

## **The Evidences Of Faith – Part 1**

**Hebrews 13:1-9**

**Pastor John Miller**

If you're taking notes, here they go. First, our evidences of faith in a Christian's life should be love, verse 1, or literally brotherly love, "Let brotherly love continue." You've maybe heard it said before that in the Greek language they have multiple words for "love." In the case of this verse, we find the Greek word *phileo*, which literally means brotherly love. It's where we get the word Philadelphia from, the city of brotherly love. There's a word that's translated "love" in the Greek that's called *storgé* which is family love. There's a word that's used quite often as the divine love given to us by the Holy Spirit which is *agape*, "For God so loved the world," is the Greek word *agape*, which speaks of a sacrificial, self-denying, giving kind of love.

In the English language we only have one word for "love," the word love. Today, we have totally lost any concept of what real love is all about. In the Greek, they have these different words. Here is an exhortation to brotherly love, "Let brotherly love continue." You can cross-reference this theme and find all through the Scriptures we are exhorted, we are commanded, to love one another.

John, in his first epistle, actually says that love is the birthmark of a true Christian. If you ever meet a Christian that says, "I'm a Christian, but I'm not one of those loving kind. I'm a mean Christian. I don't like people," or a Christian that doesn't like Christians, something is wrong. Do you know one of the first things that happens when you get born again, the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of love, *agape*, the Holy Spirit of God, sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts; and on the top of that list, and this is a particular love, *phileo*, brotherly love, gives us a love for brothers and sisters in Christ. He's talking about loving other believers.

I remember before I was a Christian, I didn't particularly like Christians. I didn't like being around them; I didn't like hanging around. They looked clean, they looked nice, they smiled, and they're kind of creepy. They were always happy, and they just kind of bugged me because it convicted me of my sin. When I got born again, I found I loved Christians—older Christians, younger Christians, people from different strokes, different backgrounds, and different categories of life. I found this great love filling my heart, and that was an evident sign that I was a true child of God. One of the Bible verses that I love says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." If you don't like Christians, then ask yourself, "Am I really a Christian?" We should love one another. We should pray for one another. We should serve one another. We should minister to one another.

The first exhortation is that we should love the brethren. Remember, a lot of what these exhortations say have this in mind is that they were getting discouraged in their Christian life and starting to turn back from Christ to Judaism. The book of Hebrews is telling them not to go back but to go forward; and if you're going to progress in the Christian life, you must have a love for the brethren. It's not enough just to say, "I love God." How can we love God whom we've never seen and not love our brothers whom we have seen? It's not enough to say, "Well, I love

God, but I don't go to church. I don't like Christians, they're hypocrites. They're weird. I just don't like them." Well, then something is wrong with your heart. We should love one another. We should pray for one another because we love each other. We should serve one another. We should wash one another's feet, and I love the fact that we are to love as brothers and sisters.

You know, the Bible actually says that we should treat one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. You are my brother, you are my sister, and we should treat each other with that same kind of love in the family of God.

The second evidence of faith is not just brotherly love, but hospitality, verse 2, "Be not,"—this is the negative—"forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." The word "hospitality" literally means in its etymology, or origin, loving strangers. We think hospitality means we have a nice house, your wife is a good cook, you like having guests over, so you invite people over to your house and you're real friendly. That may be involved, but in the Bible the word "hospitality" literally means to love strangers.

In Bible days, and I won't get too much into it, they didn't have hotels. They had Inn's, but they were places of ill repute. They were wicked, vile places, so it was hard for Christians to go and hang out there. There weren't very many, so it was hard when you were traveling as a stranger, "Where are we going to stay?" That's why hospitality in Bible days was big on the list. Actually, in the middle east and in the culture of that land, hospitality is very important.

As Christians, we are to love strangers, we are to love believers—brothers and sisters—and we're to reach out to non-Christians and strangers or people that we don't know. I quite often use this as an exhortation for Christians at church to reach out to other people in the fellowship. If you've been coming to this church for any length of time, then you should reach out to greet people. You should reach out to meet people. You should reach out to open your home to people. You should open your heart and your home to people. That's what Christians are to do. One of the things that made an impact on the culture of the early church at that time was they loved one another and took care of one another. They sold possessions and distributed it in the body to meet the needs of those who are part of the family of God. Loving strangers is the gift of hospitality. Do you know the Spirit gives the spiritual gift of hospitality, of loving strangers, loving people, and reaching out to them.

