry. If there's someone here with a weight on their shoulders, loading them down. See if you can lend a hand to carry it. You know, sometimes it's nice to receive, but the Bible says it's even better to give. It's even better to give. You might feel loaded down yourself.

[12:38] There might be someone more loaded down than you that you can help lift up and encourage today. Take time to care. Take time to care. You know, sometimes churches can be a bit like this story.

There's a story told years ago. There was a war on, and there was a German soldier slightly wounded in the battle. And the story goes, he went home to his mother, and the mum said, Look, son, you're injured.

You need to go down to the hospital down the street and get some help. So this son, he went down to the hospital, and he walked in and he saw two doors. Two doors faced him. One said, Seriously wounded.

One said, Slightly wounded. He wasn't hurt that badly, so he went through the second door. He walked down the long hall, and again he was faced with two doors. One said, Officers, and one said, Non-Officers.

Being an enlisted man, he took the non-officers door. Again, there was a long hall. He walked down the hallway, he got to the end, and he came to two more doors. One said, Party members.

[13:41] The other said, Non-Party members. Not being a party member, he walked through the right-hand door, and he found himself back out on the street. Amen. Upon returning home, his mother asked him, Well, son, did they help you?

He said, To tell you the truth, mum, they didn't do a thing for me, but you ought to see the tremendous organisation they have. You know, churches can be like that. Let's be honest, brothers and sisters, we can be so organised.

We can have everything just down pat, and everything running smoothly, and you've got a perfect musician, who doesn't make any mistakes, and the songs are perfectly projected, and you sing just so perfectly, and yet, we can be so organised, that we miss the point, of what we're about, of what we're meant to be about, brothers and sisters.

It's not about all of that. It's nice to have such things working well, but really, the organisation is not so much the issue, as the organism, the organism, that is the church, that we're meant to be, a

body, of God's people, representing Christ, on this earth, being his hands, being his feet, being his caring, outreach, caring for one another, as an organism, a body, of Christ, living and walking, sharing, caring, bearing one another's burdens, with a concern, a connection, and a togetherness, as every part of the body, plays its part, caring about one another.

That's what we want to be. We fail often, I know, but let's aspire for that. Let's aspire to that. Let's be that kind of church. You know, this sense of this phrase here, of bear ye, one another's burdens, is carry, and keep on carrying, the burden.

[15:26] Carry, and keep on carrying. Pray for one another, if you hear of a burden tonight. Pray tonight, and pray through the week. There's a man going into hospital, we can pray for him, we can pray for him, before he goes into hospital, we can pray for him, when he's in hospital, we can pray for him, when he's out of hospital.

We can pray for one another. There's people here, take time tonight, take time tonight, to see what needs people have. Find out how you can pray, how you can care.

You know, the context of Galatians 6, 2, is of restoration, 2. It's of church discipline. It's of a restoring of a brother, or a sister, who needs restoration.

And the sense is of, the ancient doctors, of setting a broken bone. That's the sense of it. So it's done carefully, firmly, but gently. It's done for healing, not for punishment.

And the sense is of burdens. There's people here, and in our fellowship, people with burdens, emotional burdens, burdens of depression, burdens of emotional pressure.

[16:35] We want to be there for you, you that are feeling that tonight. We want to be there for you. And it's not all about me, it's about the body, the body.

You know, I want the church, to rise up, to meet the need. Every one of us, to take time, to care, to counsel, to pray, to listen, to hug, to hold, to help.

And do that day, after day, after day. Not just, when it's church time, so called. And so, there could be emotional burdens, there could be financial burdens.

Burdens where there's people, who need some assistance, and support. We don't have a limitless supply, but maybe there's ways, we can show our love, in practical support.

A joy shared, is a double joy, a burden shared, is half a burden. Help someone carry a burden. Find a need, and meet it. You know, and sometimes, we can think, well, some people might, be too hard to help.

