

## To the Saints of God at Topeka, Kansas September 27, 2015

**Let all your things be done with charity (1 Cor. 16:14).**

**And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity (2Pe 1:7).**

The “mother” of all chapters in the New Testament on charity (love) is I Cor. 13. This is where you learn the true definition of Biblical love. The state of the church at Corinth included: 1) there were schisms and divisions in the body (1 Cor. 12:25, 3:3, 11:18), 2) there was strife and envyings (1 Cor. 3:3), 3) there was open (incestuous) fornication (1 Cor. 5), 4) there were heresies among them (1 Cor. 11:19), 5) church members were suing one another in civil courts (1 Cor. 6:1), 6) some church members were getting drunk at the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:21), 7) the rich were lording it over the poor (being respecters of persons – not making distribution as there was need – 1 Cor. 11), 8) some were eating and drinking the Lord’s Supper unworthily so that many were sick and dying (1 Cor. 11:30), 9) the women were cutting their hair (I Cor. 11) and 10) the church members were envying each other’s gifts (1 Cor. 12). So, the Holy Spirit through Paul takes up a whole chapter in the New Testament regarding what this heightened sense of love should look like. This is what good looks like.

### **I Cor. 13:**

*1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, (the most eloquent and beautiful speech in the most excellent language); and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal (a very loud sound and discordant).*



*2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

Beloved, we better be teaching our children charity! They learn every day from the natural man how not to be charitable. These charity verses in 1 Cor. 13 are a great thing to have on our walls in our house. At Notre Dame as you leave the football locker room and head to the stadium there is a sign as you go down the stairs it says “*Play Like A Champion Today*” and the players are supposed to touch the sign as a reminder how they are supposed to play. Going down your stairwells is a great place for some of these charity verses as we want to see constant and daily reminders of this duty. If you don’t have a stairwell, there are many good places that your eyes daily light upon.

*3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned (to be martyred – burned at the stake), and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

*4 Charity suffereth long (extraordinarily patient under even difficult circumstances; slow to anger), and is kind (tender, affectionate, gentle, affable, and courteous – not ill natured or mean); charity envieth not (it does not envy the temporal happiness of others); charity vaunteth not itself (boasting/bragging), is not puffed up (pride/vanity),*

*5 Doth not behave itself unseemly (by using filthy or unbecoming words or indecent actions), seeketh not her own (love seeketh the things of God/Christ and to enlarge His kingdom first), is not easily provoked (slow to wrath, and is calm, serious and patient), thinketh no evil (puts the best possible construction on the motives and the conduct of others; forgets injuries done him and keeps no record of them and seeks no revenge);*

*6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity (neither in his own, nor in the vices of others; but on the contrary he mourns over his own iniquities, the corruption of his heart, the infirmities of his life, his secret sins, which none know but God and his own soul), but rejoiceth in the truth (...of God - virtue, piety, godliness, holiness);*

*7 Beareth all things (covers and hides all things), believeth all thing (a disposition to put the best construction on conduct); hopeth all things (when looking at the conduct of others - the hope that things will come out well – including when we go on the picket line – Acts 26:29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.), endureth all things.*

*8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*

*9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.*

*10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

*11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

As we spiritually mature, our charity toward one another should improve, and we should put away those things that went before until we reach the heavenly shores and see clearly what charity actually looks like. Like the four and twenty elders who beheld the sacrifice of the Lamb as He sat on the throne and gladly threw in their crowns before the throne (Rev. 4:10).

*12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

*13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

Beloved, you see from 1 Cor. 13 that there is no provision for a “scorched earth” type approach, it is just the opposite. There are a lot of practical applications for charity and brotherly kindness in the scripture.

### **Help the Weak:**

*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification (Rom. 15:1-2).*

*Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men (1Th 5:14).*

*I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, **It is more blessed to give than to receive** (Acts 20:35).*

***IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE*** (ACTS 20:35).

***JESUS***

It is our fundamental duty to support the weak. We are all weak. We all need help at times, whether it be spiritual weakness or where someone is weak in the body (sick or elderly) and therefore we must labor for them. In Acts 20:35, Paul is quoting the Lord Jesus Christ saying it is more blessed to give than to receive. Beloved, I do not believe we make enough of this verse. Certainly, the Lord Jesus Christ did this on earth giving far more than He received (suffering great loss and enduring great humiliation for us ) and we each should give much to each other and expect nothing in return. We should freely give to each other all that we have, and we must teach our children this. Beloved, the heathen give things to the poor (i.e. soup kitchen mentality), because among other things it appeals to their fleshly heart, “look how holy and righteous I am, I am such a good person.” Giving with a spiritual heart is rare, it is required for the true Christian (it is a part of their reasonable service to God) and is an actual manifestation of their love for God. Beloved, some are better takers, than givers, and we should all resolve to turn that on its head and actually follow the words of the Lord Jesus Christ! It’s not charity/love to take, take, take – to consume the time and resources of God’s elect without giving. Take, take, take is selfishness and laziness. This religion is about giving and laboring. This is not an academic discussion.