Notice this little tidbit put at the end of the verse, "...for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." This is the only place this appears in the Bible. It actually says that many times you may open your heart and your home to a stranger, and then discover that they literally, and this isn't just figuratively, they literally were an angel. There are stories in the Bible about this. Abraham had angels show up and one of them was the Lord, the Angel of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and visited him in his tent. He fed them and took them into his tent. Lot had angels show up and visit him in Sodom and Gomorrah, so there are other instances in the Bible, too. Manoah, the father of Samson, actually had an angel visit him and told him that he was going to have a son. He thought he was just a normal dude, but he was an angel. Angels can actually

visit us, so be careful to entertain strangers because that stranger may just be an angel.

We used to hitchhike and witness. I heard all kinds of stories about angels appearing when people picked up hitchhikers. I don't know if they were true or not, but you can never know what's going on when you pick up a stranger or you reach out to a stranger. You might be entertaining angels unaware.

The third is in verse 3, we are to have compassion—love the brethren, show hospitality, and third, verse 3, have compassion, “Remember them that are in bonds.” How do we remember people who are in bonds? The first category are people who are in prison for their faith. Again, the background to Hebrews is they were being persecuted for their faith, and many of them were actually being thrown into prison. They were in bonds. There are believers, brothers and sisters in Christ, that we are to love, verse 1, who for their faith right now in other parts of the world are in prison. It's good to be aware of that. It's good to pray for them. It's good to get informed about those who are suffering for Christ and to remember them. Primarily, you do that through prayer. “...that are in bonds, as bound with them,” that's the concept of being compassionate. It means to have a form of sympathy and care for others who are in need, “...and them which suffer adversity,”—as a separate category, verse 3. There are two individuals we're to remember, primarily through prayer, those that are in bonds (those that are in prison) and those, “...which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.” That's referring to the body of Christ, the church.

In 1 Corinthians 12:26, Paul says, regarding the church, the body of Christ, “And whether one member suffer, all the members,”—do what?—“suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.” It's like your physical body. If you have part of your body that's out of whack, then it affects the whole body. We're the body of Christ. When you suffer, I suffer with you; when I suffer, you suffer with me. We suffer together, and we pray for one another. Remember those that are going through that. Again, remember they were being persecuted, arrested, imprisoned, and they were suffering for their faith in Jesus Christ, so he says, “Suffer with them in the body of Christ,” have compassion.

Here's the fourth, verse 4, purity. Christians should be marked by love of the brethren, hospitality, love for strangers, compassion for those who are in prison or bonds, for those who are suffering adversity, and then purity is the mark of the true believer. I've always loved this verse, and we'll talk about this verse when we cover our series on marriage, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” This is in the Bible. This is a great verse to memorize and actually use to quote. We could spend the whole night talking about marriage, we're going to spend nine weeks on this subject, but marriage is honorable. Greek scholars debate whether this is a statement of encouraging people to honor marriage as an imperative or just a statement of fact that marriage is honorable. Both are possible. If it's an imperative, it would translate like this, as it does in some translations, that marriage is to be honored by all. It's a command for all of us to honor marriage.

The words “honor marriage” means to prize as a valuable possession, so marriage should be held in high esteem. This is a classic verse on the sanctity of marriage. You should make a note of that, memorize it, keep it before you—the sanctity of marriage. Marriage is to be held as honorable and highly prized by every individual.

Why is it in this text? Well, we can't be sure, but it's possible...we're going to see that they are to avoid false teachers, that they were being influenced by people who were teaching asceticism, which is the denying of the flesh, and they were promoting what the Bible says in the last days false teachers will say that we should forbid to marry—they shouldn't get married—with the idea that you're more spiritual if you're not married, that it's an evil concept and we should not be married; that you're more godly, you can be more devoted, you can be more spiritual, if you're not married. Sadly, there's a great segment of the church that has forbidden to marry—forbidden ministers or priests in the Roman Catholic Church to marry. I think that's tragic. “Marriage is honourable in all,” so all should hold it in high esteem or honor.

