

By Love Serve

by Bill McLeod

The sermon emphasizes the importance of love in serving others, and provides practical ways to serve by love, including prayer, giving, exhortation, comforting, and supporting one another.

Duration: 54:08

Scripture: Psalm 142:4, Proverbs 17:9, Proverbs 31:26, John 15:13, Romans 15:1, Galatians 5:13, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 1 Peter 1:22

Topics: "Serving Others", "Christian Love"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of serving one another in love, drawing from Galatians 5:13. It highlights the need to show genuine care, exhort, comfort, and support fellow believers, using spiritual gifts to edify the church. The speaker urges the congregation to be proactive in reaching out to those in need, sharing stories of sacrificial love and practical ways to serve others.

Transcript

I'm wondering what would happen if these pianists had four hands instead of just two, you know. I'm a little curious, how many remember to take time, to make time, to pray specifically for this session? Can I see your hands? Well, wow, that's rough. Why don't we just bow in silent prayer right now, and everybody pray for God to bless this session.

Okay, why don't we do that? Father, we know you're here, because you can't be anywhere else, really, without being here. You're everywhere. And we thank you for that, and do pray, God, you'd speak to each of our hearts, as we draw near, Father, to you, draw near to us, we pray.

Bless us in Christ's name, amen. For a text, I want to take Galatians 5, 13. It's the verse that says, by love serve one another.

By love serve one another. The context has two particular thoughts in it. One is that if you people keep on biting and snapping at each other, this is what Paul is saying to the people in the region of Galatia, there was a danger they would be consuming one another.

And the other thought was, remember we are to love our neighbor as ourself. All the laws fulfilled in one word, even this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. So the text says, by love serve one another.

Paul, in writing to the church at Thessalonica in the first chapter, he said, you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus. You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. What I want to talk about tonight is how we can serve, it isn't night now, but this morning, how we can serve in a very practical way, by love serve one another.

I suppose we should say, first of all, that there's a heavy emphasis on the first two words, by love, because if love is not there, we cannot serve. We can go through the motions, and we can pretend, but we cannot really serve in the sense in which God wants us to serve, unless our hearts are truly filled with the love of God. Charles Spurgeon said that love comes in fullness when self dies.

Paul said in Philippians 2.21, all seek their own, all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ. Well, surely he was talking about the world. Oh no, oh no, he was talking about Christians.

Was he really? Yes, he was, because here's what he said. I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ. He was talking about Christians in his day.

They had the same problems then that we have now. But love seeks not her own. So when self dies, love comes in its fullness, and then we can serve one another by love.

And here are some ways in which we can do that. In 2 Corinthians 1.11, Paul said, you also are helping together by prayer for us. I think this is the most important thing of all, and that's why I put it first.

And I know that many of us, perhaps all of us, struggle at times in the area of prayer. It is so hard to maintain a daily, a proper daily prayer life. We make our resolutions and then we break them.

And sometimes the force of circumstances are such that they just get broken. We didn't plan on it. We don't want it that way, but it just happens.

Then we try to catch up and can't catch up, and then we get discouraged and we get confused. Satan wars against us in the area of prayer more than in any other area. Andrew Murray, in one of his books on prayer, one of the first books on prayer he ever wrote, *The Ministry of Intercession*, I think is the title, back in his day, he said that wherever he went in the world, Christians told him, My number one problem is my prayer life.

And that was a hundred years or more ago. And it is no different today. In Romans 15, 30, Paul said, Brethren, I beseech you, for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and for the love of the Spirit that you strive together with me, the word really means agonize, in your prayers to God for me.

Now, he's saying something there that needs to be picked up, and it's this, that in some way, when we get totally committed in the area of prayer, the love of the Spirit is manifest in fullness in our heart and life. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a disciplined mind. The love of God is poured out or shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who is given unto us.

But prayer, you also helping together by prayer. Did you ever notice in Job chapter 42, at what point God set Job free from all his problems? He said, I am made to possess wearisome months of vanity. And when did it all end? The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends.

And you and I will find the same thing, that there will be times when we're interceding with a heart filled with love and faith for some brother or sister or some Christian work. And while we're doing that for others, God does something special for us in our heart and in our need. You also helping together by prayer.

