

Sign of True Brethren

Elders Conference—2012

Wendell Yeary—May 19, 2012

We've been talking about serving the brethren here at the Elders Conference. How do we serve the brethren? All of us, not just the elders, but all of you, all the people here that's not here today that's in the Church, we all need to serve the brethren. It's a job for everyone. It's a job for every converted person. *We need to help each other!*

We're a scattered church, so it depends on your situation. For example, if you're able to meet in small groups, then you can serve the brethren in a little different way than if you are just by yourself out here.

Let's turn to Exodus 17:8 to set the tone of what the sermon is about. That has to do with Moses. It tells a good story here that we can use to explain the sermon today. "Then Amalek came and *made war against* Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said to Joshua, 'Choose us out men, and go out to fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.' And Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought against Amalek. And Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill" (vs 8-10). So we had Moses, Aaron and Hur.

Verse 11: "And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. And when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. **But Moses' hands became heavy.** And they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur held up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side. And his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua defeated Amalek..." (vs 11-13).

The whole story here that I really want to zero in on is v 12: "...But **Moses' hands became heavy...**" Moses couldn't do it by himself, he had to have help. Those two came and gave the support that Moses needed. We want to think about this because we all need help, we all need something.

- How can we serve the brethren?
- How can all of you help me?
- How can I help you?

Look at all of the other brethren that are scattered out all over the nation. *One thing we can do, the most effective thing, and that is prayer!* You can help me anytime you want to *by prayer!* I can also help you as well with prayer. Prayer is the most effective way for us to serve the brethren, because we can pray that God will give the needs and take care of whatever it is that we need.

Paul spoke about the armor of God. One of the pieces of the armor is prayer. Paul tells us to pray and pray for each other and in effect hold one another up before God and that's what we need to be doing.

Ephesians 6:18: "Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the Spirit*, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.... [He's saying pray for me, pray for the saints.] ...And for me, that boldness of speech may be given to me so that I may open my mouth to make known the mystery of the Gospel" (vs 18-19).

Paul was needing their help. But how could they help him? *By praying* and asking God to open up and give him the speech that he needed, give him the thoughts that he needed, whatever he needed to carry out the work. That's what I want us to think about: *serving the brethren in any way we can.* You think, 'Well, I can't do a thing. I just cannot do anything.' You can pray. Remember: *pray!* We're going to talk about some more here. Paul gives examples so we need to look at those examples that Paul had.

Philippians 1:4, Paul says: "Always making supplication with joy in my every prayer for you all." So, Paul was praying for the Philippian Church even though he wasn't there necessarily, maybe just once in awhile, but he was praying for them. We can follow Paul's example.

Colossians 4:2, Paul again says this: "Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving, *and* praying for us also so that God may open to us a door to proclaim the message of the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned" (vs 2-3). Paul again is saying, 'I need your help. I want you to pray for me.' But he's also praying for them. Again, this is that combination that we need.

Then 1-Thessalonians 5:17, Paul again says: "**Pray unceasingly.**"

We can see here that prayer is a very effective way of serving the brethren. This is something you don't even have to leave your living room to do. You don't have to leave your house. This is something that doesn't cost anything. It just requires you to think of the brethren.

As I said, I'm going to repeat some things here as I go along, but it's because I want you to remember this. *All of us need prayer and all of us*

need support from all of you! I know all of you need the same thing. We're to help each other, we're to serve the brethren. That's one of the things we need to really get in our minds and heart so deeply that we never forget it. We need to serve the brethren. There are a lot of people hurting out here. There are a lot of people lonely. There are a lot of things we can do.

Paul is writing this and notice what he says, notice the context and how he put it, Hebrews 10:24: "And let us be concerned about one another.... [That's what I'm asking you to do—*be concerned* about one another.] ...and *be* stirring up *one another* unto love and good works.... [This applies to all the elders as well. We are to be concerned with one another.] ...Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." (vs 24-25).

If you have a chance to be in a local group, this is what we need to do. We need to be in a local group so that we can fellowship and so you can help people. You can find out what their needs are and you can tell people what your needs are. It's a way of us being together.

"...even as some *are* accustomed to do; but rather, encouraging *one another*... [that's what we need to do] ...and all *the* more as you see the day drawing near" (v 25). I think we see the day drawing near so we need to encourage one another. We need to do the things that we just read here in Heb. 10.