It could be that some of them were being tempted to say, “Well, I'd be more spiritual if I weren't married.” Read 1 Corinthians 7 where Paul says, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman,” but to avoid sexual immorality, “...let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” He talks about the conjugal rights in the covenant relationship of marriage between a man and a wife. Marriage is to be honorable.

Let me just say a few things about marriage. Marriage is a divine institution. If you are a Bible-believing Christian, and I don't think there is any other kind of Christian but the Bible-believing kind, because if you don't believe the Bible, I don't know where you get what you believe. God created marriage. It's God's idea. It's not a product of culture that can ebb and flow and change and can be redefined by the state.

One of the greatest tragedies in the day of America was when we legalized and legitimized same-sex marriage. That's not marriage as God has created it, it's not even marriage. Just to say that puts a Christian in a place of being so radically opposed to the cultural norm today. But we, as Christians, are called to go against the flow, not with the flow. Amen? Take a stand for God's truth. Marriage is the divine institution instituted by God in the Garden of Eden. Before government, before the church, God made man, God made woman; and the first wedding was officiated by God with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and He made them male and female.

In Matthew 19, Jesus actually says that, “...made them male and female,” quoting from Genesis, written by Moses, “And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh.” The writer of the book of Genesis, Moses, said, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” Jesus quoted that. Read Matthew 19. Jesus even endorsed the sanctity of marriage. God, “...made them male and female,” so marriage is a divine institution.

In my humble opinion and estimation of the legitimizing and legalizing of same-sex marriage

was the beginning of the end for America. Read Romans 1 and see that the degeneration of a culture starts with the rejection of God and ends in homosexuality and the demise of marriage. We live in a culture today where we don't know what a female or a male, we don't know what a woman is or a man, and we've got all this gender confusion, so-called, when the Bible is very clear He, "...made them male and female." Marriage is the divine institution ordained by God, and we need to stand on the truth of God's Word.

Marriage should be held in honor in all because it's valuable and essential and necessary as a building block and a foundation for society. You cannot play fast and loose with God's design for marriage or the institute of marriage and expect to prosper as a culture. There's no hope for America if we don't get back to God's principles in His Word. The more Christian influence on our culture, the more blessed we will be as a nation. I actually believe that rise in crime, violence, and all the confusion and the craziness goes back to our rejection of God and His Word—we have no absolute truth—which leads to the demise of marriage, which leads to the demise of the home, which leads to the demise of people being raised in the fear of the Lord. Is it any wonder that we have bands of youth going out and vandalizing, stealing things, attacking people violently in our culture? Violence is rising so rapidly, why? Because we have forgotten God, and we see the breakdown in the family and in the home, and we've made covetousness, we'll see that in our text, our god and rejected the God of the Bible.

Let me give you a couple of verses to write down and look up. As I said, 1 Corinthians 7 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3, why? Because notice in verse 4, marriage is not only to be held as honorable by all or in all, but it says, "...and the bed undefiled." Why did he specifically say that? Because he's actually saying that sex is God's gift to marriage. Not only is marriage God's idea, but sexual intimacy is God's idea. It's actually God-ordained, God-designed, God-created.

Let me give you three, the list could be longer but I don't want to get sidetracked, reasons for marriage in the Bible. First, procreation of children. If we don't have heterosexual, monogamous marriages, it's detrimental to the family for children, and you don't have children. We're not having enough children in America right now. Children are a gift from God. Children are the blessing from the Lord, so it actually says in Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful, and multiply." He said to Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful, and multiply." Now, I realize that there's times that maybe you can't have children, that's understandable; but the general rule, God actually created marriage for procreation, to have children, and those children should be raised in the fear and the admonition of the Lord.

The second reason for marriage is to prevent sexual immorality. You can throw in that marriage has that element to it and can be satisfying and pleasurable to a husband and a wife, but in 1 Corinthians 7, which I say every married person should read and study, indicates that it is to prevent sexual immorality, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." There's a preservation of sexual intimacy in marriage. By the way, the only place where God has ordained and willed for sexual intimacy is in the covenant relationship of marriage. It's pretty simple, you don't have to write a whole book

on the subject, it's the only place for that to take place in a person's life.

