

when that love doesn't cost us anything more than weekly attendance at worship service. The real test of our love for God is how we treat our brothers and sisters who are right in front of us as fellow believers. **I John 4:18-21:** *"We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, 'I love God' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."*

Like it or not, that person you have a hateful attitude toward is a child of God just like you are and you will be judged according to your heart. Real love is action, not some warm fuzzy feeling. So, who is my brother? All of those who have put on Christ in baptism, and are part of the Lord's body which is the church. So let's learn to

accept each other regardless of our social status, income, race or language. Christ died for all of us so let's grow up and be mature Christians. With Christ's help, someday we will all learn to love each other and be as one family. Maybe then we will use our resources to teach a world lost in sin what a true brother and sister in the Lord really is.

-Bill Davis

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Faithful Sayings

Olsen Park Church of Christ

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Who Is My Brother?

Most of us in this world have family members that we call family. Most of us have a father and a mother and many of us have brothers and sisters. All of these individuals make up our close family ties. So far, both of my parents are alive and I have two sisters and one brother - not a big family, but not a small one either. How often when we go to church do we look at those who are sitting beside us as a spiritual family in the Lord? For some people this can be a rude awakening to actually think of those around them in the church as their spiritual family. You see, Jesus broke down every barrier that man has put up to keep others around him out that we do not like or want to have much fellowship with. Yes, there can be a fellowship which breaks through social and economic barriers. A banker, fireman, farmer, realtor, salesperson, C.E.O., homemaker,

mechanic, cook or a plumber might travel in different social circles but as Christians we are all one family in the Lord. Often we have a tendency to spend our time with those who are a lot like ourselves and shun those that don't walk and talk like we do. There are many barriers that can and will divide us from other Christians, such as age, social level, appearance and political views. Even race and language can divide us if we allow it to do so. One of the best ways we as Christians can stifle the love of Christ is to be loving and caring with only those that are like ourselves and ignore all the rest. As Christians we need to realize that Christ, when He died, broke down the barriers and unified all believers into one family. If we are honest with ourselves as we look around the church we will see that all of us who have been baptized into the Lord have

Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.
10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Ken Ford
Charles Kelley
Pat Ledbetter

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Pat Goguen
Neil Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Fred Perez
Rusty Scott

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

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one thing in common...we are Christians. Christ is our brother (**Heb. 2:10-12**) and God is our heavenly Father. The blood of Christ unifies all who have been baptized into the Lord (**Gal. 3: 26-29**) and walk worthy of the calling with which we have been called (**Eph. 4:1-6**). As children of God our relationship is based on our obedience when we obey the words of Jesus as seen in **Matthew 12:50**: *"For whoever does the will of My Father in Heaven is My brother and sister and mother."* Also in **Luke 8:21** Jesus says *"But He answered and said to them, 'My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.'"*

In **Matthew 12:46-50**, while Jesus was talking to a crowd, His mother and His brothers stood outside wanting to speak to Him. Someone told Jesus, *"Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside to speak to You."* Now the reply that Jesus gave probably shocked these people when He told them *"Who is My mother and who are My brothers? For whoever does the will of my Father in Heaven is My brother and My sister and mother."* When Jesus made this statement He was not denying His relationship or His responsibility to His earthly family. Instead Jesus was pointing out that the spiritual relationships are as binding as the physical ones here on earth. You see, Jesus was giving an example for the believers. His church is to be His spiritual family for those

who have been saved by His blood. Before the death of Jesus, the Gentiles and the Jews were kept apart. In Acts 10, Cornelius and his household were the first Gentiles to become Christians. God had to give Peter a special vision in order for Peter to begin to understand that this wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was to be broken down (Acts 10:9-16, 28, 34). The Jews had looked down upon the Gentiles and considered themselves better because of their relationship to Abraham. The Gentiles were often arrogant of their power and position in the world and resented the Jewish claims that the Jews were the only ones in God's favor. Chapters 2 and 3 of Romans show that both of these groups were guilty of sin and needed redemption in Christ Jesus. When Christ came into this world He revealed the total sinfulness of both the Jews and the Gentiles and then He offered salvation to both by dying on the cross. When Christ died on the cross He broke down the walls of prejudice and reconciled all believers to God and made us into one body by His death as seen in **Ephesians 2:11-18**. *"Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh -who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands - that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise,*

having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ for He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father." The church is sometimes called a building or a physical structure, however, in reality God's household is not a building but a group of people who have a common bond as Christians. They all have been baptized in the blood of Christ and have God as their heavenly Father walking in the light (**I John 1:7**). The church is spiritual not physical. In the church today, many Christians will live their lives to make a good impression on others they meet or to only please themselves. Selfish motives or vain conceit only bring discord in the church. In **Philippians 2:1-4**, Paul had much to say on spiritual unity by telling the Philippian Christians to love each other and have unity in the Lord. **Philippians 2:1-4**: *"Therefore if*

there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

If we say we really love the Lord we must also demonstrate our love for each other (**I John 3:11-24**). Jesus put others first as an example for us today. We must serve with a joyful heart as Christ also showed toward all mankind. As Christians today, we should not be so concerned about building ourselves up or trying to have our needs met, which may strain the relationships in the church. In **Philippians 2:5-8** we see that Jesus was very humble, obeyed God and served others. We also should have a humble servant's attitude to serve others out of our love for God. In **Mark 10:45** we read that the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. Yes, when we become Christians we become part of God's family with our fellow believers as our brothers and sisters who have been washed in the blood of Christ when they were baptized for the remission of their sins. It's easy to say that we love God and His Son (Jesus)