[17:40] You know, I've read this story, in preparation, and I'll share another kind of, quaint little story. Now, we've got a man in this church, who's got two dogs, but, this is another man, in England, who's got two dogs.

He had two dogs. One was a terrier, and one was a chihuahua. And, Percy the chihuahua, was hit by a car. And, Percy's owner thought, that poor Percy was dead.

So, the owner, Christine, took the little chihuahua's body, took Percy's body, put it in a plastic bag, went out back, and buried it, in the backyard. Then, Nick the terrier, was heartbroken.

His mate, the other dog, was, you know, buried in the ground, in a plastic bag. And, Nick the terrier, went over there, and dug up the plastic bag. With his teeth, he drove the bag, over to the house.

And, when Christine, the owner, came out, and saw the bag, her heart was, the heart was beating. Percy the chihuahua, not only lived, but he totally recovered. And, it was because of Nick, the terrier, who saved Percy, the chihuahua.

[18:46] Now, saying all of that, to say, God is in the resurrection business. God is interested in giving people new life. And, there's people here, you might think they're past it, they're dead and buried.

But, there's people you can help, and maybe breathe some of God's new life, back into them. Give them an encouragement, pat them on the back, show that you care, give them a smile, give them a word, give them a call.

Do what you can, do what you can, brothers and sisters, because we're his body, we're his hand extended, we're his mouth, on the end of the phone line. Friends, let's pull people out, of the clutches of death, and help ease those burdens, bear those burdens.

Like someone said, the church, is a hospital. But, it doesn't matter how organised we are, if nobody gets cured. If we're not going to bear, people's burdens, if there's no real dedication, to fellowship. You know, a church is not meant to be, an edifice, a museum, some kind of school, so much. It's meant to be a hospital. It's meant to be a place, where people care, for one another.

[19:50] We care for those, who are hurting, are grieving, and needing the saviour. A hospital, for souls. And that's what we want to be, we want to bear those burdens, like the great burden bearer, our saviour did.

The burden bearer. He came, it says that, he carried, our sorrows. He carried, our griefs. He's carried them for you already. He's carried your griefs.

He's carried those burdens. He's carried, those hurts. He's carried, those feelings. And friends, we can, be encouraged today, no matter what.

Now, all Christians have burdens, as here's a quote, they differ in size and shape, they vary depending on, the circumstances of life. For some, it might be, a burden of temptation, a moral lapse, a mental disorder, a physical ailment, a family crisis, a lack of employment, demon oppression.

No Christian, is exempt from burdens. But we can be, as it says in Romans 12, five, members, one of another. Here's, bear with me, another little story, to try to illustrate, this truth.

[21:00] There was, a mountain climber, famous mountain climber, people would know about, Sir Edmund Hillary. Sir Edmund Hillary, he led the first team, to the zenith, of Mount Everest.

And he had a guide with him, a Sherpa guide, one of the locals, who knew all the paths, and the way to go, to climb Mount Everest. And his name, was Penzik Norgay. And this fellow, Norgay, was with, Edmund Hillary, right through the climb.

And, partway through the climb, Edmund Hillary's foot slipped, and he lost his balance, and he fell completely. But Norgay, had taken his pick, and jammed it, into the ice.

And because of the rope, holding the two of them together, he was able to hold up Hillary, until he was able to, climb back, onto the mountain face, again. If, the guide had not been there, Hillary would have fallen, over a thousand feet, to a short doom.

When they got down, the bottom of the mountain, everybody was congratulating, this fellow Norgay, he said he was a hero. The press was there, and this fellow said, no, no, no, I'm not a hero.

[22:09] Mountain climbers, are tied to one another, to help each other. That's just, who we are. That's how Christians should be. That's how we should be, brothers and sisters.

We should be tied to one another, with the bond of love, as it were, tied to one another. That we are Christ's body, we care for one another, we're committed to helping one another, we're committed to sharing the burdens, and bearing them, for one another.