You know, Christian people, I say this kindly, most of us don't believe that, at least many of us don't. If we did, we'd pray more. We would make prayer the principal thing.

Like the apostles, we admire them. Great men of God, great preachers, spirit-filled, great men of prayer. They said, we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

But we do it the other way around. We'll give ourselves continually to the ministry of the word. And if we have time, we'll pray.

But that's not what the Bible says. I read of some churches in Mexico and missionaries in the area said these churches experienced perennial revival. It was always happening, the year round.

And the secret was a very simple thing. It was this. The Christians in those churches would not read any further in the Bible than they were currently prepared to obey.

So if they read something and they said, well, no, I'm not doing that, they would not read one word further until they could say, I am doing that. Now, Phineas said that revival is a new outburst of obedience to God on the part of Christian believers. And if that's so, I understand what's happening in that particular area in Mexico.

What would happen if we did the same thing? Don't read any further than you're currently prepared to obey or are obeying. Then, by helping, serving by helping one another. And you know, there's a great deal said in the Bible about this.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, but especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Especially unto the Christians. A Christian in need, that's an opportunity to serve by love.

And there are many different ways in which we can do this. And if your love is so small, it doesn't get you outside your own denomination. It's not the kind of love we're talking about.

There may be somebody you know from another church. Remember the first year I was out preaching and I met a fellow, he was from a certain group that didn't have a church in the town where I was preaching. And he really loved God.

I just don't remember how I met him. It's 45 years ago, I guess. But I remember inviting him to my church.

You know what he said? He said, why seek you the living among the dead? I mean, that was his attitude. He never attended my church, so he didn't know what went on there. But that's what he said.

Because he took it for granted that this particular denomination, since it was not his, couldn't be alive. But I loved him just the same. And he had a large family, this fellow had.

And he wasn't well at times and didn't always have a steady job. And I was in the store one day and the Lord said, buy some groceries for that fellow. So I bought a box of groceries.

And just when they had the box about full, I noticed a great big cheese thing that weighed about 10 pounds. I said, how much is that? He told me. I said, throw that in too, you know.

But don't tell him who did it. Just deliver it. A couple of days later, I met this brother on the street.

Oh, he said, you'll never guess what God did. But I knew what he was referring to right away. I said, tell me brother, what did he do? He said, the other night, my family, my wife and kids, we were kneeling around the table.

We had nothing to eat. And we were praying for God to send something and there was a knock at the door. And he went to the door and he started bawling.

He said, there was a guy, there was a box of groceries. And do you know what he said? He said, when we were praying for food, I said, Lord, you know how I love cheese? Please send some cheese. Well, by love served.

Whether he's from your denomination or not, whether he loves you or not, by love served. Not rendering evil for evil, but contrary wise blessing. Dick Siple's got a fantastic sermon on that.

It's on tape, Dick, isn't it? You should get it and read it. I was blessed by it. He and I were ministering to some Salvation Army people in Saskatchewan.

That's the first time and the only time I heard it. Contrary wise blessing. Why? That you should inherit a blessing.

Now, remember what happened. I think I might have referred to this. It runs in my mind.

It didn't run in the other sessions. That David, when he became king, did something extraordinary. Because back in those times, and you catch this even from reading the Old Testament, when certain people became king, the first thing they did was rub out all the opposition.

Any potential rival, they killed him immediately. And Saul had been chasing David for seven years in the wilderness, and David was now the king. And he asked if there's any left of the house of Saul.

And they said there was a lad called Mephibosheth. He was lame on both his feet. Jonathan's son, Jonathan was dead, killed with his father on the battlefield.

And they sent for him out of Lodabar. And poor Mephibosheth, he came in fear and trembling because he knew what this meant. And David saw the fear in his face and said, don't be afraid.

You see, here's what David said. Are there any left of the house of Saul, his mortal enemy, that I may show the kindness of God unto them? That's what he wanted to do, to show the kindness of God. By love serve one another.

Where did David learn that? I think he learned it from Mephibosheth's father, Jonathan, because when David was running away from Jonathan's father, Saul, hiding in the wilderness, Jonathan came to meet David in the wilderness, and it says he strengthened his hand in God. Jonathan strengthened David's hand in God. He encouraged him.