Here's the third purpose for marriage, to provide companionship. Yes, your husband and your wife should be your closest companion. As you grow older together, talk to people that have been married for a long time, you value one another more as you age and realize what a blessed gift your husband or wife is. Maybe when you're young and you're still trying to relate to one another, and you're stressing out over raising the kids, your jobs and careers, you sometimes take each other for granted or you forget about how valuable that person is in my life. Those of us that are empty nesters and have seen our kids grow up and leave, and then we're alone with our spouse, we realize how important it is to build that relationship and that intimacy in our marriage relationship. We value that, but there's companionship.

In Genesis 2:18, when God created man, He looked at man and said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet,"—helper suitable—"for him." He made Eve and brought her to the man, so there's companionship intended by God in the marriage relationship. Sexual intimacy is blessed by God in the marriage relationship. In 1Thessalonians 4:3, it actually says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication,"—sexual immorality. He mentions two sexual sins in my King James Bible, "...whoremongers and adulterers." The word "whoremongers" is the Greek word *porneia*, where we get our word pornographic which is the word fornicator or sexual immorality. When you have the word *porneia* in the Greek New Testament, it's a general term for sexual immorality.

We live in a culture today that doesn't believe there's any such thing as sexual immorality, but there is. Sex outside of marriage, the covenant relationship of marriage, is either fornication or it is adultery. That second word "adulterers," indicates those who are married and then go outside the marriage covenant relationship and have sex with someone else other than their spouse. They are adulterers—in premarital sex, fornication, or extramarital sex, which is adultery—and what happens? "...God will judge," not God might judge, not God maybe will judge; but, "...God will judge." There's a whole series of different ways God brings judgment on those who get involved in sexual sin. Sexual sin leads to all kinds of horrible, horrible effects—guilt, shame, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, divorce, heartbreak.

I can tell you as a pastor the greatest pain that I've ever witnessed in people's lives is the pain of infidelity in a marriage, when you find out that your spouse has been unfaithful. I can't tell you how heartbreaking that is for people, how hard that is. Some of you know from experience. This is why marriage is to be held in honor by all and the bed undefiled. If you are married, you never go outside your marriage to meet your sexual needs, your spouse becomes the number one person after Christ in your life, you make marriage your priority, you commit to that spouse for life, and you hold marriage as honorable in all. I love that verse. You should memorize it and quote it quite often.

Here's the fifth, let's move on, verses 5-6, contentment. We have brotherly love, hospitality, compassion, purity, and contentment. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content,"—there it is—"with such things as ye have." It's a great verse for those of you that are

pinning for a bigger, new, nicer house or new cars, more clothes, more money, more in the bank, physical and material possessions. "...be content with such things as ye have," why? Because the Lord has said. Now, this statement is only found here in Hebrews 13:5, and it's a reference to what something Jesus said and only quoted by the writer of Hebrews, which is unique, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." You ought to highlight and underline that, right? Contentment is in the context of realizing, "I have the Lord. I have everything I need. I don't need to be afraid of what man will do unto me." Be content, "...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."

Let me give you real quick, rapid fire, four practical things to remember to be content. Again, this is a little mini sermon within this text. First, remember God is good. When you get your eyes off the goodness of God, you'll begin to be covetous of things that God hasn't given to you. Remember, God is good, and whatever God gives is good, so be content with what you have. Secondly, remember God knows your need, "...for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." God is good, and God knows what you need. Constantly remind yourself of the goodness of God and that God knows all about whatever you need. Sometimes we think we need something, and it's really a want. The Father in heaven knows what we need, and He's promised to provide all our needs but not our greeds.

Here's the third, remember God's mercy. This is a good point. Remember that God hasn't given you what you deserve, and you should be thankful for that. Mercy is God not giving you what you deserve. If you start thinking, "Well, I deserve a better wife!" "I deserve a better husband!" "I deserve better kids, mine are all spaced out." "I deserve more money." "I deserve a better job." "I deserve better health." "I deserve more wealth." The truth is, we all deserve hell, just thought I'd encourage you. If you realize that, you're pretty blessed, right? We'd all be in hell right now, if God gave us what we deserved. Everything we have—your husband, your wife, your children, your job, your income, your house, your home, your car, your health—all that you have is more than you deserve, so don't get the idea that you deserve more.

