

Audio Transcript of Sermon
February 22, 2020
Kindness

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Throughout this first part of 2020 we've been taking a very close look at second Peter chapter one. That's where we'll begin today taking a look at second Peter one verse five.

2 Peter 1:5-8

5. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6. And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7. And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8. 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.

Last week, we looked at godliness and this week we'll be looking at brotherly kindness. Brotherly kindness could also be translated as brotherly love. The word for kindness in verse seven is the Greek word *philadelphia*, just like the United States city, and cities in other parts of the world. It comes from Strong's Greek word 5360 and it means brotherly love or kindness, and love for the brethren. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is the best known city in the United States that bears that name. There are other cities and towns primarily in the eastern part of the United States and I've been able to find a few towns in Europe and South Africa that also have the same name. Philadelphia was also the name of a city that one of the churches in the Book of Revelation was mentioned. Let's take a look to begin with Revelation three verse seven, Revelation three verse seven.

Revelation 3:7-8
7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8. I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

13. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

So, perhaps this church was based in the city of Philadelphia. Maybe this church as a faithful church had many elements of brotherly kindness and love. When we look at a church that has an unlimited open door and unlimited open opportunities, but has little strength, that combination in order to succeed requires mutual effort from everybody to achieve. So, there should be no mistake that this church was successful not because of its physical location but because of the attitude of the members. And, I don't think it would be a stretch when people are working together for mutual benefit that there is this brotherly kindness in play that keeps everyone strong when they have very little strength.

Philadelphia is the Greek word that is used in many instances in the New Testament. There is a variant that is used, *philadelphos*, in one passage in first Peter chapter three. Let's take a look at that passage, first Peter three verse eight.

1 Peter 3:8-12

8. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

9. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

11. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

When we have love for the brethren, when we have *philadelphia*, or in this instance in this passage, *philadelphos*, we have compassion for each other. We do not seek retributions for evils that happen against us. When other people act angry towards us, we do not act angry back towards them. When people curse them, instead of cursing them back, we seek a blessing for that person. That is what *philadelphia* means. It's a higher form of Christianity. It's a higher exercise of the Spirit of God that is within us. Any animal can bark, a dog can bark at anything that it sees, and it can bark and bark and bark. As people we need to respond with kindness.

Other passages talk of *philadelphia* as well. In first Peter one, we'll begin in verse three, first Peter one verse three.

1 Peter 1:3-25

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

We are called not because of anything we have done, but because of this incredible mercy. Without this mercy, we would have no opportunity for salvation. It is impossible for a person of and by ourselves to be saved. We need the miraculous mercy that comes through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Verse four.

4. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

We have this mercy that is beneficial for us. We live in a time of physical human beings where we are tempted all of the time because we live a life in the flesh, and this body is not spiritually minded. People as they age, lose physical capacity in their body and often wonder what happened to the youth and the strength and

the energy they had when they were younger. Spiritually, we are limited through our physical body and it is this mercy of Jesus Christ that allows us to be saved. Verse seven.

7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

We have the benefit of a high priest in the person Jesus Christ, our elder brother who lived as a man here on earth, who knows exactly all the kinds of temptations we have, that are linked to our physical nature. Satan, every day, uses our physical nature against us. He uses our physical nature in an attempt to snuff out our spiritual life, before we are spiritually resurrected in the Kingdom of God. Verse eight. Continuing to speak of Jesus Christ,

8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

9. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

10. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16. Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

It is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we have this opportunity for salvation, and as Jesus Christ is holy, we are to be holy in our own lives. Verse seventeen.

- 17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:**
18. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;
19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:
20. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

In a couple of weeks, it will be time for the spring holy days, including the Christian Passover. Jesus Christ is our Passover sacrifice, the lamb without blemish and without spot. Our salvation was not bought with money that could be earned, it was paid with a dear and heavy price. In everything that we do here on earth we must be very mindful of that heavy price. When we fall short, we need to be reminded of this important sacrifice that allows for our salvation. Verse twenty-one.

- 21. Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.**

We live lives as Christians recognizing that Jesus Christ was ordained before the foundation of the world to come to earth and be sacrificed for our salvation, that he would be resurrected from the dead, and that we would be given this opportunity for salvation and that at this future time, at our resurrection, we will be resurrected and become spirit beings, immortal in our existence as children of God. So, how do we know we are on this right path towards this future time of salvation? Verse twenty-two.

- 22. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit**

We have to have an understanding of what is in the Bible, that's why it is important to study the Bible on a regular and consistent basis. Many people look

at the Bible on a daily basis, other people might look at it with a different level of frequency, but you have to regularly and periodically read and understand what is in the Bible. And, what must we do with that truth and knowledge that we have attained through the Spirit? Continuing in verse twenty-two,

unto unfeigned love of the brethren,

We must have this brotherly kindness for people who are in the faith as well as people who live here on earth with us. We must, continuing,

see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

When we have this love that is unfeigned, it is not phony, it has to be legitimate. We're not putting on a show for other people to see. It has to be sincere. And, there are things that as we have this love for other people that we must be cautious of. Verse twenty-three.

23. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Whatever we do for the love of the brethren in a spirit of *philadelphia*, must be done sincerely without corruption. We can do nothing that is phony that is intended to deceive other people, because all that would do is put us in the same category as Satan the devil who deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The Book of Hebrews gives us other thoughts on *philadelphia*, brotherly love. Let's consider the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Hebrews. Hebrews thirteen beginning with verse one.

Hebrews 13:1-6

1. Let brotherly love continue.

Let *philadelphia* continue. Verse two.

This transcript Copyright Tom Laign 2020 and is free to be used for non-commercial purposes.

2. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Strangers are people who we do not know and in the modern era we have to be very cautious who we bring into our homes and socialize. Verse two is not telling us to entertain all people who we may come across, because that could put ourselves and our family in extreme danger. But, we must not forget to be hospitable to other people who may be travelling through or visiting. We never know when some of these people might simply be angels. Verse three.

3. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

We allow brotherly love, brotherly kindness, *philadelphia*, to continue when we remember people who are in bonds, people who are in prison, people who in the modern era might be heavily in debt that there is no way for them to dig themselves out of debt. Verse three could be people who are going through bankruptcy. And in verse three when we look at those who suffer adversity, people who have illnesses in their life are suffering adversity. People who are experiencing any kind of loss in their life are experiencing adversity, whether that loss is the love of a family member that is lost through death, whether they have lost a job, whether they have lost anything in their life that might have defined them. It's all a loss for these people, and we have to remember people who are in bonds and people who are suffering adversity. Sometimes, people wonder if there are limits in brotherly love, brotherly kindness, and *philadelphia*. We are clued in to some of those limits in verse four.

4. Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Brotherly love, brotherly kindness, *philadelphia*, never extends to any kind of sexual immorality, or sexual relationships with other people. The only time that is honorable is within marriage. Verse five.

5. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

As we are practicing brotherly love and brotherly kindness as we are practicing this *philadelphia*, we do not practice *philadelphia* with a focus of greed and personal gain. We are not associating and our time or expending our efforts to get to know other people solely that we can get from them. That is not *philadelphia*. In the world of business, there is this concept of business networking, where people come together not so much to learn the important issues of the other person or to become their friends, it's more of a business transaction. Our relationship with other people, especially other people in the faith, cannot be a business transaction. *Philadelphia* extends way beyond any type of business transaction because *philadelphia* is this brotherly love, and this brotherly kindness that is this very high level of our Christian faith and development. And as we live this kind of life where we are not trying to use our faith to gain from other people, we can boldly say, "*The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*"

The apostle Paul also wrote about brotherly love, brotherly kindness, *philadelphia* in many of his letters including first Thessalonians. Let's take a look at first Thessalonians four beginning with verse one, first Thessalonians four verse one.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

- 1. Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.**
- 2. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.**
- 3. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:**
- 4. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;**
- 5. Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:**

As we are living our Christian life, as we are developing brotherly love and brotherly kindness, Paul is very clearly indicating in first Thessalonians four that this is never any kind of sexual relationship, one that may be outside of marriage.

As was written in the Book of Hebrews, sexual relationships are only OK within the marriage relationship. Verse six.

6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

We cannot use brotherly kindness, brotherly love, *philadelphia* in an effort to defraud other people. Brotherly kindness is based on the law of God and the commandments and requires a very high level of our Christian maturity and the development and extension of our faith. Verse seven.

7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

8. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

Those who have been called, are baptized, have God's Holy Spirit. And, if we are called of God when we despise other people, in many ways, we are despising God the Father and Jesus Christ because we have this gift of the Holy Spirit within us. Notice verse nine.

9. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you:

And again in verse nine, brotherly love, brotherly kindness is this *philadelphia*.

for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

And we are to have love one for another in a pure way, not in a sexual way of any kind, except within marriage.

10. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

And, so here the Thessalonians were definitely expressing a lot of brotherly love. They were generous with their time. They were generous sharing their blessings with other people. And that's why Paul said, I know you are sharing with everyone here in Macedonia, but that you need to do it more and more. Verse eleven.

This transcript Copyright Tom Laign 2020 and is free to be used for non-commercial purposes.

11. And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

It's important as we live our lives not to be so noisy that everyone hears us before they can physically and visually see us. We need to be focused on doing what we need to be doing and not keeping our interest and our nose in other people's business. Verse twelve.

12. That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

We will be interacting in our life with people who both have and have nothing, and as we walk in those circles, it's important that what we demonstrate is having the spiritual gifts that come through the maturity of the Holy Spirit.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul gives other examples of what brotherly love, brotherly kindness, and *philadelphia* could look like. Let's look at Romans twelve beginning with verse nine, Romans twelve verse nine.

Romans 12:9-21

9. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

As we are demonstrating this brotherly love, we have to hate the evil that we see in this world, within ourselves that we are still working on, and in our communities, and we have to cleave to that which is good.

10. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

As we come to know people in the faith, it should be natural that these people take a higher level of priority in our life. Just like, if you work with somebody at work, and you spend a lot of time with that person at work, you'll be more interested in them not just as somebody you work with, but as a human being that you know. After a while, you may even begin to think of people you work with as your friend. That's a very normal way how people work. We need to in

verse ten be kindly affectioned preferring one another just like little children who are brothers and sisters are very loving towards each other. Sometimes brothers and sisters get on each other's nerves but most of the time, brothers and sisters tend to have a very special place in their heart for each other. Verse eleven.

11. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

12. Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

Whatever we do, we have to do with a sense of diligence, with a sense of urgency. We have to do it recognizing we serve the Lord. As we live our life, we will rejoice in positive news, hoping that that positive news will bring us to a happier place tomorrow. And, we will rejoice not only for the happy news in our lives, but the lives of other people that we know especially those who are of the household of faith. We will be patient in the bad times. Life isn't always rosy even when you are called of God. We're given what we need but not always what we would want. And, many times our tribulations stems off of an over focus on what we want rather than what we need. "*Continuing instant in prayer,*" recognizing that when bad times do come, that we recognize that we have this advocate in our life, this high priest Jesus Christ, that we can go to prayer and ask God in the name of Jesus Christ. Verse thirteen.

13. Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

When we come across people who are in need, especially those of the household of faith, we want to help them as much as we can. We cannot give other people what we ourselves do not have, but we do need to be able to give as we are able to give to other people, and we must be given to hospitality. We must be able to socialize and interact with other people in a way where we are not trying to get something out of them in return. Tricky for us is what is mentioned for us in verse fourteen.

14. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

It is very easy for us to curse people when they curse us, or to bless people who also bless us. It's a whole other matter to instead when we are being attacked, we instead bless these people. Verse fifteen.

15. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

As we are living this life of brotherly kindness, we are not only exuding what is happening in our life, we are reflecting what is happening in the lives of other people, especially those who are around us. And, when the people we know and care for are going through a bad time, that's going to bring us that level of sadness as well. We cannot be rejoicing when other people are going through bad times. Verse sixteen.

16. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

As we are living a life of *philadelphia*, brotherly kindness, brotherly love, this is not a love that is a respecter of persons. We do not go to the person who is very rich and think, "Oh, I will show this person brotherly love and brotherly kindness, but this poor person I will ignore." When we truly have *philadelphia*, brotherly love, brotherly kindness, it makes no difference who the other person is. We will show that brotherly love and kindness to all. Verse seventeen.

17. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

We, as Christians, are not to repay evil for evil. There is to be no reciprocity on our behalf when we are the recipients of evil. Whatever we do, we are to do honest in the sight of all men, the modern phrase would be transparency. We cannot be deceitful in our actions in any way. We have to be open, and as much as possible, we have to live peaceably with all people, because if we are choosing with whom we will have peace and with whom we will have war, we will always be living a life where we are at war. Verse nineteen.

19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

It is not our place to seek revenge on other people. It is our place to have anger when anger is justified. If you go out of your way, for example, to be hospitable to another person, and that other person doesn't show up to an event you have

invited them to, it would be OK to be angry about that, but it would be totally wrong for you to go out and seek vengeance. There is a difference between anger and vengeance. And here Paul was telling us that it was OK to have this anger in our life when something bad happens, but we should never seek vengeance, because vengeance is mine saith the Lord, I will repay. God will handle any need for revenge on our behalf. Verse twenty.

20. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Brotherly kindness, brotherly love, *philadelphia*, is a tool we can use to overcome evil with good. The Bible beyond *philadelphia* also speaks of kindness. Sometimes the word is kindness, sometimes the word is meekness, but the concept is what we would think of today as kindness. Let's notice Ephesians four as a good example also written by the apostle Paul. We'll start with verse one.

Ephesians 4:1-6

1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

Our Christian faith, that's our calling.

2. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

God wants us to live a life of kindness. Continuing down in verse twenty-five.

Ephesians 4:25-32

25. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

26. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27. Neither give place to the devil.

28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

When we look at a book of prophecy and we see the mark of the beast, think of the Holy Spirit as the mark or seal of God. Corporations have a corporate seal, it's an emblem that goes on official documents that simply shows who the corporation is and that it is an official document. The Holy Spirit is what sets us aside, as special and unique to God. And, we are set aside until this day of redemption when we are resurrected, and become born of the spirit. Verse thirty-one.

31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

Again, everything that we are reading here so far is very much aligned to the concept of brotherly love, brotherly kindness, *philadelphia*. Verse thirty-two.

32. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Each and every one of us have done and continue to do things that are wrong in the eyes of God, and it is through Jesus Christ and His sacrifice that we have any hope for this redemption. Let's take a look to conclude today what was written in the Book of Galatians. We'll look at Galatians five verse twenty-two.

Galatians 5:22-26

22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Gentleness is simply another word for kindness. Verse twenty-three.

23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

This transcript Copyright Tom Laign 2020 and is free to be used for non-commercial purposes.

24. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Philadelphia, brotherly love, brotherly kindness is never intended to be any kind of a sexual relationship. Verse twenty-five.

25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Philadelphia is another sign post on our journey of faith. We start with our faith being diligent with our faith, and to that we add virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and godliness, and today we studied brotherly kindness. Next week, we'll conclude this study by considering charity. Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.