I'm sure they prayed together. They had a tremendous love for each other. You know how David wept when he got word that Saul and Jonathan were slain.

He even wept because Saul was gone. He said he was lovely and pleasant. By love, we have to learn how to serve one another.

We can do it by giving. We can do it in many other ways, encouraging people that are discouraged. There are so many ways that we can do this.

Paul took offerings, and you remember in writing to the church at Corinth, he used two phrases in chapter 8 of 2 Corinthians. One phrase was to prove the sincerity of your love, and the other phrase was the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf. It had to do with giving. Giving, in a certain sense, is an acid test of the reality of a fully committed life.

I mean, these phrases Paul used in reference to giving. In Ezekiel 33, 31, it says, They talk it, but they don't do it. So the word of God says, I wouldn't be surprised if there are people in this crowd that are hurting.

And God might be leading some of us to say, my brother, my sister, how is it with you? Do you ever ask anybody that? How are you doing? We need to ask that question. At one of our conferences in Saskatoon, I saw a dear Christian brother say to him, I said, hey, brother, come over here. How are you doing? And he just burst into tears.

He said, I'm having a terrible time. So we went off in the side room, and we had a great time of prayer. And he was encouraged.

There's lots of hurting Christians. We're such dull clods, you know, sometimes. Colder than an iceberg.

No concern. And this kind of text doesn't speak to many Christians, because it demands time. And they haven't got it.

For worldly things, earthly endeavors, yes, but for God and his people, no. Really because their heart is not filled with the love of God. By love, serve one another.

Then we are told to exhort one another, and it also says exhort one another daily. Do you do that? I ask myself that question, too. In Hebrews chapter 3, it says, Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

But, here's the antidote, exhort one another daily. While it's called today, lest, if you don't do it, here's what will happen, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And if we have a ministry, and all of us could have this kind of ministry, you don't have to be a preacher or a singer to do this.

We can all talk. So we can all exhort one another, and we can do it daily. And if we don't do it, Christians will get hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

That's in Hebrews 3. In Hebrews chapter 10, it talks about it again, Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another. And he says, So much the more, as you see the day, the day, God's day, the day of the coming of Christ, so much the more, the ministry of exhortation is required and needed as we draw near to the end of the age, because it says in Matthew 24, Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many, literally, remember, the love of the many, the majority,

will get cold. We need to exhort one another daily, lest God's people get hardened.

It's not enough that they hear preaching from the Pope, but they need to hear it from us on a personal level, a personal basis. And sometimes backsliding can be nipped in the bud. I'm sure in any church, if God's people are really walking with God, and somebody got a little cold, maybe half a dozen people, God would be leading to that person to say something.

By love serve one another, and so serve God. Then we're supposed to comfort each other. Paul said in one place, he said, Comfort one another with these words.

It's the last verse of 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. Comfort one another with these words. Comfort one another with the word of God. Quote scripture to other Christians that are struggling and so on.

Or read scripture to them. Or maybe even have a little Bible study together. I had a funny thing happen one time.

We have a Bible camp in Saskatchewan, a place called Namibian Lake. It's a canoe camp. We take kids on 100, 200, 300 mile canoe trips in the summertime.

And we were up at the base camp doing some work, and there was a fellow there who I knew was struggling, so I said to him, How'd you like to go for a little fishing trip? Yeah, he said, yeah, I'd like to go. I said, there'll be just one qualification, though. Somewhere in the day.

We'll take a lunch with him, but somewhere along the way, we're going to pull into shore and get the Bible and have a Bible study. Is that okay? Yeah, yeah, he said, that's fine. So we went to fish, and I never saw anything like it.

I had a favorite fishing hole, you know. And I started catching them. And he caught a big northern pike, a real beauty, you know.

And I can still see him. It was a 16-foot canoe. He got so excited, almost upset the thing.

And he said, man, wait till the guys at camp see this. And then he knocked it on the head a couple of times. And then he tied a rope through its gills, and he must have put about 16 knots on it.

Then he tied it around the throat about 14 times and dropped it over the side of the boat. And every now and then, he'd pull it up and take a look, and he'd just gloat, you know. Wait till the guys at camp see this one.

Then he pulled up the rope, and the fish was gone. People, I have no idea what happened. And when he asked me, I shouldn't have said that.