Fourthly, remember God's sovereignty, that God sovereignly has a plan and a purpose for you, God put you where He has you and wants you to be; and God sovereignly and purposely put this neighbor where He wants them to be, what He has for them, and what He wants them to do. In the Ten Commandments, notice the Decalogue, and we studied that on Sunday morning, the tenth commandment is what? Do you remember? It should be pretty easy. What's my topic? "Thou shalt not covet." We learn that covetousness is the sin that can lead to the breaking of all the other nine commandments. This was the sin that the devout Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus who became Paul the apostle, found convicted him the most and he was guilty of, "Thou shalt not covet."

Do you know what the etymology of the word "covet" means? It means the desire for more, not content. It's the opposite of contentment. Contentment is the absence of desire for more, "I'm content with what God has given me. I don't have to have more." Ask somebody that has a million dollars how much it takes to make him content. He'll probably say, "Two million." If he

has ten million, he needs eleven million. It's always more. You'll never be content.

The Bible says in Hebrews, "...be content with such as ye have." In 1 Timothy 6, which is a great chapter dealing with the subject of contentment and the absence of covetousness, says we should be content because, "...we brought nothing into this world, and...we can carry nothing out." It says if you have food and you have clothes, be content. "But godliness with contentment is great gain," Paul says in 1 Timothy 6. When the Holy Spirit fills your heart and you're finding your joy in the Lord, you can say with the psalmist, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want,"—I have everything I need. He leads me, He guides me, He provides for me, He's with me. The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need. I'm content. Be free of covetousness.

I think of Achan who spied the Babylonian garment and brought the judgment of God upon the nation of Israel at Ai. I think of Gehazi, the servant of Elijah, who actually wanted the gold and the silver from the king and the plague came on him—all the stories of covetousness and the sin that brought destruction. Be content. The Lord is your helper, "...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

The sixth, verses 7-8, follow true spiritual leaders. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow,"—there it is—"considering the end of their conversation,"—or manner of life—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." In verse 17, we'll get it next Wednesday night, we're to "Obey them that have the rule over you," and in verse 24, "Salute all them that have the rule over you." When it says, "that have the rule over you," it's talking about spiritual leaders in the local church, but it doesn't mean that they're to rule in a domineering, controlling way over your life. How do spiritual leaders influence those who are in the church or the congregation? By speaking unto them, "...the word of God," and by modeling them faith that must be emulated or followed, and then, "...considering the end of their conversation,"—their life, which some scholars believe is a reference to their martyrdom, that may be past tense here, that they died.

There's no authority in a pastor or an elder or an overseer in a church other than the Bible, the Word of God. As a pastor, I do not have any authority over you. I'm not here to tell you how to live your life, but I am here to be faithful to dispensing and teaching and preaching and communicating God's Word and letting the Spirit of God, take the Word of God, and transform you into the image of the Son of God. If a pastor or spiritual leader is teaching you the Bible, the Word of God, you do well to heed God's Word, not because John Miller says it, but because God says it in His Word. My only authority is not really mine at all, it's only God's Word that is the authority. As much as the pastor speaks the Word of God, then the Word of God is the authority over their lives. We should have a right relationship with our spiritual leaders by remembering them, verse 7; obeying them, verse 17; and greeting them, verse 24. They share the Word of God. Follow their life and remember the end of their life, either a reference to their death, how they die, or a reference to inheriting the blessings of the kingdom of God.