This is an example of how we can serve the brethren. Sometimes these problems come in. Paul said, Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in some offense, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ" (vs 1-2).

He's telling us here that we are to bear one another's burdens. We want to know what your problems are and we can go to God in prayer or we can help you in some other way depending on the situation. But again, it revolves around service and serving the brethren. That's what Paul is mentioning here.

As elders sometimes we can be like Moses, we can become kind of weary sometimes, we can become kind of tired, needing help, needing someone to lift us up. After all, I looked around the room here in the Elders Conference and I don't think there were any young people. We're all getting to that 'senior citizen' age. But we all get weary. We all get tired from different things and we all need help. That's what I want to emphasize.

I need your prayer and I need your support and I know you need my prayers and my support. So

does Fred, so does Roy—and I can just name all the elders. Remember when you feel like you maybe can't go another foot, remember Wendell—it's me—on your right side and your left side helping to hold you up. I know when I get tired and I get weary, I know I can count on you to be there as well even though you may be hundreds of miles away. You are there through prayer and I'm there with you through prayer.

I get phone calls from people sometimes and they'll say, 'So-and-So needs help,' or So-and-So needs this,' I'll say, 'I'm not there. You go and you take care of the situation. I'll pray for them. I'll give you any kind of other help I can get, but I'm not there.' That is part of your job, too, to serve the brethren. You're there, you handle it. That's what I would say to you today. Take care of those problems, I'm only one person. Fred is only one person. Again, we can name all the elders—Larry, Roy, Marlin, Duncan—and we just keep naming them. We cannot be but one place at a time, so we depend on you.

You're going to get tired, too, maybe and you're going to need help. Remember what Jesus said. This is one of the things Jesus said on the Passover night. He was talking to the disciples and it was very clear what Christ said.

John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you: that you **love one another in the same way that I have loved you**, that *is how* you are to love one another." How did He love us? *He gave everything for us, including His life!* That is how we are to do to each other. We have to give ourselves to each other.

Then He says, v 35: "By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you love one another." The way we show that love is by serving, by giving ourselves just like Christ did. Because He said in v 34, 'You love the brethren the same way that I loved you.' Again, how did He do this? *He gave Himself.* We need to do the same. We need to give ourselves to each other in whatever way that we can.

Paul again, in Romans 12, goes through a series of things here that we can talk about. Paul is telling us how to deal with each other in a local meeting, but this can apply even if you are miles away from anyone.

Romans 12:8: "Or the one who is encouraging, *let him tend* to encouragement; the one who is giving, *let it be* with generosity; the one who is taking the lead, *let it be* with diligence; the one who is showing mercy, *let it be* with cheerfulness.... [he's showing us how to act here] ...*Let love be* without hypocrisy, abhorring that which is evil *and* cleaving to that which is good. *Be* kindly affectioned

toward one another in brotherly love... [Again he's telling us the same thing Christ did.] ...*Let each esteem the other more highly than himself*" (vs 8-10). That's the way we should do. We should put other people first. We should serve other people before we serve ourselves. We should always think of the other person.

- Think of that person who is lonely.
- Think of that person who is by themselves, whose husband or wife just passed away.
- Think of that person and give them a phone call. Maybe two or three phone calls in a week.

It doesn't hurt, it doesn't cost anything, just a little bit of our time. Whatever it is, raise that other person up. Let that other person know that people care for them. This is what we need to do. There are all kinds of things like this we can do.

Verse 11: "*Be not slack in business. Be fervent in spirit. Be timely in serving. Be rejoicing in hope. Be patient in tribulation. Be steadfastly continuing in prayer...* [again he mentions prayer] ...*Contribute to the needs of the saints, and strive to be hospitable*" (vs 11-13). That's what I'm saying, ***contribute to the needs of the saints!***

What are those needs? *It's as varied as we are people*, so we need to find out what those needs are and we can help.

Verse 14: "Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep; *be* of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high ambitions; rather be accommodating with those of low estate. Do not be wise in your own eyes" (vs 14-16). These are some things that we could talk about forever.. There are sermons right here in each one of these lines. "...be accommodating with those of low estate..."