*Great are the advantages and profit which a cheerful giver reaps, both in this world, and that to come: wherefore the conclusion which the apostle would have drawn from hence is, that it is better for a man to work with his own hands, and support himself, and assist others, than to receive at the hands of others. Giving promotes one's own peace. We must labour in an honest employment, not only that we may be able to live, but that we may be able to give. It is more blessed (more excellent in itself, an evidence of a more excellent disposition of mind, and the way to a better blessedness at last) to give than to receive. It makes us more like God, who gives to all, and receives from none; and to the Lord Jesus, who went about doing good and giving to others.*

### **Heal the Sick (the Gift of Our Time to Others)**

*And He (Jesus) arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her (Luke 4:38).*

I believe some of the apostles went to the synagogue where Jesus was preaching so as to enlist His help to heal Peter's mother-in-law. I believe the Lord Jesus Christ dropped what he was doing to come and heal her. He could have said, "I am too busy preaching doing my Father's work to come." Beloved, one of the most precious commodities we have is our time – giving your time to someone in need is a great gift. It is invaluable to the person receiving it and the person giving it. We must put away our pursuit of money, games, entertainment and daily living to help our loved ones that do the will of God when they need it – not when it is convenient for us to give it. If our brother asks for a fish, how cruel is it for us to give them a serpent (Mat. 7:9)? If you have some extra time on your hands give it willing to your brother or sister in Christ. You should look for opportunities to give your time and not just wait for it to come to you. The natural man says: *I hate all of this work... the work of this church is going to be the death of me.* When in fact, the work of the church and the work of charity and brotherly kindness is life to you and is a great blessing from God, which keeps us busy and engaged in the things of the Lord and not the things of this world. It is one thing to be charitable on the beach relaxing and taking in the sun, and another thing entirely to be charitable under great persecution and affliction. I believe there is a common experience amongst all of God's elect and Christ that includes being hated, persecuted and afflicted for these commandments and things of God while having great charity among God's people and that this common experience is central to all of God's elect through millennia. I often wonder what would these faux christian pretenders would do in heaven when they got there, they would have nothing in common with the people there.

*And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me,*

*These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:13-14).*

Beloved, Tim said a couple of weeks ago, that the angels know that they add nothing to the King's honor, glory, or issues; they are always and only servants. That is a true saying: WE ARE ALL SERVANTS BELOVED. *God be merciful to me a sinner.* If you think you are something more than a servant, you are absolutely mistaken and taken hostage by Satan. We are all servants and we should treat each other as good as the Lord Jesus Christ treats us. The Lord is inherently not lazy, look at the night sky, or a view from the Hubble Telescope. Beloved, the flesh is lazy, and this work of charity is sometimes hard. Let's don't be lazy. *His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed (Mt. 25:26).*

*You get what you give, and you don't have to throw a fit.* Beloved, these acts of charity are your **fruits of brotherly kindness and charity**. *For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 1:5-8).*

### **Give Food, Drink, Housing, Clothing to the Brethren & Visit them in Sickness and in Bonds**

*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me (Mat. 25:34-40)*

I think we do a pretty good job of making distribution unto every man according as there is a need (Acts. 4:35) whether it be food, drink, housing or clothing. We each have a duty to visit the sick. I remember visiting loved ones when they had kidney stones, but I did not appreciate their suffering until I had them. It is an affirmative duty to visit the sick. We should view this as a natural part of our service to God. Am I relieved of my duty to visit member A when she is sick if I know member B is visiting her? I don't think so. When you visit the sick, with the right spirit, it is as if you were visiting the Lord himself. It's a big deal that we do this.