There are two things that mark them: They are men of the Word and men of faith—men of the

Bible, and men of faith. The pastor's greatest influence is not just teaching the Bible but by the way he lives the Word of God in his daily life. If a pastor who faithfully teaches the Bible is found to be hypocritical and not living what he preaches, his word has no power or effect. It's not just the words we speak, it's the way that we live. The same thing is true in your life. Your only authority lies in the Bible and in the godly influence you're going to have upon others.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," is inserted there in verse 8 possibly because true godly leaders point people to Jesus Christ as His being the sufficient One. They don't draw attention to themselves, they draw attention to Jesus. If a pastor is preaching the Word and living by faith faithfully as an example, his job is to point people to Jesus because—listen to me carefully—spiritual leaders come and go, Jesus Christ is always here. If the Lord tarries, I don't have any plans to go anywhere very soon, I won't be here someday. I've lived long enough to know that you never know how much time you have. Your focus and your dependence and your reliance must be on Jesus Christ, Amen? not on a man. God raises up men, God takes down men; God moves men in, God moves men out, but the Word of the Lord abides forever. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

This is a statement about what's called the immutability of Christ, that He doesn't change. Yes, He's the same Jesus that you read about in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but it's basically saying that He doesn't change, He's immutable, and that He should be your focus. He's the One, a true leader, we'll get you to follow.

Here's my last point, the negative, verse 7, don't follow false leaders. "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." Back in verse 2 had the negative, "Be not forgetful," and now verse 9, "Be not carried about,"—or carried away—"with divers,"—or different—"and strange doctrines." Why? "For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats,"—which are foods, so he's probably speaking of the legalists that had their dietary laws—"which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." Remember, they were in danger of going back to Judaism, and Judaism was, "Don't touch that, don't taste that, don't handle that, don't eat that," all the ceremonial laws and washings and dietary laws which those who get wrapped up in, do not benefit or do not profit.

There are two things in closing: Follow true leaders who speak to you the Word of God, and have a life that is exemplary to follow; and those who are not to be followed, verse 9, false leaders who are preaching strange doctrines. Again, it's kind of hard for me. I'm at the end of my text, but I'd like to preach a whole sermon on verse 9. Over and over and over and over and over throughout the whole Old Testament and New Testament we are warned of false teachers and false prophets, so be discerning. How can you be discerning? The Bible. It's the plumb line. It's the rule.

If you're not listening to me preach, or you're listening to anyone else preach, always examine it in light of Scripture. Is that what the Bible says? Is that what the Bible means? Is that in context? Is that the meaning of the original author? When you listen to someone preaching the Bible, ask yourself...now, don't be critical or fault-finding or judgmental, but be discerning. Be a

Berean. Ask yourself, is that biblical? Is that scriptural? Nothing more important than to be a discerning Christian. Don't lack discernment. Children lack discernment. Spiritual babes lack discernment. Not everyone is teaching the true Word of God.

Paul met with the elders at Ephesus and said, "I know that when I leave you, grievous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock, and some will even lead people astray." In Galatians 1, Paul said, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed,"—anathema, cursed to the lowest hell. He's warning us, his original readers and us, "Be not carried about with...strange doctrines." I'll just give you one more verse, because it's one of my favorites and we'll wrap it up, Ephesians 4, where Paul tells us that God has given to the church pastor-teachers. He said, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets...and some, pastors and teachers." Then he tells us why, "For the perfecting of the saints," then tells us why they need to be perfected or matured, "for the work of the ministry," and then says, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him...which is the head, even Christ."

The church I grew up in was not faithfully teaching the Word of God. There were sermons, they were reading the Bible, but it wasn't taken in context, it wasn't properly interpreted, it wasn't expositional preaching, it wasn't the meaning of the text. Do you know what the preacher's job is? To preach the meaning of the text, not his own ideas. What was the original author's intention when he said what he said. What did he say? What did he mean? How does it apply. Application should be consistent with interpretation. This meant a lot to me when I finally got saved, got under real good Bible teaching, and I realized that a lot of what I was taught was not sound doctrine. They were sincere, but they weren't faithfully preaching God's Word. You need to be discerning what you're listening to.

When you're picking a church, whether it be this church or any church, one of your number one criterion should be sound biblical doctrine, that's why I just did the whole series on "Great Doctrines Of The Bible." There's a lack of doctrinal preaching today in the church, and it's so necessary and so needed because you don't know what is wrong doctrine, if you don't know what's right doctrine. You don't know a counterfeit unless you study the real thing, so don't be deceived, verse 9. Let's pray.