

Keep on Loving One Another

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- [0 : 00] Good morning, church. It's good to see you again. And thank you for the opportunity that you have given to me to come and share the Word of God with you.
- ! It's one of the things that I hate most in every church, to have an interregnum.
- Because it puts burden on the leadership. And there's always attrition. Some people, they cannot cope.
- There's no minister. I've witnessed many of them. I've seen their results. And that is why I don't like it. But that's not what we can do. I just want to encourage you.
- Keep on keeping on. Pray. And God will bring the right person to you. He's there. I don't know where he is. I don't know who he is.
- [1 : 12] But he's there. That God will bring that person. And just keep on praying. And be hopeful. This morning, I've been giving the text, Hebrew chapter 13, verse 1 to 19, to speak about.
- And apparently, it's the conclusion of the whole of the book. And as you must have been told, that theologians don't agree about the authorship of this book.
- But every evidence there, for me, I'm not a theologian. I'm just a pastor, a practical man. The evidence that is there for me, I believe, is Paul that wrote it.
- Because the only person that mentions Timothy in all his epistles, the one that works with Timothy is Paul. The main theme of the Hebrew book is to be perfect.
- Or to be mature. And that is found in Hebrew chapter 6, verse 1. Maturity does not come through the striving of our own strength.
- [2 : 27] It comes as we allow Christ to walk in us, to walk through us, and through his word.
- This, we can find the parallels in Philippians chapter 2, verse 12 to 16, and Ephesians 3, 20 to 21. So God cannot walk through us until first he walks in us, and he walks in us through the word.
- Chapter 13 concludes this epistle. And it's with an encouragement. And that encouragement, when I was reading them and preparing, I called them Christian obligations.
- So that is where I take my topic from. Christian obligations. So the author was asking, I was telling the Christians all over that are suffering, that wanted to go back to Judaism, because at that time, there are a group of people, we call them Judaizers.
- They were preaching. They were going to every church that Paul has established, and they were telling them that you cannot be a proper Christian until you obey all the Mosaic laws, until you observe the kosher male, and until you are circumcised, of which Paul has always, always refuted that we are saved only by grace and nothing else.
- [4 : 06] So this was a precarious time for the Christians at that time. So the writer of Hebrew was encouraging them, instead of going back, yes, you have lost your material possessions, yes, you have lost the worship in the temple, but Christ is superior to all that.

The temple, the sacrifice, they are shadows of the real thing, and the real thing is Christ, who has come. So, and when you look at that, what the author is trying to say, yes, you go to the temple to worship, but we are, you are seeking God at that time.

But Christ, God is now seeking us through Christ. And the moment we allow him into our lives, his Holy Spirit comes and lives in us.

So, and that is always, I'm always excited about that. And I remember when Solomon was dedicating the temple, the heavens of the heavens cannot contain thee.

How much less of this house I bid for you. And at the same time, when Christ now come, he said, I will pray the Father. He will send you the Holy Spirit, and he will dwell in you forever.

[5 : 25] So if the heavens of heavens cannot contain God, and now he chooses to live in us by his Holy Spirit, is that not wonderful? Is that not wonderful?

So, he said, instead of them to go back, they should stay in Christ, because there's much more benefit, blessings in Christ. So, two obligations I sift out of this particular passage.

First, the moral obligations for believers. First one of under the moral obligation is the obligation to one another, which is verse one, brotherly love, and sisterly love.

The word hates the Christians, so loving one another is essential and a hallmark of true Christianity. To disobey this command is to deny Christ.

The obligation is so important that in John, in his epistle, and his gospel, 12 times, he mentions love one another.

[6 : 39] Therefore, Christians loving one another is not a choice. It's an obligation. We must do it. Otherwise, we deny Christ and what he has done for us.

And when we love one another, yes, in those days, Christians are hated. Even we are hated more now. There's no time people like Christians.

No time. And if it was so then, it's much, much so now. So, and if the word hates us, what is the point?

In us, not loving one another. We need to love one another, to encourage one another, to strengthen one another, and to, to, to, to have solidarity.

It's a shame. When brethren are at each other's throat, in any matter, whether small or big. The second obligation under the moral obligation is obligation to strangers, immigrants, legal or illegal.

[7 : 58] Christians loving each other compares us to be compassionate to others, and especially strangers, aliens, immigrants, legal or illegal, and all the less privileged.

Hospitality to strangers has run throughout the scripture, and this particular instance, he quoted Abraham entertaining angels without knowing.

And that is when one of those three men was Christ incarnate. And that is when after the hospitality, he found favor, and he said, will I hide what I want to do from my friend Abraham?

