

1Tim 24-03-17b

We're ready now to resume our study and it is such a helpful, I think, investigation of what scripture has to say so that we can have a worthy walk. We can keep in step with the Spirit, all of the commands we have to walk circumspectly and to redeem the time. It is so helpful because so much of our time is spent in contact with others and to know how to behave, to be able to discern where we can freely express the one another brand of love and where we need to maintain a distance, where we are never those who slam a door and lock it so that there's no opportunity to return if someone has a change of heart or change of mind.

If God did that, Israel would have been destroyed many, many centuries ago. But even in their hardness of heart, God always left a path of return. But it is, turn you at my reproof, repent and believe, change your mind.

Why will you die, O house of Israel? All day long I have held out my hands. But there is a difference when you think of these passages, God's treatment of his own people, Israel, in Old Testament days. He doesn't say, because I am almighty God, I will come and take you in my hands and bring you into my presence.

God stands his ground, as it were, and holds out his hands. All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and stiff-necked people. These are the outsiders.

These are those who are in darkness, those who prefer Belial to Christ, those who are lawless instead of faithful, and so on. The notion that the Jews and Arabs sometimes have, if one of their children converts to a faith different than their own, and they say, well, you are dead to me, and they hold a funeral, and they never speak the person's name, and this is not a Christian concept, it isn't scriptural, it's not right, it doesn't reflect the glory of God. Our separation is with sorrow.

You look at the Lord Jesus stretching his hands out toward Jerusalem and saying, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who slay the prophets, how often I would have come to you and gathered you under my wings as a hen gathers her chicks. You would have none of me. But Jesus did not force the kingdom on people who weren't interested in receiving it, and there are only two occasions where scripture tells us that Jesus wept.

One is at the faithlessness at the tomb of Lazarus, the misunderstanding. Jesus has now been teaching for over three years, and his closest, most intimate disciples don't understand the issue of life and death and resurrection. His most intimate friends, Mary and Martha, his disciples don't understand.

They have seen Jesus raise the dead on other occasions, and yet the people who surround the tomb of Lazarus, and you would expect that the friends of Lazarus, Mary and Martha would be of like mind and would appreciate the Lord Jesus. But Jesus weeps,

not because he loved Lazarus so much, that's the misunderstanding of the crowd. It is he groans and weeps on that occasion because so little progress has been made in understanding.

Even those closest to him are not ready for God's kingdom. And the other time Jesus weeps is over Jerusalem, and this is not a self-righteous, looking down the nose separation. This is a separation characterized by sorrow and grief and hope for a change of mind on the part of those who have created the need for separation.

We don't create the need. We don't change ourselves. We endeavor to remain faithful and obedient, and if others don't want to stay in the light and want to embrace the darkness, if there is a, you know, there used to be a bumper sticker, if God seems far away, who moved? And in the same way, if there are those with whom we cannot have close fellowship, it is their response, their reaction in the presence of God and the things of God that creates the separation.

We just have to maintain that distance unless and until there is a change of mind where we can gather in the light. We don't want to fellowship in the darkness. And if we are walking in the light, there is little to no fellowship with those who walk in darkness.

Paul says, what fellowship can there be in 2 Corinthians 6? Well, so it is helpful to know what the standards are, what the procedure is based on where people are. Are they those who are outside and are potentially wolves and Canaanites who are interested in our elimination and destruction? That calls for one set of policies. Our neighbor, with whom we don't have close contact, but this is the golden rule aspect.

And believer or unbeliever, faithless or faithful, we will do them a good turn. We want to shine light. We do not want our good spoken of as evil.

We want to be those who are approachable. If some of these people want to ask us a reason for the hope that is in us, they should not be put off by some sort of holier than thou sanctimonious attitude on our part. But we do not embrace, we do not enfold, we do not become intimate with neighbors.

The reason they're a neighbor is they've got their household with their own intimate relationships. They live in that house and we live in this. We are in the household of faith, whatever their household is.

And these are concentric circles. There can be those who are outsiders that actually are across the backyard fence. We do no harm.

We love our enemies. This is neighbor love, not one another love. There are different kinds of love, just like romantic love is different than other kinds of love.

But we are never those who seek the harm of others, whether they're outsiders. Paul

says, God will judge those who are outside. Neighbors, it's the golden rule.