I said, frogman. And he didn't think that was funny. And then I encouraged him.

I said, now, brother, listen, there's more fish in the lake. Yeah, but not that ball. Sure, there's bigger ones than that.

I've seen them, I said. So he fished, and he caught another big one, not quite as big, but a beauty. And I'll tell you, when he knocked it on the head, he knocked it on the head.

And he said, this one is staying in the canoe. So he slid it under his seat. And I can't explain what happened.

You know what happened? All of a sudden, the fish jumped up on its tail and flipped over the side, and it was gone. I thought, oh, no. He jumped to his feet.

The old canoe was rocking. I thought, for sure, we're going over. I said, sit down, sit down, sit down.

This is not a battleship. This is a canoe. And he was muttering away, because in the meantime, I'd caught my limit.

And he said, if it was anybody else but you, he said, I wouldn't let you fish, even though you wouldn't. Until I caught up to you, he said, I wouldn't let you fish. But I can't tell you that.

I said, listen, there's lots more here. So he got all ready, and he made a cast, and his reel fell apart. Well, it was just terrible.

I said, I think it's time we went and had our Bible study. So we did, and he felled all, cheered up. And then we went back to camp, and he got another rod and reeled it back to the fish.

And only he caught five. He didn't quite get his limit, but he was very happy. But I puzzled for months over how those two fish got away.

And then one day, he told me, he said, you know how those two fish got away? And I said, no, tell me, quick, tell me. He said, I didn't have a fishing license. Oh, of course, the Lord can do some strange things when you don't have a fishing license.

But anyway, we had a beautiful time. I tried to exhort him, encourage him. And we're to do that, comfort one another with these words.

I gave him some words of comfort. And then it says, warn the unruly, warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all. That's a big order, isn't it? I think it's great, though.

Warn the unruly, we don't like doing that, because we might snap our head off. Comfort the feeble-minded, they'll take up too much of your time. Support the weak.

Man alive, I've got enough, I'm weak myself. Be patient towards all. Well, my wife's quite patient, but you can't have two in one family.

Isn't that often the way it is? But people, if we're going to serve God's children, and he's not talking to preachers, he's talking to all of us as Christians in this text, obviously, without any doubt, we're all called by love to serve one another. You know, sometimes preachers, they have so little contact with people, when they get in the pulpit on Sunday, you're reminded of a possum crawling out of a hollow log where he's been sleeping for six months. He's blinking at the light.

He's not at home among people, you know. God doesn't want us to be like that. You can't serve God sleeping in a hollow log.

Comfort with the Word of God. Comfort with your own words. I think it's great.

Then, this matter of spiritual gifts. I don't know how carefully you've read 1 Corinthians chapter 14. I don't want to get off on some kind of a tirade or anything like that.

I notice this, that eight times in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul speaks about people seeking or using gifts that will edify the Church. Seek that you may excel, he says, to the edifying of the Church. Not self-edifying gifts, but gifts that will edify the Church.

Follow after love, the chapter begins, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that you may prophesy. He explains why a little further down in the same chapter. He that prophesies speaks unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort.

Just the very things we're talking about. The gift of prophesying. What does he say in verse 31 of the same chapter? You may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted.

Everybody can have that gift. Everybody can do that. It's kind of an echo of something Moses said in the Old Testament.

Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them. Well, God has done that. If that was a prayer, it's been answered.

It was certainly a desire of Moses' heart, and I'm sure heavenly knows what's going on now down here on earth. The gift of prophesying for every Christian. It's not for telling the future.

He that prophesies speaks unto men to edification, to exhortation, and to comfort. That's the gift. Ever read the prophecy that King Lemuel's mother taught him? There isn't a predictive element in the whole thing.

Are the words of Edgar over there in Proverbs also? Not a predictive element in the whole thing. It's called a prophecy. And we can all exercise this gift.

And from what Paul tells me in 1 Corinthians 14, it's the greatest gift of them all. Next, of course, to love. I think it is, too.

It's not as showy and spectacular as some. True enough. And you might be quickly forgotten after exercising the two.

I'm going to write a book about you. But by love, serve. You remember Solomon when he talked to the Lord in that prayer of his? It says his speech pleased the Lord.

