

Am I My Brother's Keeper?

Introduction:

1. This sermon logically and chronologically follows a sermon entitled, "Blood Is Thicker than Blood."
2. That sermon exalts the precious bonds saints have in the family of God and in their own local churches.
3. This sermon identifies the great blessing and duties of fulfilling our roles in our local congregations.
4. Attending church to sing, hear a sermon, and then go home is not the life of a Christian saint at all.
5. Our purpose as saints is to help one another prepare in holiness for meeting Jesus by death or His coming.
6. The highest degree of love is the desire and conduct toward another to prepare them to meet the Lord.

I. The BLESSING

- A. Church membership is a privilege, not a right; as Paul learned at Jerusalem (Acts 9:26).
- B. If you have ever sought the Lord with your whole heart, you wondered if there were any others in the earth like yourself. But none that trust Him shall be desolate (Psalm 34:22).
- C. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psalm 133:1-3).
- D. Forsaking bonds of our natural family brings bonds of a spiritual family (Mark 10:29-30).
- E. A properly functioning church is a glorious and growing organism (Ephesians 4:15-16).

II. The BUSINESS

- A. We love the bond, admit the battle, and love the blessing. But do we relish the business?
- B. The business is thicker love, concern, warning, discipline, protection, help, and so forth.
- C. If we have the heart of Cain, we think or ask, "**AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?**"
 1. This selfish, spiteful, and murderous spirit rejects responsibilities for others.
 2. If you see your brother in sin, it is your loving duty to correct it (Leviticus 19:17).
 3. Each case will fall somewhere between compassion and snatching (Jude 1:22-23).
 4. If you see a brother living outside God's rule, then you are to warn (I Thess 5:14).
 5. If you see a brother mentally down for any reason, comfort him (I Thess 5:14).
 6. If you see a brother weak in a matter of liberty, then support him (I Thess 5:14).
 7. If a brother offends you in some matter, be patient toward him (I Thess 5:14).
 8. It is our duty to grow in goodness and knowledge to admonish (Romans 15:14).
 9. When we see a brother overtaken in a fault, we must save him (Galatians 6:1-2).
 10. This work of conversion from error is our duty of soul winning (James 5:19-20).
 11. We assemble to consider, provoke, and exhort one another (Hebrews 10:23-25), which is the one-on-one action that Scripture teaches and the Holy Ghost blesses.
 12. Our exhortation should be intense and frequent, as sin is deceitful (Heb 3:12-13).
 13. We are to remember all those in afflictions, as being there with them (Heb 13:3).
 14. If you suspect you offended your brother, you are to go to him (Matt 5:22-25).
 15. If you cannot overlook a brother's offence, you are to go to him (Matt 18:15-17).
 16. We commiserate with one another in joy and sorrow (Ro 12:15-16; I Cor 12:26).
 17. We are to serve one another, not be served by others (Matthew 20:20-28; 23:11-12; John 13:14; Acts 20:35; Galatians 5:13). Ask not what your church can do for you, but ask what you can do for your church.

18. Forbearing one another is putting up with their offences (Eph 4:2; Col 3:13).
 19. Forgiving one another is not holding any bitterness (Ephesians 4:32; Col 3:13).
 20. The love of God requires the love of the brethren (John 13:34; 15:12,17; Romans 13:8; I Thess 4:9; I Peter 1:22; I John 3:11,20,23; 4:7,11-12,20; II John 1:5).
 21. As we have opportunity, we are to do good to the household of faith (Gal 6:10).
 22. We are to pray for each other, as Paul did and taught (Ep 3:14-19; 6:18; Jas 5:16).
 23. Our *internal* love is the mark of true disciples, according to Jesus (John 13:35).
 24. We must gladly distribute to needy saints and be given to hospitality (Ro 12:13).
 25. We greet one another with affection like a close family (Rom 16:16; I Cor 16:20).
 26. Our goal should be the edification, or building up, of one another (I Thess 5:11).
 27. We comfort one another, which is to strengthen and encourage (I Thess 5:11).
 28. We should teach and admonish one another (Rom 15:14; Col 3:16; Heb 5:12-14).
 29. We prefer one another and their things more than our own (Ro 12:10; Phil 2:3-4).
 30. We are to receive one another, as Jesus Christ has received us (Rom 14:1; 15:7).
 31. All matters of liberty should be easily parted with to please others (Rom 15:1-7).
 32. Christ's death for our brethren should compel us to serve them (Romans 14:15).
 33. We should be of one mind with the rest of the body (I Cor 1:10; Phil 2:1-2).
- D. If we have the heart of Cain, we think or ask, "**WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?**"
1. This proud, spiteful, and rebellious spirit rejects correction or help from others.
 2. The "inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" are a manmade heresy, for we owe God our lives, liberty, and every pursuit to the glory of God and His Word. And He gave us churches to accomplish this lofty goal.
 3. Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's; our lives are not our own (Ro 14:7-9).
 4. We do not have the right to do anything that would be sin or offend a brother.
 5. The first order of church submission is one to another in proper fear (Eph 5:21).
 6. If you do not hear a brother, then witnesses, or the church in a matter as small as a torn power cord on a saw, you will be treated as a heathen man (Matt 18:15-18).
 7. Some weakness gets compassion; some rebellion gets intensity (Jude 1:22-23), and you don't get to choose or complain, for those saving you make the choice.
 8. A blow from the righteous might hurt, but it should be appreciated (Psalm 141:5).
 9. You will either take correction as a wicked scorner or as a wise man (Prov 9:7-9).
 10. It is a terrible person who accuses the righteous for correcting them (Is 29:20-21).
 11. Open rebuke for your good is better than meaningless love of your sin (Pro 27:5).
 12. If we have any wisdom at all, we want wounds rather than kisses (Proverbs 27:6).
 13. Shame or honour from God is dependent on how you hear reproof (Prov 13:18).
 14. Let us reject the wicked conceit that despises seven wise men (Proverbs 26:16).
 15. Love suffers long, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth, and endureth.
 16. When you bite a kind reprove, you do two things: you sin against your own soul, and you discourage a righteous brother from doing his duty in the future.

Conclusion:

1. Membership in the family of God and a local church of Christ are great blessings we should appreciate.
2. But our great goal of being ready at our Lord's return is by giving and receiving correction graciously, which does not allow us to float in and out merely participating in singing and hearing a sermon preached.
3. How can we be holy alone? We cannot. So we have churches to help each other toward this perfection.
4. Are we our brother's keeper? Yes, indeed! We all must strive to perfect the body of our Lord Jesus, which is to consider, provoke, and exhort one another toward that goal of every man perfect in Christ.