So we see, the, brotherly love. Let brotherly love continue. We want brotherly love, to dominate, this church, to be, manifest, as the prime, feature, of our relating to one another.

Let brotherly love continue. We see, that we're called to have, the, bowels, of Jesus Christ. To have the kind of feelings, that our Saviour would have.

To lost humanity, to the needy, to the hurting. The consideration, the compassion, for one another. Let's not be stiff and starchy, with one another. Let's not be standoffish, with one another.

[23:21] Let's have the bowels, of Jesus Christ. That kind of, compassion, that moves us, that shapes us, that drives us, that constrains us, that makes us care, that makes us, want to love, one another, as he, love does.

Absolute, supreme love. Nothing can match it. It's matchless love. It's incomparable love. The love, that sets him to the cross, for you, for me.

We can't understand it. We can't fathom it. That's the kind of, bowels, of Jesus Christ. That kind of love. We can't, we can't, fathom it. The bowels, of Jesus Christ.

We see, the burdens, the burdens. Let's look out, for the burdens. Let's look out, for one another. Let's see those, that are burdened, in our midst. Those, that might not be here today, that are normally here.

We might think, how can I show, that I care? How can I give, some time, some consideration, some respect, to their burden? Maybe they've not, got a burden, but at least you show, that you care.

[24:24] And thirdly, bonds. Bonds, is what I'd like to, close with. The third thing, that I would put to you, we could consider, when we think of brotherly love. The bowels, of Christ, the burdens, of one another, and thirdly, the bonds, that should unite us, and tie us together.

A bit like that rope, tied Hillary, to the guide. Colossians 3, 14 it says, above all these things, there's a big long list there, he says, put on charity.

He says, be clothed with this, be clothed with charity, put it on, it's the bond, of perfectness, the bond, of charity, it's the bond, of perfectness.

And then Ephesians 4, 3 speaks of, the bond, of peace, endeavouring to keep, the unity, of the spirit, in the bond, of peace. The bond of love, the bond of peace. There's bonds, that tie us together.

There's bonds, that unite us. It speaks of like, a band, of a, of a control, of something, that unites, that holds us together, as a belt, that tie us, together.

[25:27] There's a, a, a uniting, element, a holding together, that should mark, the church of God, the people of God, the love, that is the binding element.

As it says in, Colossians 3, 13, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, as Christ also, forgave you. And Philippians 2, 2, fulfill me, ye my joy, that you be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

There's a unity there, there's a, a oneness there, there's a uniting there, of not some, kind of, disunited, or divided bunch, but we're on the same page.

We're heading in the same direction, we've got the same vision, we've got the same love, we've got the same, consideration, we've got that same, heart. We've got those, bounds of Christ, that, that feeling, that affection, that innermost drive.

We've got that, consideration, for the burdened ones. We're not selfishly, living our lives, but rather, selflessly, considering one another, and the burdens, that people carry.

[26:41] And there's a bonding together, there's a knitting together, there's the bonds, of love, the bonds of peace, that, we have a oneness, in Christ. We have that one goal, that one, desire, the glory of God.

That's what motivates us, and moves us, that shapes our, whole, decision making, is that, which will glorify him. And friends, I just want to encourage, to close, think of these things, in your life, as a church, how can we, let brotherly love, continue?

How can we have, that brotherly love, that should be, very evident, in our lives? I'm going to close, with a scripture, I know, we went through Hebrews, lately, and, it speaks, volumes, this, this one here, in, the end of Hebrews, just to close, we won't close, with a song, but Hebrews 13, from verse 20, now the God of peace, that brought again, from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd, of the sheep, through the blood, of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect, in every good work, to do his will, working in you, that which is well pleasing, in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, forever and ever, Amen.

God bless you tonight. God bless you tonight. God bless you tonight. God bless you tonight. God bless you tonight. God bless you tonight. God bless you tonight. Thank you.