And a lot of the times our prayers don't please the Lord. It says his speech pleased the Lord. What did he ask for? He said, it went like this, Lord, here's your people, such a great people.

And I want wisdom so I can lead this thy so great a people. He didn't ask for money. He didn't ask for a long life.

He didn't ask for, you know, his enemies to be destroyed. None of these things. Oh, God, give me wisdom so I can help your people.

That's a great prayer to pray. Just to have wisdom. To help people that have needs.

And God is waiting to give us that, because 1 James 1 tells me, if you lack wisdom, ask of God. He gives to all men liberally. And he doesn't reproach us, but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.

For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. Surely, dear people, listen, if you ask God for wisdom, not to be some kind of a great preacher, but to be able to talk to people on a personal basis and help them, your speech will please the Lord. He'll really be pleased.

And he'll give you wisdom. You know what it says in the Bible? Listen carefully. Both ears.

With the lowly is wisdom. Some of us are so proud, we'll never be wise. With the lowly is wisdom.

If you have to judge things concerning this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. Harken, my beloved brethren. Has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him? But you've despised the poor, he said.

Do not rich men oppress you and drive you before the judgment seat and blaspheme that worthy name by which you're called? You despise the poor and you worship the rich? Oh, listen, pray God to give you wisdom so you can serve his people, whether they're wealthy or poor. You can have wisdom and God will give you that to do this kind of thing. By love, serve one another.

So gifts, spiritual gifts. He said, if then you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that you may excel to the edifying of the church. A gift that will edify, build up the church, which sure save us a lot of problems if Christians understood this and stopped seeking for gifts that edify themselves.

Provoking one another, it says, envying one another. We're supposed to provoke one another, by the way, but in a totally different sense. It says, let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.

That's how we're to provoke one another. Your zeal has provoked very many, Paul said, writing to Church of Corinth. It was their zeal in giving that provoked others to give.

But don't provoke people in a bad way. Envy one another, provoking one another, it says, in Philippians chapter 2. And to force all that, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also in the things of others.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who left heaven's glory to walk on a mud ball for 33 years, so he could save us. We're to have the same mind and attitude that the Lord Jesus had. He came to help.

He came to bless. He came to comfort and to cheer. Read Isaiah chapter 61.

He came to give us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that we might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified thereby. He came to cheer us and help us and lift us. Now he wants us to do the same thing.

And isn't it strange that most Christians don't want to get involved? They've got their own plans, and they're working their own plans. They've got no time. That verse, Paul, your first Corinthians chapter, goes in one ear, out the other, picks up speed in between.

It's the verse that says, Let no man seek his own, but every man another's welfare. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's welfare. You know what? When you start living, you and I start living this

way, our couple gets so full at times, it'll splash all over in all directions.

You get so blessed helping other people. You get so blessed exhorting and comforting other people. So spiritual gifts.

Seek for gifts that will edify the Church of God. Then did you ever think of cheering God's people by singing? All you say, I'm like you, I can't sing. No, I can't sing, I admit that freely.

But you know what? I sing too. And the Lord's never turned me off. I was driving from Rejohn and Seston one time a year or two ago, last summer I guess it was, and the cloud formations in the sky were absolutely fantastic, and I sang the whole way from Rejohn to Saskatoon.

That's 165 miles. The Lord didn't get tired of it. It's amazing the patience He had.

But what I was getting at here is this. If you feel like singing, sing. And God may take the words you're singing and wing them into some needy person's heart.

You know, we've got this stupid idea that we have to be full of music or we can't sing, you know. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God has perfected praise. Right? That's right.

I was reading a beautiful story out of Scotland. A Christian was in his room, second floor, and his window was open, it was night, and he was extremely discouraged, despondent. Everything had been going wrong.

He tried to pray. He could only cry. And some dear old saint, some dear old lady was walking down on the sidewalk below.

She couldn't sing, but she was singing, Jesus, keep me near the cross, there a precious fountain. His heart was blessed. He never knew who she was, and she never knew what she did, see.

But her heart was happy, so she was singing, Jesus, keep me near the cross. And she ministered to a man's need. I've been ministered, standing in a congregation when some dear old saint that can't sing at all, you know, that would scare crows even, is singing next to me or behind me or in front of me, and I'm blessed.