Love your neighbor as you love yourself. One another love, which is what we're looking at now, has a higher standard. This is the new commandment.

The old commandment is love your neighbor as yourself, as a reflection of your love for God. Love your neighbor. Jesus in the upper room gives his disciples a new command, which is love one another as I have loved you.

This is a much higher bar and a much more fulsome and self-sacrificial love. And we saw in looking at these, the first 20 odd of these, and I'll just give you these, the straight one another's, love one another, John 13, 34, twice. That's number one and two.

Love one another, John 13, 35 in the following verse. If you need something repeated and then emphasized a third time, look at John 13, 34 and 35. Love one another, love one another, love one another.

Three times in two verses. Again in John 15, 12. Again in John 15, 17.

Again in Romans 13, 8. Again in first Thessalonians 4, 9. Hopefully you've got these written down and this is review. And multiple times in first John, first John 3, 11, 3, 23, 4, 7, 4, 11, and 4, 12. Just those instances I have covered, that's 12 times love one another.

How many times do you have love your neighbor emphasized in the entire old Testament? And here in just the letters of John and two letters of Paul, you've got it a dozen times emphasized. The exact same construction. It is the imperative love one another.

Then there are expansions and extensions to it. So in, uh, and I could add to that second John five, second John five, love one another. So that's 13 times.

Number 14, love one another deeply from the heart. That's first Peter three, eight, love one another deeply. First Peter four, eight, be devoted to one another in brotherly love.

Number 16, that's Romans 12, 10. Make your love increase and overflow for one another. That's first Thessalonians 3, 12.

You get the idea that this is a pretty important aspect and we've got to know how to do it right. There are about 60 of these. I think my list total comes to 59, which is, I think that's a prime number.

Uh, I was hoping it would be a biblical number. It would be, you know, 12 times 12 or, you know, something significant. But of those that I have included here, my list goes to number 59.

This is, uh, 17. Make your love increase and overflow in first Thessalonians 3, 12. Then

you have the holy kiss commands, which this is the opposite of do not eat, do not meet, do not greet that we saw in second John.

The entire letter of second John is pay attention to who you associate with and who you don't. And with those who deny the Lord Jesus is who he is and who we know him to be, that's a deal breaker. Don't share a table.

Don't say hello. Don't initiate contact. It's a different thing.

If someone initiates contact with us, the Pharisees to whom Jesus pronounced the nine woes came out to hear him teach and started carping and stirring up the crowds and trying to create opposition. Jesus never approached a Pharisee and confronted him. They always came to him.

There are other Pharisees, Nicodemus, uh, and, and, uh, Simon who came to him and invited him to the house. When those opponents invited him, he, he responded. When the Pharisees asked him questions, he answered.

There's never a case where it says the Pharisees challenged him with a question and Jesus opened not his mouth. If they approached him and asked a question, he always answered, but he didn't go to the Sanhedrin and get his followers to break down the door and go tell the Sanhedrin a thing or two about their social policies or their religious policies or their relationship to Rome. He didn't go to the Romans and start carping and harping about Caesar and Roman rule and what the centurions were doing.

He didn't go to the slave market and protest against the marketing of human flesh. He didn't go to the brothels and the houses of prostitution and stand outside and say, what are you doing? Don't you know, you have the image of God and you're prostituting yourselves. And it should not be.

So Jesus often went to the wilderness or went to the sea. People followed him and he spoke to them. Those who approached him.

This is our rule for those who are outside. If they approach us, we should be approachable. To our neighbors, we may be maintaining a neighborly distance and doing to them as we would have them do to us, but we are approachable.

Anything a believer does that makes them unapproachable. Now we can maintain standards. And if somebody says, Hey, I'd like to come over and spend a week at your house and they're engaged in open immorality, we can respond.

They're asking us a question and we can demur and we can say, I'm sorry, but that isn't something that I can have under my roof. And I don't apologize for it. I'm a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And there are certain things from which I have to maintain the distance and your lifestyle, your choices fall into that category. And that kind of contact is forbidden to me by the word of God. And that is my life's guide.

And so I'm sorry, but no, you and your girlfriend or your boyfriend cannot come and stay in my back bedroom. That is, I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and I live my life to honor him. And one of the requirements of so doing is that I cannot support, embrace, or in any other way, encourage immorality.

There is right and wrong. That's wrong. And it's not going to happen on my property or under my roof.