## **Visit the People of God in Affliction**

*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction... (Jas. 1:27).*

I tell you that I think it is a wonderful thing that it is our longstanding practice and charity to birth mothers and their families to cook dinner for them when there is a birth of a child. However, from experience I will tell you that when we have a person leave the church, it is a heavier lift on those same parents and siblings and families than with a new arrival. My opinion is that we should do as much for those parents at that end of the equation as we did at the beginning. It is one of the heavier afflictions in life. Of course, we know that we do not control salvation, that Christ sows in the tares and that Christ came not for peace on earth but a sword to set a man at variance against his father and daughter against mother (Mat. 10:34-36). We should surround those parents and that family with help, comfort, support and spiritual assistance because we grieve for the afflictions of Joseph. When you are surrounded with the charity and love of your fellow elect, it makes the loss easier to deal with. Our duty is to visit God's elect *in affliction*.

You don't need actual knowledge that someone needs help in affliction. Constructive knowledge is enough. If you would need help, spiritual, physical, emotional, help if that thing happened to you – whatever it is – then you have a duty to deliver help – however that looks. If you hear from back channels or otherwise that someone needs help in affliction, then there is a duty of you to deliver it. When there is affliction it should be like a 9-1-1 call, that people come to deliver help in the form of spiritual aid whether it is in person, by email, text, voicemail, and that people come to comfort the afflicted. Beloved, we *visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction* TO COMFORT THEM! Do you want to be comforted and supported in affliction? *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them...* (Mat. 7:12)

- Did someone get fired today for their service to God?
- Did someone get diagnosed with some sickness?
- Is someone calling on the Elders to pray over them?
- Is there a crisis in a family?
  - We should regularly ask ourselves “WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?”

## **Is There a Duty to Receive the Help?**

What about those needing the help? Should they refuse help because of their pride or some other human notion. *"No, I don't need your help."* Beloved, we must learn to put that away and to accept the help with the love that it is offered with. Most of the time we should just say "thank you" and accept the help, assuming it is offered with a pure heart (*love believeth and hopeth all things*).

### **Does Charity Begin at Home? Yes**

Beloved, we must have charity and love in our hearts and display it to others, but not to the exclusion of charity (love) at home. It is misguided and erroneous charity to go "help" someone else when our own situation is untended to. Unless there is a true crisis with someone else, we should first put our affairs and situation in order then tend to the charity and love of others.

*Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God (1 Tim. 5:3-4)*

The Ethiopic version says: *"let the children first learn to do well to their own house."*

*It is the duty of children to take care of their parents in old age, and provide for them, when they cannot for themselves: this is a lesson they ought to learn in the first place, and a duty which they ought principally to observe; and to requite their parents; for all the sorrow, pain, trouble, care, and expenses they have been at in bearing and bringing them forth into the world, in taking care of them in their infancy, in bringing them up, giving them an education, providing food and raiment for them, and settling them in the world; wherefore to neglect them in old age, when incapable of providing for themselves, would be base ingratitude. John Gill*

### **Other Thoughts on Charity**

*" [Charity] can endure evil, injury, and provocation, without being filled with resentment, indignation or revenge. Is not grieved at the good of others; neither of their gifts nor at their good qualities, their honors nor their estates. His bliss and sanctification will be an addition to ours, instead of impairing or lessening it. Charity has a large heart. True love will give us an esteem of our brethren, and raise our value for them; and this will limit our esteem of ourselves, and prevent the tumors of self-conceit & arrogance."*

- Matthew Henry

Beloved, I and many of you have prior to arriving at this church seen the "charity" of other churches and it does not look like the Bible standard that we have talked about here. Pot

luck dinners, boy scouts, schools, sunday schools, vacation bible schools, knights of columbus, bingo, confessions, soup kitchens, children and adult choirs, and bible studies are all limited human forms of this concept but they do not approach the charity and love in afflictions, that the Holy Spirit contemplates in the New Testament. Beloved, a large popular church in this town has the following: a "Guest Services Counter," "Divorce Care" (a weekly support group for individuals who have been through a divorce or are currently experiencing a divorce), "Intentional Mom" (a biblically based time for moms to socialize, listen to speakers, do crafts, and eat great food), "Kids Choir Practice," "Women's Espresso Group," "Women's Chronological Study," "Women in the Word" group, "Men's Fraternity" group, "Grief Share" group (a 13-week seminar and support group for people who are grieving the death of someone close to them), "Jr. High Bible Study" group, "Worship Practice," "Men's Breakfast," and "Vintage Classics Fellowship."

We are not supposed to treat each other at arms-length like they do in these churches beloved and we are not supposed to worship God with gimmicks and marketing. Charity begins and ends in our heart and we must be knit together in love and be there for one another, or we individually and collectively put the candlestick of this church in jeopardy.

*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.... And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. **Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment:** because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. I John 4:7-21; 5:1-3.*

I love you all. Amen