I stopped singing and I listened because it was just something I needed. Just something I needed. Somebody walking with God and singing.

That's important. So in Colossians 3.16 it says, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. That's the inflow.

Then the outflow, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. That was written to the church, the whole church at Colossae, to the whole church today. Psalms, from Job to the Song of Psalms, those five books that were called the Psalms sometimes by the Jews and they set them to music, they sang them in their synagogues and so on.

The Psalms, sing the word of God. Then hymns, it really means hymns of praise. Then spiritual songs, the word there really is ode, O-D-E.

It means songs that originate with the spirit of God. Spurgeon described music in his day. I wonder what he'd say if he was here today.

In the church he said, A lot of it is what he called mermaid poetry, fair enough where it broke the surface but totally fishy in the lower parts. He said, Some of it was what he called wax-nosed hymnology made to fit the face of any creed. You know, beautiful isle of somewhere, that fits, you know.

There's a lot of junk today. We're supposed to be singing songs whether we do it formally on the platform or do it informally as we were suggesting. Songs that will teach, songs that will admonish.

And I might add, songs that will comfort and cheer and exhort. These are the kind of songs. Did you ever notice that most of our contemporary songs are totally subjective in nature? Have you noticed that? It's all about me and my problems.

I had a terrible Monday and a horrible Tuesday and an awful Wednesday and a black Thursday, you know, and everything went. Then a big hand came down through the clouds and picked me out of it all. I've heard that so often it just makes me sick.

Sure, there's some good contemporary songs. But brethren, we're saying that before I agree to that. I went through a new songbook a while ago.

There's 85 songs, 75 were totally subjective in nature. All about me and my problems. Listen, I know about me and my problems.

And to listen to those kind of songs doesn't do anything for me. I just turn off my ears. But if somebody sings, My Jesus, I love Thee.

I know Thou art mine for Thee. All the follies of sin. I'll recite.

That speaks. It doesn't have to be an old song. There's old songs that are subjective too, you know.

But all to have songs, majestic sweetness that's enthroned upon my Savior's brow. His head with radiant glories crowned his lips with grace or flow. Who writes songs like that today? Who sings them? We're content with that which is shallow when they say it's got to be singable, whatever that means.

I didn't intend to get on that. But Colossians 3.16. Then, serve one another just by loving one another. You know, in 1 Peter 1, verse 22, seeing you have purified your souls, and many of us have in these days, we've purified our souls, we've met God.

Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth, that's what we have to do to be purified. Through the Spirit, by the Spirit of God's blessing, unto, and that word means motion towards, moving towards what? Unfeigned, that's a genuine, non-hypocritical love of the brethren. See that you love one another with a pure heart, fervently.

In the same book, chapter 4, verse 8 says, have fervent love among yourselves, for love shall cover the multitude of sins. He that covers a matter seeks love. A tailbearer reveals secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit conceals the matter, because he's seeking love.

He doesn't want to be a gossip. So, we're to show love to one another. There was a girl named Ethel Rupp.

She attended a college down in Minneapolis years ago. I think she was from Canada originally. I believe she's dead now, too, but she was a very fine Christian girl and quite sharp on the reply.

And one day, she was coming with arms loaded with books across the campus, and some guys saw her coming. This was a Christian school, and they thought they'd have a little fun, so they lined up along the wall. And when she walked in, they all just kind of went to attention and stood there.

And she said, well, what's up? Well, they said, aren't you going to greet the brethren with a holy kiss? Well, she said, certainly, when the brethren prove they're holy. And she walked on. She always had answers like this.

You know, sometimes somebody will come up, a pastor came up one time with his wife, and he said, you know, my wife has been so blessed in these meetings. She wants to give you a hug and a kiss. Do you mind? Well, I said, my brother, if you don't mind and you're standing right here, it's fine.

So she gave me a hug and a kiss and she cried. And the way they went, I've never seen them since. But sometimes somebody comes up and says, I appreciate your ministry.

I want to give you a hug and a kiss. And you know, afterwards, you don't know whether you've been kissed by a saint or puppet by a pig. You know, you don't really know.

And I feel uneasy, you know, sometimes. Let's think of love in a different context. There was a lady called May Agnew Stevens.