Don't apologize, but you can explain that puts the ball in the other person's court. And if nobody ever makes that issue, why is anybody going to think what they're doing is wrong? If somebody doesn't point it out, if somebody doesn't say for me to allow you in here is for me to touch the unclean thing and to be tolerant of that, which my Lord in heaven has forbidden. Somebody's got to be the Lord Jesus Christ, reflecting the difference between righteousness and evil, between morality and immorality, between light and darkness.

And if you don't maintain the distinction and if you don't explain that's darkness, I am trying to walk in the light. How's anybody going to know who are the communicators of God's word? If not us, who is the embodiment of Christ on this earth? If not us, we are his body. He is the head.

And what is his goal? He wants to present to himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. That's the wedding garment that is spotless. So it's important to know who is one another.

We commit faults against one another and we can confess our faults. Remember, confess your faults. That's coming up in our list.

So greet one another with a holy kiss. This is number 18. It's Romans 16, 16.

Paul gives the identical exhortation in 1 Corinthians 16, 20 and in 2 Corinthians 13, 12. Romans 16, 16, 1 Corinthians 16, 20, 2 Corinthians 13, 12. I'm not going to be labor making sure you get these in a list.

You can Google them or you can review the recording. Greet one another with a holy kiss. Peter says, greet one another with a kiss of love.

But notice one another. And as we saw last time, intrinsic to this is this has to be reciprocal to work. All of the one another commands are reciprocal.

Both sides have to be doing it to some effectual degree. It is not a one-sided love. Loving

your enemy, doing good to those who hate you and praying for those who despitefully use you is one-sided.

Are they returning your love? When they are an active enemy and they are despitefully using you? No, that's one-sided love. That's neighbor love at best or an abstract love toward those who are outside. Do no harm.

Do as you would have done to you, but it's one-sided. One another love is reciprocal love. And you know who is a legitimate target if it is reciprocated.

This takes wisdom, but you cannot do these things with someone who is not interested, not faithful, not in the light, more interested in Belial than Christ. None of these one another's will work there. And one of the ways we know if somebody is a one another is, is this a reciprocal love? So greet one another with a holy kiss.

The opposite of 2 John 2, where John says, when these don't acknowledge who Christ is, don't even greet them. Don't initiate contact. You've got a different set of opportunities if they contact you, but you cannot compromise.

You cannot say, well, since you've given me a call, I'll leave the light and walk in darkness, but there's always a path back. So greet one another with a kiss of love, 1 Peter 5, 14. The idea that this love transcends neighbor love, love your neighbor as yourself, to love one another as I have loved you is expressed.

And we saw these last time. Number 22, in humility, consider others better than yourselves. Others better than yourselves.

This is Philippians 2, 3. And of course, this is Philippians. This is Paul writing to one of the healthiest churches in his sphere of ministry. And these others are others in the fellowship.

And you don't just love them as yourself. You consider them better than yourself. And this doesn't mean your opinion of their worth.

This means when you consider what to do, their interest comes ahead of your own. This is the Philippians 2 example that he's going to go on to give of the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. So in number 23, honor one another above yourselves, Romans 12, 10. One another above yourself.

Others come first. Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for another, for his friend. This is one another love in that self-sacrifice.

Serve one another in love. If you are serving, you are diminishing yourself. This is Jesus with the towel around his waist, washing feet.

Serve one another in love, Galatians 5, 13. That's number 24. 25, be at peace with each other.

Be at peace with one another. It is extremely difficult to maintain peace if you're not in one another's sphere. Because that sphere of one another is in the realm of the Holy Spirit that eases friction and gives us the ability to love as Christ loved.

That love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Romans 5, 5. So to be at peace with one another, that's Mark 9, 50. Number 26, live in harmony with one another. Many times to be at peace, you have to make a concession.

You have to give something up in the interest of peace. This is ever the diplomatic problem, is how much am I willing to give up in the interest of peace? So being at peace with one another and living in harmony with one another, Romans 12, 16. Number 27, each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others.

This is Peter talking in 1 Peter 4, 10. Each one should serve others. You should serve one another using whatever gift you have received.

Number 28, Peter again in 1 Peter 5, 5, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another. Service, endeavoring to maintain peace, takes humility, considering others better than ourselves. So clothe yourself with humility toward one another.

