

Our Primary Responsibility to One Another

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Text: *Ephesians 5:1-9*

Introduction

Last Sunday, Pastor Larry Obero spoke about the importance of relationships and how in any relationships there are expectations. He spoke about what is expected of me as your pastor, what do I, as your pastor expects from you as a church member, what God expects from us, and then concluded with what we can expect from God and Jesus Christ as Head of His church.

Today, I want us to consider, as members together of Grace & Truth Bible Baptist Church, our primary responsibility to one another. So the question this morning is, as a member of this local church, what is my primary responsibility to you, what is your primary responsibility to me, what is our primary responsibility to each other?

I - Our Relationship with One Another

To answer that question we need to understand the nature of our relationship with one another? Grace & Truth Bible Baptist Church is not a social club, nor a political party, nor a fraternity, nor a sorority, nor any association or organization which are formed and united around a common interest, occupation and aspiration.

These clubs or associations may have a strong bonding but **none of them can even begin to be compared to the bonding we have as a church.** What binds us together as a church is not just **common cause**, nor common **need**, nor common **heritage**, nor common **beliefs**, nor common **values**, nor common **standards**, etc. It is much more and much deeper than these things. What binds us together as a church is a **common life.** We belong to one big family.

It is true that, as a church we have common doctrine, we subscribe to common beliefs, we have structure, discipline and organization. We should not minimize the importance of these things, but a gathering is not necessarily a church simply because a group of people subscribe to the same doctrinal standard. No, something more than that. The **NT concept of the church** is that **living, organic entity bound together in a common life.**

1 Corinthians 12:12 For as **the body is one**, and hath many members, and all the members of that **one body**, being many, are **one body**: so also is Christ. 13: For by one Spirit are we all baptized into **one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Romans 12:4 For as we have many members in **one body**, and all members have not the same office: 5: So we, being many, are **one body in Christ**, and every one members one of another.

The church is not just an organization but rather it is an organism. One body, one member, one Spirit were baptized in one body. Our relationship with each other is even **deeper than the relationship we have with our own flesh and blood**, for this relationship is eternal.

1 Peter 2:4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5: Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

II - Our Responsibility to One Another

Based on this unique relationship we have with one another, what then is our primary responsibility to one to another?

We have many responsibilities but the question this morning is the **primary responsibility** that we have one to another?

Ephesians 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2: And **walk in love**, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to **love one another**.

1 John 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should **love one another**.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 And the Lord make you to increase and **abound in love one toward another**, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

It is obvious from these verses that our primary responsibility as church members to one to another is **to abound in love one to another**.

This is why as a church family, we need to avoid the error of viewing our relationship as mere organization or club or society. No, we are a family. We share common life. If we forget this fundamental truth our "one-another" responsibility toward each other will either be ignored or compromised.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye **love one another; as I have loved you**, that ye also **love one another**. 35: **By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another**.

How are men going to know that you are my disciples? By the love you have one to another. A love demonstrated by deeds and actions that even the unbelievers can see and discern.

1 John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17: 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? 18: My little children, **let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth**. .

Someone ask, what is church? "The **Church** is a local gathering or assembly of Christians committed to Christ and to one another."

Church – ecclesia – an assembly

It is an assembly of called out ones through the Gospel by His Spirit, called out from a life of sin and fused into the fellowship of God's people.

That is what church is all about - an assembly of people who are **committed to Christ** and His Kingdom and **committed to one another**. An assembly of people bound by common life and increasing and abounding in love one toward another.

III - The Result of Fulfilling Our Responsibility

What happens when there is abounding and fervent love among ourselves?

1. If there is love, there will be forgiveness

How easy it is to throw stones to a brother who has been wounded and crippled with sin.

Colossians 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13: Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14: And **above all these things put on charity**, which is the bond of perfectness.

Most important of all have a deep and intense love for each other. Oh, how we need this exhortation since all of us have not yet arrived and therefore a lot of growing to do. As fellow sinners live with one another and fall short of perfection before one another and therefore there is a necessity to forgive and forget. But we can only forgive and forget if we have a deep and an intense love for each other.

1 Peter 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. 8: And above all things **have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.**

If we have fervent love among ourselves we will be able to cover a multitude of sins. Our love for one another will enable us forgive and forget, instead of focusing on and magnifying each other's fault.

This does not mean we tolerate sin. This does not mean that, if there is an open and scandalous sin, **because there is love, we just ignore it and act as if it is not there.** NO, because there is love, a sinning brother or sister must be reprov'd and rebuked as prescribed in Luke 17 and Matthew 18:15ff.

But rebuke and reproof must be done in love and humility. It must be done with the goal to recover and restore the offending party.

So if God is pleased to allow us to grow in number, the capacity to sin in the house of God also grows. Because every person brought into the membership is an imperfectly sanctified saints. **So the more people** we have, **the more possibility for sin** and **the more love we must have**, to cover a multitude of sins.

