

## Hebrews 13:1-8

Pentecost 15; August 28 & 29, 2016

Human beings are selfish people. Any parent knows it. You have a blue ball and a red ball for two kids – they both want the blue one. It doesn't matter if they are the same size, same everything other than the color. They both want the same one at the same time. It doesn't stop with kids. Even we adults are selfish to a certain extent. We want to be in control. We like things done our way. Sometimes we all feel that our needs are bigger than someone else's needs.

Even Jesus' disciples had a tendency to fight with one another. On one occasion, the Twelve were arguing about who was the greatest when they were on their way to Capernaum. They thought that Jesus didn't know what they were talking about. They get to the place where they were going and Jesus asks: **"What were you arguing about on the road?"** (Mark 9:33) They go dead silent. Then Mark tells us: **"Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.'"** (Mark 9:35) How would you have liked to be in that room? Before we condemn the disciples, we have to confess that we are selfish people. Human beings are selfish people.

It isn't always easy to be unselfish, is it? This morning, the writer to the Hebrews gives us five ways that we can show unselfish love to others in our lives. That unselfish love begins with the unselfish love of Jesus.

At the time that our text was written, Christianity was still pretty young. Many of the Jewish people of that day didn't want to give up the customs, traditions, sacrifices that God had given his people for the last several thousands of years. The theme of the entire book is trying to show how much better Jesus is. He wants to convince his readers of the strength and security that they have in Jesus. The world around them was changing, but God's love for his people was not changing. **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and tomorrow."**

God loved this world unselfishly. He had nothing to gain by saving it. God knew that after Adam and Eve fell into sin, there was no way that they could fix it. They would not be able to love totally unselfishly again. So, God did. He put himself in the shoes of a human being. Jesus took on human flesh. He let the shackles be put around his hands and feet. He felt the hunger pains of starving. He felt the beatings and the nails go through his hands and feet. He showed us how to love unselfishly by loving us unselfishly.

Look at all that love does. He lists five different ways that we get to love unselfishly.

**"Keep on loving each other as brothers."** The word that is used for "love" is a word that has the thought of "brotherly love." That sounds nice, but how to brothers and sisters treat each other? There have been many brothers and sisters who have grown up pushing each other when Mom doesn't see it. Or fight with each other. Steal one another's toys. Poke each other in the back seat while in the car on vacation. Brotherly love? Do we sometimes do show some of that "brotherly love" to fellow believers in Christ? Do we say words that are far from "brotherly?" Yet, brothers and sisters will care and support each other because they are our family. We are encouraged to love each other because we belong to the family of God.

**"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering."** Here are some examples of how we can show Christ's love to those around us. We treat strangers the same way that we would treat brothers and sisters. In other words, we have compassion on people.

**"Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."** Love is respected and shared in marriage. Marriage is a precious gift that God has given his children on earth.

**"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have."** Money is not bad. However, money does not solve all the problems of the world. Money doesn't bring complete contentment. Sometimes, we think if only we had more, we would be content. Contentment doesn't come from either not having much or being blessed with

much. It comes from knowing: **"God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."** No matter what may happen in life, we know that we have a God who will not leave us or forsake us. God is not like the team that is on one side of the tug-of-war who lets go to see what might happen to the other side. He will hold us tight in his hands.

**"Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."** Two chapters before this, the writer has listed those who were heroes of faith. Heroes because they trusted in their God. They shared the promises of God with each and to others. God has given all of us people that we can learn from, who have let their faith be evident to those around them.

How are we going to do these things? How are we going to live this humble life? We trust in the one who loved perfectly. We trust the one who doesn't change in a changing world. For **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."**

Human being are selfish. At times, we are. Let us take comfort in the truth that we do not have a selfish God. We have a God who has loved us completely. That love will not change! Amen.