We never want to look at someone and put them below us, regardless of who they are. We are to lift them up. If anything, we are to put ourselves below them. That is what Christ did. He was the Son of God and He was the God of the Old Testament. He gave the commandments; He was the One Who created everything. What did He do? *He became a human being!* Look at how low He came to serve us. We need to get all of this other stuff out of our heads.

Verse 17: "Do not render to anyone evil for evil, *but* be prepared to do what is right in the sight of all men.... [We need to think about this in the Church.] ...If possible, as much as is your part, be at peace with all men" (vs 17-18). Paul has given us real good description of how we are to act and be toward each other.

Sometimes when do we get discouraged, when we do get down and out, Satan then wants to move in. He always finds an opportunity, but we can't give in! We must resist! Sometimes we get maybe where we think we can't even pray or something like this. People get discouraged. I've had people say, 'I can't even get down to pray.'

This is what Paul wrote; If you get to where you can't even pray, think of this, Romans 8:26: "Now in the same way also, the Spirit is conjointly helping our weaknesses because we do not fully understand what we should pray for... [Sometimes we don't know even what to pray for. We just can't find the words.] ...according as it is necessary, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be expressed *by us*."

We turn here and we can turn it over to God and the Holy Spirit that's in us and it will intercede for us, even in our prayers. Let's not get ourselves down to the point that we think that we're even going to lose out. Let's not do that.

When we're dealing with brethren and we're trying to serve the brethren, sometimes it can really be difficult. Sometimes people can be difficult. I just kind of think about this. I know that Christ had to get discouraged from time to time when He was here on earth. Three and a half years of talking to the disciples and they never really got it. They just really didn't get it. I'm sure He thought, 'What do I say next? How can I explain it any different?'

Remember He said, 'Philip, how long have I been with you?' So He got discouraged, He really did! When I look at this, I kind of see this in my mind's eye.^(speculation) It's not scriptural, but I think it is partly. Can you see that when Christ ascended back to the Father, He's sitting at the right hand of God, and He's looking down at His disciples and here the Day of Pentecost comes, the Holy Spirit is poured out. I'm sure that Jesus was looking at the Father, kind of grinning a little bit, saying about Peter, 'You called him, I picked him.' Humanly speaking, Peter shouldn't have been picked. He was hot-headed, he was braggadocios. He saw Jesus walking on the water and thought, 'I can walk on the water.' He whacked the guy's ear off! Peter told Jesus he would never deny Him, but Christ told him, 'You will deny me three times.' Peter said, 'Not me, not me.'

Then Christ looks down and He sees what's happened now, the same guy. You read this in Acts, I'm just paraphrasing a little bit. As it was, Peter's looking old Satan right in the eyeball and he's talking to the people, 'You crucified the Son of God. You crucified the Son of the Living God and God raised Him from the dead. You did it.' He pointed his fingers at these people. Then they were all cut to the quick. They said, 'What can we do?' He gave

them the salvation formula we read about in Acts 2:38.

We must not give up on people either. Jesus didn't give up on his disciples, even though they didn't really get it at first. Sometimes when we're serving the brethren we've got to think of this, too. *Let's not give up on people!*

You can substitute different words here, but let's start reading. Jesus is speaking here, Matthew 25:35: "For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, and fed You? Or thirsty, and gave You a drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and took You in? or naked, and clothed You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and came to You?" And answering, the King shall say to them, "Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you have done *it* to one of the least *of* these My brethren, you have done *it* to Me"" (vs 35-40).

These are words that we need to think about. You can substitute anything in there—the needs of the saints, whatever they happen to be, the needs of the brethren. It could be hunger, thirst, loneliness, sadness, anything.

Remember what He says here in v 40: "Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you have done *it* to one of the least *of* these My brethren, you have done *it* to Me."

We see here that Jesus is saying *when you serve the brethren, when you serve people who need help, you have done it to Him*. We need to be thinking about this. So we all need each other's help. We all need to help each other. *So let's hold one another up*.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 17:8-13, 12
- 2) Ephesians 6:18-19
- 3) Philippians 1:4
- 4) Colossians 4:2-3
- 5) 1-Thessalonians 5:17
- 6) Hebrews 10:24-25
- 7) Galatians 6:1-2
- 8) John 13:34-35
- 9) Romans 12:8-18
- 10) Romans 8:26
- 11) Matthew 25:35-40

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Acts 2:38

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