2. If there is love, there will be forbearance

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, **forbearing one another in love**; 3: Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Paul calls himself as the prisoner in the Lord, that is, imprisoned in the Lord's cause, which some would consider it a trap, a bondage, a disgrace, a dishonor, but Paul considers it an honor and a privilege to be imprisoned in the Lord and His cause. And he uses his imprisonment as an argument to enforce his exhortation.

Forbearing one another means putting up with one another. Because we are imperfect people, we are capable of doing things that will require forbearance, putting up with one another.

Church is not for perfect people. If we are perfect we don't need to come to church gathering.

In Heaven there is no need of forbearance, you and I will be so perfect that we cannot help it but love one another all the time. **But we are not there yet**, that is why we need to exercise forbearance. And **what is it that motivates us to forebear?** It is love. It is the love of Christ constrains us. It is the love of the Spirit shed abroad in our hearts.

"One of the things that frustrates me are Church members who have been Christians for decades and still are not getting it, are still not catching on." But we must forebear.

The more differently developed saints we have within the assembly, the more love we need to mutually forebear with one another.

3. If there is love, there will be bearing of one another's burden.

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

We live in a broken planet and which means expect sin, shortcomings, sorrow, suffering, sickness, and separation. These are burdens we bear just because we live in this fallen world. And even as children of God we experience these things. That's is why we are called ...

2: **Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**

And if there is love, there will be burden bearing - visible by acts of love like - prayers, visitation, and words of encouragement. If there is love, phone calls, texting, e-mailing, card sending, home and hospital visits, sharing meal will abound and will be part your life and my life.

4. If there is love, there will be exhortation and admonition.

Exhortation and admonition responsibility is not just for the Pastor only, as members we also have the responsibility to exhort and admonish one another.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us **consider one another to provoke** (motivate, stimulate, stir up) unto love and to good works: 25: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is (as some are in the habit of doing); but **exhorting one another**: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Let us think of others, our brothers and sisters and motivate them to love and good works, instead of hatred and disengagement, which is too often the case.

One way we could encourage one another is by not neglecting, abandoning, staying away, not giving up meeting together. There are many things that could distract us, discourage us, dissuade us, and we need each other to encourage one another not to take our eyes off our Saviour and our reason for existence.

Faithfully meeting and gathering together beget and foster love, and give good opportunities for "provoking to good works," by "exhorting one another."

Romans 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded (fully convinced) of you, my brethren, that ye also are **full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish** (teach and instruct) **one another**.

Another way of encouragement is teaching and instruction...

... **able also to admonish** (teach and instruct) **one another**.

Goodness and knowledge are necessary to admonition, and qualify persons for it: if a man is not a good man himself, he is not fit to admonish another; and if he has not knowledge, he will not be able to do it as it should be.

Without compassion and tenderness, he will not perform it aright, and with success; but all this being in these persons, they were able and fit for it.

My prayer for Grace & Truth BBC is that we will be **filled with knowledge** and be **filled with goodness**. That we would all **grow in knowledge** and **grow in grace**. Because as we grow in knowledge and grow in grace **we will be able to exhort and admonish one another**.

If we are to admonish one another we have to have both, knowledge and goodness, **full head** and **full heart**.

If you have a **full heart but empty head** and try to admonish, you **have nothing worthwhile to admonish another**.

But if you have a **full head but empty heart**, you may **be hurting instead of helping people**.

Let us pray ...

Romans 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are **full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another**.

Strive to be filled of goodness and filled with knowledge that we are able to admonish one another with the **proper attitude** and **frame of mind**. Here is **Grace and Truth** again. Let us have grace and truth as we admonish one another.

5. If there is love, it will restrain us from hurting one another

Romans 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

If there is love, it will keep us from doing anything that is harmful to our brethren. If there is love we will avoid things that would hurt a brother or a sister, such as unkind words, wrong attitudes, harboring bitterness, unforgiving spirit, etc.

IV - The Root or Source of Abounding Love

What is the source of this increasing and fervent love?

How can I abound in love?

1. Remember how Christ loved us

Ephesians 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Therefore, as dearly loved children, be followers or be imitators of God, in respect to "love" (5:2). Walk in love as Christ also loved us.

Sonship infers an absolute necessity of imitation, it being vain to assume the title of son without any similitude of the Father. - Pearson

2. Remember that love is the fruit of the Spirit

After Paul exhorts the believers to walk in love, he then reminds them that walking in love is the consequence of walking in the Spirit. It is the fruit of the Spirit.

9: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23: Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24: And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25: If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26: Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Many times, we don't love each other the way we should because our relationship with God is not what it ought to be. In our coldness of heart toward God, His word and prayer, we grieve the Holy Spirit, and the first manifestation that we have grieved the Spirit is, we begin to and we have problems with our brothers and sisters,

O may God speak to us and cause us as His people to abound in this love, more and more to the end that all men will know that we are His disciples.

Let us look to Him for grace that we may abound in love one to another.

Ephesians 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2: And walk in love, **as Christ also hath loved us**, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

AMEN!