We don't, we never know where Christ is through those strangers. It's amazing how we see all these immigrants as criminals and outcasts when in actual fact we are all strangers on the earth.

as the fathers of faith were cited in Hebrew chapter 11 verse 13 admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.

[9 : 16] If they admitted it at that time that they have a better place, we must always live in that. Yes! We may be born in Britain, we may be born in America, born in Nigeria, born in Timbuktu.

Timbuktu. We are all strangers on this earth. This is not our home. We are citizens of heaven. So, he also asked us to remember those in prison and this one is, it cost my heart.

It's not about sympathizing with people. The word he used here is that as if we are in prison with them.

It's like we are incarcerated with them. That is, we should empathize. And if empathy is our hallmark, it's not passive.

It is active. It will compel us to do something with those people and for those people. There was a church on a high street street.

[10 : 31] There are many people with homeless people, mental health people, and this church is just like an extension of the high street.

The minister, there's a particular one of them, very dirty and everything. He will always come for a cup cup of tea on Sunday morning.

And after that, he will stay a little while. And the minister says, okay, come and sit right by me in front here. And there was a visitor one day.

After service, the visitor went to the minister. Why did you allow the dirty man to sit by you? I was impressed by the minister's response.

You know what he said? He may be dirty on the outside. I'm sure he may be cleaner and purer in the heart.

[11 : 38] And that was good. We should not discriminate on anybody. If it's you, if it's me, what are we going to do?

The third obligation under the moral obligation is obligation to self. It says, avoid sexual immorality and covetousness. Verse 5 to 6.

True Christians' love ought to be seen and started in the home and family. So he warns about sexual sins that can destroy homes.

And that, we see that today. I'm always particularly interested in young people so I get myself aligned with them though.

They are always skeptical of me that what does he want? But I just want to enter into their world. The boys don't trust the girls nowadays.

[12 : 38] Neither the girls trust the boys nowadays. And especially the girls, they hate the idea of these boys just sleeping with it's a game number of their fornication.

That's not right. But the author is telling us that we should avoid that to preserve the family where love begins.

In these days when marriage vows are taken so lightly and especially the rate of divorce outmatch the rate at which they contract marriage.

We Christians, we need to stand out. We are not going to be popular. We have never been popular. And we will not be popular.

But we should align ourselves and stand out. not allowing the world to influence us but us influencing the world by the way we behave and see things.

[13 : 49] The second thing he warns about after the sexual immorality is covetousness.

These people that he was writing to have been scattered all over the place. They have lost their material possessions. They have lost their homes. And they were thinking that maybe if we go back to Judaism as the other people were saying maybe we are going to get restored.

We are going to get all our things back. He said no. Don't covet that. Don't covet it. And it's easy to covet I must tell you and especially when you are suffering.

It's easy to I won't lie to you. It's one of the sins that is very easy to commit. Covetousness.

Wanting to be like the Joneses. I have a true story and I will share it. To this covetousness the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to another side of it.

[14 : 59] What I always thought about covetousness is wanting what other people have that I don't have. That is what I always understood as covetousness.

But in my ministry the Holy Spirit nudged me to show me the other side of covetousness. So in other words covetousness is like a coin with two sides.

The first one is wanting what others have that we don't have. And everybody understand that. This second one. I was in college. Thank God Anne is there.

I met her in 2001 when we entered Spurgeon's College. They gave us a letter. She was the one that drafted the letters to all the churches that now that has been called of God and is now studying in in the college.

We expect the church to pay their fee and any other ways they can support them. I personally copied those letters because I was the church leader then.

[16 : 08] I copied that letter and gave it to each of the dickens. Did they discuss it? No. I went to college. I had to take a student loan because that same year, that is when my first son entered university, that is the same year the government stopped paying them bursary and we are paying fee.

So that means I will be looking for two fees which I couldn't afford. So I have to resort in student loan. When I finished, one of the dickens, we were just chatting one day and he came to realize that I had a student loan pending.

And he said, ah, that is wrong. And then he took it upon himself, spoke to the rest of them and they agreed to pay that loan off. Guess what happened?

The treasurer came to me, oh, pastor, suppose we pay your fee, your student loan and you pay it back to the church.

and I said, no, it's either you pay, the church pays it or leave it. Two years down the line, I didn't say anything, the guy who initiated the first meeting realized again that this loan was not paid.

[17 : 36] And then he started speaking to every one of them. Do you know what? Nobody can remember that they have agreed because it was not documented.

It wasn't mandated. And I saw the boy so frantic and I said, look, listen, this is a lost game. Leave it. At the appointed time, I'm going to do something.