She worked herself into an early grave in New York City. Her husband told me that before she died, he was a preacher and evangelist. He said, my wife led a thousand prostitutes to Jesus Christ off the streets of New York City.

He said, she was out all hours of the day and night looking for these fallen women, loving them. Now that's what I'm thinking of. Or Amy Carmichael in India.

She loved. She saved a thousand, at least a thousand of those temple children who would have been condemned to a life of idolatry and prostitution. And she did it at the risk of her life.

She could have been killed. She could have been incarcerated for life had she been caught. But God kept her from that.

She had a glorious ministry. When I'm talking about love, I'm talking about that. Not a peck on the cheek.

By love, serving one another. And you know people, by having a kind tongue, in Proverbs 31, it says, in her tongue is the law of kindness. Do you have the law of kindness in your tongue? If you repeat a matter, you separate chief friends, you know.

The Bible says that. But I can't control my tongue if my heart isn't right. And I can't serve other people if my heart isn't right.

I can feel terribly condemned about it, and I can see the need, and I can want to do it, but I can't do it if my heart isn't right. I can't exhort. I can't comfort.

I can't warn. I can't do anything right. I can't really even help people.

Well, in a mechanical sense, maybe I could give somebody a ride in my car and sing the doxology and do nothing for another six months, you know, the way we sometimes do. This is a constant thing, day and night, and you have to make your plans in the sand, not in concrete, because you never know when the Lord's going to come along and say, I want you to do this, or I want you to do that. We have to be open to that.

When Robert Wilson, Walter Wilson, pardon me, he's dead now, but he was a great soul, a medical doctor, and he gave his life to the Lord entirely one night and asked God to fill him with the Spirit, and the Lord did. You know what he did the next morning? He went out and bought a briefcase, and his wife said, what's that all about? Oh, he said, I gave my life to the Lord last night and I expect He'll want me to travel. You know what he used to do? He'd get out on the highway dressed in a business suit, and he'd hitchhike.

Well, people weren't afraid of picking up He looked like a sharp businessman with a briefcase. He never had any problem getting rides. So he'd get in the car and he'd share Christ with his guy and they might go 50 miles down the highway or however far they had to go to get the message across.

Then he'd get out and he'd hitchhike home, he'd say. A medical doctor. Boy, he had it right.

They said no patient ever got into his office that didn't hear the gospel from his lips. And God used him. Many, many hundreds of people found the Lord Jesus.

But you see, he bought a briefcase and maybe some of us need to do the same thing in a figurative sense, I mean. To be available to God that He might use us. And then we have to learn how to dismiss our fears.

You see, the Lord might lead you, you look at a person and you say to yourself, well, they look very happy. And maybe inside they're just crying. And the Holy Spirit knows they're crying and is trying to get you to go and talk to them.

You don't want to talk to them because you say, well, they're smiling, you know. You can't tell. I sat in a car in Winnipeg one time with a fellow preacher and we were waiting for our wives.

I forget they were shopping somewhere and that can get long. And so we decided to play a game. Let's try and figure out who of these people that are walking by are saints, you know.

So a lady goes by and says, you think she's a saint? No, man, she sure doesn't look like one, you know. You think that guy's a saint? You know, he could be. He kind of looks like he's got a nice smile.

He looks like he could be a saint. Of course, we knew we were probably wrong 99 out of 100 times. You can't really tell by that.

But we're just playing a game to put in time. But God doesn't want us to play games. There are a lot of people.

It's a big world. Petra and I were in the Philippines last fall and we were in a hotel in a place called Daguapan, I think it was. We came downstairs and here was a table in the foyer of the hotel and there was a couple of guys sitting there with big charts and stuff and I thought instinctively false doctrine.

What's going on here? We watched. And there was a fellow sitting here. We phoned him afterwards.

He was a born-again believer. A Baptist, if you please. And these guys were feeding this TM junk, you know.

And he was buying it. And I listened for a few minutes. Now, we could have just walked away and gone and had dinner.

But we didn't. I said to this fellow, I said, listen, the junk these guys are giving you is garbage. It's straight garbage right out of the pit of hell.

I said, don't listen to these guys. They're Satan's emissaries. Now, it wasn't exactly a loving thing to say, maybe.

