

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



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Doing All Things with Love

As Paul closed his epistle to the church at Corinth, he exhorted them to be strong in the face of opposition. *"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong"* (1 Corinthians 16:13). To follow the instructions of Paul a certain amount of courage and conviction is necessary. We need courageous brethren in the church today to wage war on those who would walk unruly before God. We need those who are bold enough to confront and expose false teachings and teachers, whether they are in or out of the church. We need brethren who stand ready to *"reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-sufferings and doctrine"* (2 Timothy 4:2).

While these qualities are needed in the church today, it is not necessary to sacrifice love in order to obtain them. One can be courageous and loving at the same time. In fact, while rebuking is sometimes necessary, it is sinful to rebuke with any other spirit other than a spirit of love. As we stated previously, exposing error is sometimes needed, but it must be done in the spirit of love. Paul said, *"Let all that you do be done in love"* (1 Corinthians 16:14). Every thing we do must be done with love. The Greek word here is *agape*. *Agape* is the most-high love, and it is unconditional in nature. It is the term used to describe God, Himself, in 1 John 4:8.

Paul's statement to do all things with love points particularly to our dealings with our fellow-man. The definition of love that I have always liked is that *it always acts in the best interest of whatever it is that is loved*. I don't recall where I heard it first, but it immediately made sense to me. It points to the fact that love is active, not passive. Love always acts. Also, that definition enlightens us as to how we can actually love our enemies, something that we are unquestionably called on to do by God (Matthew 5:44). We may not like the ungodly. We may not like how they live their lives. We may not appreciate their utter disrespect for God or God's people. Their behavior, their language, their personality may all be things that irritate us beyond words; yet, we can still love them – we can always act in their best interest. With this in view, you can see how we can love those who love us and those who hate us. We can love those who we know very well and those who are complete strangers to us. It is this kind of love with which Paul says we must do all things.

We must discipline our children with love. That means we will not spare the rod, nor will we be abusive. We must preach the gospel with love. That means we will preach what people need to hear, not simply what they want to hear. At the same time, we will not be abrasive and rude in our speech, nor will we be quick to anger when dealing with those who do not immediately see the truth of the gospel. Paul said, *"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head even Christ"* (Ephesians 4:15). When a brother in Christ is in err, doctrinally or morally, we must try to show him his error in love (Galatians 6:1, 2), understanding that we might someday be in

our brother's position. We must worship God with love (John 4:24). We must love our wives (Ephesians 5:25). We must allow brotherly love to continue (Hebrews 13:1).

We could write line after line discussing the importance of love. The Bible message is that love should prevail in everything that we do. We should never grow tired of being loved or loving others, and the love that is in our hearts should grow stronger every day (1 Thessalonians 4:9, 10).

Let's all make up in our minds to follow the inspired words of Paul and make sure that everything we do is done with love. It will enrich our lives and draw us closer to our God, for God is love (1 John 4:8).

Don

The Kingdom

By Aaron Erhaardt

Premillennialists teach that the kingdom is not currently in existence. They say that although Jesus intended to set up the kingdom while on earth the first time, He was crucified before He could do it. Are they correct? This article will address their claims.

The Kingdom

Premillennialism is a false doctrine that makes Jesus a failure. Think about it. They say that He was unable to do what He came to do. Who can believe such nonsense? The truth is, Jesus did set up the kingdom. Consider the passages below.

Colossians 1:13 — “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”

1 Thessalonians 2:12 — “That ye walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.”

Notice that both the Colossian brethren and the Thessalonian brethren were in the kingdom. There can be no denying that fact. The Hebrew brethren and John were also in the kingdom (Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9). Hence, the kingdom was in existence in the first century.

In writing to the persecuted saints of his day, John wrote that Jesus “made us to be a kingdom and priests” (Rev. 1:6, NIV). Why would he have said that, if the kingdom were not in existence? Why would he call them a kingdom if they were not in it?

According to Daniel 7:13-14, the Son of man (Jesus) would receive the kingdom when going to the Ancient of days (Father) in heaven, not when He leaves heaven as the Premillennialists teach.

Harmful Consequences

There are many harmful consequences for those who deny that the kingdom is in existence. For instance, if there is no kingdom, there is no new birth (Jn. 3:5), there is no conversion (Matt. 18:3), and there is no deliverance from darkness (Col. 1:13). Furthermore, one must accept that Jesus failed the first time and that He is currently a King without a kingdom. How absurd!

The kingdom was established in the first century. It is the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18-19). If you are not a citizen in the kingdom, why not become one right now? Obey the gospel and be saved (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21).