

Who Is My Brother?

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: 1 Peter 2:17

Peter said we are to “love the brotherhood.” This is a special group of people. But who are they? Does it matter that we know? Shouldn’t we love everyone? Of course, we should love everyone; but it is important that we know who our brethren are. We need to appreciate the blessings of this brotherhood and fulfill our responsibilities to our brethren.

Term “Brother” Used Different Ways in the Bible

- One who is a brother in the flesh (Genesis 37:26-27) – universally used; this is the basis for the other usages
- One who is a friend (2 Samuel 1:26) – sometimes a closer relationship than a real brother (Proverbs 17:17)
- One who is a fellow countryman (Acts 2:29, 37; 7:2)
- One who is a fellow Christian (Acts 9:29-30) – the BRETHREN were DISCIPLES (Acts 9:26); included those who were Jews and Gentiles (Acts 16:23); this is the type of BROTHER we will discuss in this lesson

What Makes Us Brethren?

- As we noticed, those who are BRETHREN are those who are DISCIPLES – whether Jew or Gentile
- How did the Jews and Gentiles become brethren/disciples? – congregation in Jerusalem (Jews) were brethren (Acts 6:3) and they believed, repented, and were baptized (Acts 2:37-38); congregation in Corinth (mostly Gentiles) were brethren (Acts 18:18) and they believed, repented, and were baptized (Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)
- We are brethren because we have a common ancestry – the Jews were brothers because they descended from Abraham; now we are one in Christ (Galatians 3:28-29) through faith and baptism (Galatians 3:26-27)
- So who are our brethren? – those who by faith have been baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-29); even if one did this and joined an unfaithful church/denomination, he is still a brother; if one did not do this but is religious and claims to believe in God/Jesus, he is not a brother (we may have things in common, just as Christians did with the Jews, but we are not brethren)

Types of Brethren

- Faithful brethren (Colossians 1:2) – not just to one another, faithful to the Lord (Colossians 2:5); faith is demonstrated through works (James 2:14-18); therefore, they

were obeying the Lord; they were saints (Colossians 1:2); “holy ones”; set apart; God’s special people

- Weak brethren (1 Thessalonians 5:14) – these would be ones who are more susceptible to temptation/error; may be due to immaturity (2 Timothy 3:6), ignorance (Hosea 4:6), or discouragement (2 Corinthians 2:7); not to remain in this condition (1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:11-14)
- Erring brethren (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15) – they have departed from the message taught by the apostles; those who are practicing sin need to be turned back to the Lord (1 Corinthians 5:4-5; James 5:19-20); those who are teaching error need to be corrected (2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 1:10-11)
- False brethren (Galatians 2:3-4) – not just those who claim to be Christians but aren’t (but could include those); those who are deliberately trying to lead Christians away from the Lord; they promote a “different gospel” (Galatians 1:6-9); not to be tolerated

Responsibilities As Brethren

- Love one another (1 John 3:23) – visible characteristic of the Lord’s disciples (John 13:34-35); not just something we talk about, it is something we DO (1 John 3:18; Galatians 5:13)
- Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11) – one way we do this is by assembling together (Hebrews 10:24-25); this is to help the weak (1 Thessalonians 5:14) and prevent others from becoming weak (Hebrews 3:12-13)
- Do good to one another (Galatians 6:10) – can do this for anyone, but pay particular attention to brethren; not just about helping others, this is about pleasing God (Hebrews 13:16)

Conclusion

- Who is my brother? – anyone who has responded to the gospel in faith and has been baptized into Christ
- This is a special group – it is from this group that the Lord will save those who serve Him faithfully