So later on I wrote them officially now that I request that the student loan be paid off. thankfully, thank God, they agreed to pay.

And then that was a Tuesday meeting. Sunday morning, I was not that. I want to show you the other side of today.

At four o'clock, called the treasurer, asked him this specific question. When he had your letter read, out, how did he feel?

[18 : 41] I couldn't, it's like four o'clock was so long a time. At four o'clock, I called him, I said, brother, on Tuesday, when my letter was read by the secretary to the leadership, how did you feel?

The reply was, I didn't feel anything. And I said, why? Oh, because nobody paid mine. Why should we pay yours?

I said, oh, oh, it's a matter of I didn't get it, nobody else will get it. That is the day I know the other side of covetousness.

God is you may want what other people don't have, but you may not want them to have what you have, and you do everything possible to prevent them from having it.

That's the other side of covetousness, where the scripture is warning us against it. when the children of God are in the will of God, obeying the word of God, they will never lack anything, because that is why he said, he promised us, don't cover it, he will provide for our needs according to his riches in glory.

[20 : 06] Ephesians chapter 3 verse 20 says, he is able to give exceedingly and abundantly more than what we ask or even imagine in our greatest dream. I'm a living witness to that.

It's never failed us. One of the reasons I delayed or I refused to go to ministry was because of money. Because when I was an NHS manager, I was earning so well, and I said, if I take this one on now, I will be done for.

And truly, truly, when I was appointed in 2003, my wages was 48% of what I was earning when I was in NHS.

Guess what? My financial status from that moment got better. Not that the church was paying me more. In fact, they stuck to start that stipend when they can afford to go and above that.

But that is the time God begins to pour his blessing. What people will get for 120 pounds, they will give it to me for 60. The second obligation is about religious obligation.

[21 : 30] And the first one under that, which is verse 7 to 17, 19. The first one under the religious obligation is verse 7 to 8, which is obligation to church leaders.

He said, remember those who have ministered among you, look at the way of their life and imitate their faith.

He didn't say imitate them, and I want you to get that one clear. Imitate their faith. the people that came to minister to them, their faith is so full in Christ that they were ready to even be slaughtered for the sake of Christ.

That's the kind of faith. He's asking us to emulate it. And he said because the same gospel they preached to you, Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

It won't change. So when anything other than what has been preached to you, if anybody comes and do otherwise, that's not it.

[22 : 49] Stand firm on your faith. The question I want to ask us today is this. The way we look at the word of God, the way we interpret it, are we true to the word?

That's the question. This command to remember them is to look at the passion, their faith, their suffering, and their commitment.

And that is what we too must do. And also, I believe it includes others that has been written somewhere is.

And Paul always say that when he says the church must remember, they must honor and share material things with their ministers in Romans chapter 15 verse 27, 1st Corinthians chapter 9 verse 11, and Galatians chapter 6 verse 6.

It says when people benefit from spiritual input from their leaders, good and it is right to share material things with them.

[24 : 04] Unfortunately, many churches are not doing that. They are the type of church that Dr. Arthur said about in one of his books that they pray, Lord, keep our minister humble and we keep him poor.

and I've heard it several times. Oh, does any of you have this in your home?

Why should you provide that in the mass? If we are men spirited, we keep ourselves out of God's blessing. The second obligation is obligation to avoid strange teachings.

This scripture is written over 3,000 years by over 40 authors that the internal consistency is strong, the external verification is strong, and all of them, they are ammonials, everything pointing to Christ.

And Christ came, it's God incarnate. In the Old Testament, people are seeking God. In the New Testament, God is seeking people. And everything is documented.

[25 : 33] Why do we now want to say, oh, the meaning of any passage in the scripture is how you interpret it? That's a strange teaching.

One of the bishops, I think, is former bishop of York, he said, oh, he even believed that the physical resurrection of Jesus did not happen.

Oh, for Christ's sake, we are accountable. We have to be careful to what we listen to, to what we allow in our heart.

And I want to tell you this, it's not strange. Right away from the very day, Jesus rose from the dead. That is the day falsehood, lies, have started, even before their time.

Because in order to prevent people from believing that Christ has been raised from the dead, they bribed the soldiers. Say, oh, his disciples came to steal his body.

[26 : 40] So, he wasn't raised. Right away from the beginning of Christianity. It's been distorted. So, if it was then, when the eyewitnesses were there, who were partakers of his ministry, if it happens, what do you expect will happen today?

Oh, much more. But at the same time, you and I, we have that obligation to stand on the truth, to stand on the world, is unshakable.

today, the interpretation of the scripture has gone so wide. His name it, get it, theology.

It's strange. I had a story that somebody, I was, oh, the more you give, you will receive, which is true.