Doesn't say clothe yourself with humility toward those who are outside. Be a humble sheep in the face of the wolves. That's not the command.

This is in the realm of one another. 29, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. It isn't our own merit.

It's not our own qualities. We don't earn the right to be treated well. We submit to one another out of reverence for Christ, Ephesians 5, 21.

Now, here's the interesting part of the list. And this is how you know whether or not love is reciprocal, whether it's going to go both ways. Teach one another.

This is number 30, Colossians 3, 16. Teach one another. Someone else has to be walking in truth and in the light to be able to teach me and I can teach them.

We can speak the truth in love. Teach one another, Colossians 3, 16. Number 31, instruct one another, Romans 15, 14.

And in the sphere of one another's, because we are humble and considering others better than ourselves, we can be teachable. If we're going to teach and instruct each other, what do we have to be? Teachable. It doesn't say teach others.

It says teach one another. The teaching is going to go in both directions. This is why

unapproachable pastors sow the seeds of their own destruction.

If I don't learn from others as well as teach, I am going to quickly fall under all kinds of divine discipline. Teach one another, instruct one another. That's Colossians 3, 16 and Romans 15, 14.

Number 32, speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Everybody can share a song. Everybody can share a praise.

Everybody can share a celebration of God's glory and God's grace and God's goodness, God's past actions. Many of the God's goodness to Israel and God's goodness to his own people. Speak to one another.

There needs to be an avenue for fellowship. This is why we have made more than a one-way communication channel in our church. We're widely separated, but we need to do communication in both directions or we can't fulfill this command.

Speak to one another. Number 33, admonish one another. There can be gentle pointing out of this is not as quite what it should be.

Things need to be done decently and in good order. This is too long. This is too short.

This is inconsiderate. This is inadvertently perhaps causing a problem. So admonish one another, Colossians 3, 16.

This of course has to be done in wisdom and prayerfully and in humility and offering a thought rather than banging someone over the head with a gavel. That's 3, 16 of Colossians, admonish one another. Number 34 and 35 and 36 and 37 and 38 and 39.

These are all encourage one another. We've got almost as many of these as we have love one another. Encourage one another.

In the sphere of one another, there should be encouragement, not discouragement. If you come in contact with somebody and you come away discouraged, that is not one another love. One another contact encourages.

So encourage one another. First Thessalonians 4, 18. 35, encourage each other.

First Thessalonians 5, 11. Build each other up. First Thessalonians 5, 11.

Encourage one another daily. Hebrews 3, 13. Spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Hebrews 10, 24. Encourage, encourage, build up. Encourage daily.

Of course, this means we need to be close enough to one another that there's daily contact. But daily, of course, means regularly, frequently. Spur one another on.

That's number 38 in Hebrews 10, 24. 39, encourage one another. Hebrews 10, 25.

Here are attitudes, practices. Be considerate. When you come together to eat, wait for each other.

This is being considerate, looking out for the interests of others. This is 1 Corinthians 11, 33 in the context of what people have kind of misunderstood related to the Lord's Supper, you know, fellowship meals with believers. When you come together, wait for each other.

Be considerate. That's number 40. 41, have equal concern for one another.

1 Corinthians 12, 25. Number 42, be patient, bearing with one another in love. Patience, long suffering.

This is bearing with. Ephesians 4, 2. Be patient, bearing with one another in love. Number 43, be kind and compassionate to one another.

Ephesians 4, 32. This is in the Old King James. Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted.

44, bear one another's burdens. Galatians 6, 2. Number 45. This is forgive one another in the sense of wash one another's feet.

As I have done for you, Jesus said, you should do for one another. John 13, 14. Washing each other's feet.

This is removing, absolving and forgetting about road dust on the feet. Contrasted with the bath by Jesus talking to Peter in that context. Number 46, forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

Forgive grievances. It's interesting, you don't see forgiveness commanded for the neighbors or for those who are outside. Forgiving one another.

And remember Jesus talking about forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. If we do not forgive each other, we are not forgiven by the Father. But that is in the context of this close circle.

I'm not saying you can be, you know, vengeful and unforgiving toward others, but the focus of this and the functional arena in which it's takes place is our intimate contact, our close fellowship. So forgive one another. Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

Colossians 3, 13. Number 47. Again, out of Ephesians 4, 32.

Be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. Ephesians 4, 32. The forgiveness is separate from kindness and compassion.