But I was really alarmed. This guy was gobbling it up. And there's times when we have to get involved.

And sometimes we have to get involved in a, you know, in a specific, in a strong way. It's easier to walk by, pretend you didn't see anything, didn't hear anything. Oh, people, we do it so much.

I know the heart of God is grief. What does this verse say to you? By love, serve one another. That other verse I gave you before.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Does that speak to your heart at all? Am I really revived? What is revival? A nice feeling inside? Not really. If I'm truly revived, then this text will speak powerfully to my soul.

And if I'm not doing this kind of thing, I'll start doing this kind of thing for the glory of God. Spurgeon tells a beautiful story about one of his deacons. His name was Olney.

The church, they had Metropolitan Tavern at London, England. In those days, it would seat 6,000. It did seat about 800.

It was bombed out in the last war and rebuilt and so on. It had a fire before that, by the way. But anyway, they were standing at the front church talking when all of a sudden, in the middle of a sentence, Olney, this deacon, just darted away like a bird.

He was gone. Spurgeon didn't know what had happened. So several hours later when the service was all over, the people were gone, Spurgeon said, Olney, that was rude.

Where did you go? Oh, pastor, he said, I saw a lady come in on the third balcony and she looked so sad. I sat behind her and I led her to Jesus. Hey, to have deacons like that.

Spurgeon never, ever gave an altar call, never called anybody for it, but thousands were saved. But you know what he had? He had what he called bird dogs in the congregation, scattered all through the congregation, and their job was to look for wounded birds. See, after the preaching of the message, they looked for wounded birds and this was how it was done and it was very effective.

But you have to have a heart of love to do that kind of thing. Olney didn't care that he had broken off in the middle of the sentence talking to the most famous preacher of the day. Even if he got fired, he saw a need and he was out there to try and meet it.

By love, serve one another. I'll close in just a moment. Do you remember John said, Hereby we perceive the love of God because he laid down his life for us and we are to lay down our lives for the brethren.

I don't think that means that we should be prepared to die for the brethren. It could be included, but I don't think that's the primary meaning there. Because Paul talks about some people in Romans, the last chapter, Aquila and Priscilla, he said, My helpers in Christ Jesus who have for my life laid down their own necks unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

They were still alive. They hadn't died, but they laid their necks down for Paul. Like those women that ministered unto Jesus of their substance.

Traveled with him, ministered to him of their substance. I don't know what Aquila and Priscilla did, but they were a great help to Paul. And so in that sense, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Find some person in your church that isn't doing well. Make them a special object of affection and love and faith and prayer. Stay with them until they're warmed up and going for God.

Find somebody else. All of our churches would be too small if we were to implement this kind of thing. And really do it.

Not for statistics' sake, but because we love people and we love our God. No one ever cared for me like Jesus. But in Psalm 142, isn't it somebody said, no man cared for my soul.

God cares, but the Christians don't. You know, in Saskatoon, I hadn't been there in more than maybe a year or two years. And a couple committed suicide in the city.

They were from Germany. And they left a suicide note. And the note said, we have no friends in Saskatoon.

We don't speak the language very well at all yet. No one ever calls on us. Our telephone never rings.

We don't have any friends. And we've decided that life isn't worth living. And they took their life.

And their house was about three blocks from my church. You can imagine how I felt. How come I never rang their doorbell someday? I visit a lot of homes in that area.

Somehow I'd miss theirs. I thought about that for weeks. Just a finger on a doorbell might have made the difference in the lives of those two people.

Well, I close. By love, serve one another. Let's pray.

Lord God, we thank you for your precious word. And God, I pray from my own heart that I might be more open and sensitive to the leading of your spirit and to people's needs. Lord, we know that your love will always fill our hearts if we're willing to pass it on.

Love is flowing like a river. Let it flow through me. Let it flow through me.

Let the mighty love of God flow out through me. Father, would you burn this great truth, by love serve one another so deeply into our hearts that we'll never forget it? Lord, just do something special in this moment of prayer. And if any of us are careless or indifferent, God rebuke us, we pray.

Someone cared for us or we wouldn't be saved. Give us that kind of heart. In Christ's name, Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18378.mp3>

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/bn7Fj_COe0Y.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bill-mcleod/by-love-serve/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net