But they are misappropriating it, they are misinterpreting it. So if you give money, you will get more money. And then you begin to hear this, oh, I got a check from the post, and it was three times double what I gave.

[27 : 56] That's falsehood. God will not do that. It's not money for money. It's not money for money.

But he promised to bless you in very many other ways. It is about if you are able to commit yourself to this, you are going to get this.

No. No. Let the Holy Spirit not people to give whatever they want to give. And apparently, you will discover that most of this is in traditionalism tradition.

The minister begins to get richer and richer, and the people in the church get poorer and poorer. That's not the scripture. the third one, under this religious obligation, is obligation to God pleasing offerings.

Verse 15 to 16, as a kingdom of priests, Christians are to offer spiritual sacrifices. 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 5, a spiritual sacrifice is something done or given in the name of Christ and for his glory.

[29 : 33] In verse 15, it states that praise is such a sacrifice. Praising God, and thank God, we've sang good some this morning. And when, in fact, this is one of the things that we are mist, that we are distorting today, when you go to, we say, oh, when we want to sing songs, we say, oh, we are not going to time of praise and worship.

Really? No. This is the time of praising God through songs. This is the time of worshipping God through songs.

Because if it's only singing is praise and worship, what is the other thing we are doing throughout the week? What is the word of God preaching?

What is it about? If it's not worship, what is our offering? If it's not worship. So, we have to praise God.

It's a sacrifice that he desires and that places him. Good works and sharing material blessings, like he has recorded just earlier, are also part of the spiritual sacrifices that places God.

[30 : 53] Other spiritual sacrifices include the believer's body. In Romans chapter 12, offer your body as a living sacrifice and that coincides with let marriage bed be unpolluted.

offerings, prayer, a broken heart, and soul winning for Christ, those are all the offerings that places God and he encourages us to do that.

The fourth one is obligation to obey our leaders. I think I have been baptized enough that this is always a problem in our midst.

Some of us, we treat our ministers as our employees. It's what we want them to do or we allow them to do.

If we are, if you think like that, please stop it. they are anointed by God to preach the word of God and they are accountable.

[32 : 18] You will not stand for them. They will stand before the god man seat of Christ for what he has called them to do and how they have done it.

Disobeying them I am not saying because some of us some of the ministers too sometimes you wonder are they really called?

I was just in a small church down in the other day. The minister on his way home oh can you please take so so and so no I rather not.

And somebody else in the congregation decided to take so so so home on his way to the minister's house and he was driving behind them. That is shocking that a minister cannot do that.

However that said the writer of this Hebrew said respect them honor them obey them because if you don't do that you are making their job not be a joyful one.

[33 : 40] And he says it will not benefit you. That means if you don't respect them if you don't have confidence in them you don't submit you are not going to gain from their ministry.

You are not. So it's not going to benefit! you.! Then you come with an attitude whenever they are speaking your mind is somewhere else and you never know that even a word from what they are saying will change your life forever for good.

And it's I can't remember but there was a text that you who are leaders know that we are going to be judged more harshly than others.

So I believe that majority of us we know what we enter into that we will be accountable. When you get a minister now God will make him accountable for every one of you that he brings under his or her ministry.

so let's have confidence in them obey them and submit to them to their authority knowing that they will give account.

[35 : 06] And the last one there is that obligation to pray for our leaders. In verse 18 to 19 the author reiterates the importance of prayer hence a request for the brethren to pray for them and this is typical of Paul's writing.

That's why personally like I've told you I'm not a theologian I believe the author of this book is Paul. It's typical of Paul to ask for prayers.

It's typical of his humility. It's typical of his belief that the Holy Spirit lives in everybody just like we believe we baptize as priesthood of all believers.

So it's always good to pray for one another and thank you for allowing people to pray this morning. It's just beautiful. When we gather together like this I'm not saying you are not praying in your individual homes you are but what I always believe that the prayer we pray here as a body of Christ is more powerful than individual prayers.

As I conclude love one another is the hallmark of Christianity and avoid the sexual sins and comfort justness make the love grow stronger and make our weakness powerful.

[36 : 34] Empathizing and care for strangers and prisoners is part of the good work done on behalf of Christ and is vital and is going to reckon!

for us and it places him remembering our ministers and emulate their faith encourages us respecting and obeying them to do us good and prophesies us and make their work to be a joy not a burden because they work over us and they are going to give account of what their stewardship is going to be and as you go forward to seek for the minister keep on praying and it's your suggestion I'm just making a suggestion to you every service devote just five minutes to pray together like this for the new minister every holy Sunday do it I believe God will answer your prayers God bless you