Number 48, accept one another just as Christ accepted you. Jesus said, love as I have loved you. Here in Romans 15, 7, Paul says, accept one another just as Christ accepted you.

Well, how does Christ accept us? Is his acceptance unconditional and without standards and without discernment? We are to accept one another as Christ accepted you. Who is it that is acceptable in Christ's sight and acceptable? If you deny me before men, I will deny you before my father. That is not acceptance.

If you do not have my words and keep them, I will not come to you and make my home with you is the obverse of that John 13 context. If you do not abide in the vine, the father is going to prune you out. That is not acceptance.

So accept one another. Discern who one another is as Christ has discerned and accepted you. And the Lord Jesus has standards.

God the father has standards. He is not indiscriminate. He is not unconditional.

Accept one another as Christ accepted you. Important passage, Romans 15, 7. Number 49, bear with one another, Colossians 3, 13. Number 50, confess your faults to each other, James 5, 16 in the realm of one another.

And these are faults. If your brother has ought against you, go and be reconciled. Jesus talks about this same thing.

James is the Lord Jesus' half brother, and they probably learned this at home, but this isn't stand up and tell people your invisible sins. This is, if you have sinned against one another, confess it to one another, acknowledge that you have done harm so that that person can forgive. God forgives those who confess their sins to him, 1 John 1, 9. If we confess, he is faithful and just to forgive.

We, in order to be forgiven by one another, need to acknowledge that I was the offending party. I have wronged you. That is the condition upon which the wronged party can forgive.

Repentance, change of mind, acknowledgement, confession. So, confess your sins to each other, James 5, 16. Pray for one another in that same passage.

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other. That is also James 5, 16. Live in harmony with each other, 1 Peter 3, 8, that's number 52.

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling, without complaint. You don't have to offer hospitality to any old neighbor. You don't have to offer hospitality to the world.

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Don't make it out to be a burden and a lot of trouble and make the guest feel bad. This is 1 Peter 4, 9. Offer hospitality to one

another.

You can see very clearly here the safety that is in that reciprocal field of intimate fellowship. I am just as accepting of you and just as willing to express hospitality as you would be for me if the situation were reversed. Now, the remainder of these, and there's about six of them, are negatives.

We've had 53 of these that were positives. Do this. Here are the do nots.

So, these last half a dozen are the do nots. 54. Stop passing judgment on one another.

Stop judging one another. Romans 14, 13. Number 55.

Do not lie to one another. Colossians 3, 9. Our intimate fellowship should be in the truth, not deceit. Number 56.

Do not slander one another. One of the things that happens in intimate fellowship is we know a lot about each other because we're close. And if you spread your knowledge in places it shouldn't be spoken of, if you betray a confidence, if you talk behind someone's back things that you understand and know because you are in that one another circle, that's slander.

Do not slander one another. Once again, do you want somebody sharing intimate confidences that you have imparted to them? Well, don't. Don't share their intimate confidences.

Keep your own counsel. Bridle your tongue. Be careful about what you share.

You can know a thing. You don't have to say what you know. You don't have to tell what you know.

And you don't have to drop hints so that somebody pries it out of you and say, well, they kept asking me questions. I finally had to cave. Do you really want somebody doing the reverse? Do not slander one another.

James 4.11. Number 57. Do not grumble against each other. When there are stresses, when there are strains, when there are differences, when there is hardship and there is the need for forgiveness and the need to not grumble, usually when we grumble it's because we think we have legitimate cause.

Don't grumble against one another. This is James 5.9. Number 58. This is the one that doesn't really contain an imperative.

If you keep on biting and devouring each other, you will be destroyed by each other. This is really more of an outcome. The implication of this is don't bite and devour each other because you will destroy each other.

You will destroy the intimate fellowship. You will destroy the one another circle if you use that access and that knowledge and that intimacy destructively. Number 59.

Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Provocation and harm done within the circle of one another's is sourced in conceit. Arrogance, self-centeredness, self-gratification.

Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Galatians 5.26. Well, great food for thought there. With that we will close.

We will pick up our study again this coming Wednesday. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word, the presence and power of your Holy Spirit, the opportunities, the potentials and the standing that we have in your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that these truths will be a fire and a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces in our own souls. And it will also be a light to shine on our path, to be a lamp unto our feet and to show us the way that is pleasing in your sight. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.