

27 September 2015.

Let all things be done with Charity (Charity Pt 7 & final)

## Introduction.

This is our seventh & final study on the word “charity” in the Scriptures.

In our previous study we established the importance of charity.

(1) Faith, hope, and charity the greatest of these is charity, and (2) Let all things be done with charity, and (3) the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart.

Question from our last study:

What does it mean to show charity out of a “pure heart”?

The reference to a “pure heart” can be linked to 2Tim.2: 22 where Paul points out that we are to “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow...charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart”. The Greek word for “heart” is also translated “brokenhearted”, and hence a reference to a person calling on the Lord out of a broken heart (Ps.51: 17). So the end of the commandment is when we show charity to our brethren out of a heart like that of a person “brokenhearted” before the Lord (see Lk.4: 18).

This study will consider what we are do with charity, and cover three points.

(1) Above all things put on charity, and (2) above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, and (3) be an example to the believer in charity.

Our three points in more detail.

1. Above all things put on charity.

Supporting verse.

Col.3: 14 “And above all these things [put on] charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”

Context and meaning of our verse.

\* “Seek those things which are above” (verse 1). “Set your affection on the things above” (verse 2). “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (verse 3). “Mortify therefore your bodies” (verse 4). “Lie not one to another” (verse 9), because you have “put off the old man with his deeds” (verse 9), and “have put on the new man” verse 10). Having put off the old man the believer is called to put on “bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (verse 12), and verse 13 continues “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” Then our verse, which is like a pinnacle of all that has gone before: “put on charity which is the bond of perfectness.” Hence what unites two brothers in perfectness is charity. What does it mean to put on charity? See Job 29: 14 “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me”.

Other scriptural support.

2Tim.2: 22, 1Cor.14: 1 “Follow after charity”.

Application of our verse today.

\* The letter to the church at Colosse is part of Paul’s instruction to the Gentile church, and is therefore applicable to us today.

Illustration.

\* Every day a man wakes up he puts on clothes.

Whatever school a child goes to each morning that has a uniform they have to put on that uniform.

Every day a soldier goes into battle he has to put on his armour to protect himself.

Every day a motor cyclist rides his motor bike he has to put on his helmet.

Learning from our Illustration.

\* According to the scriptures we are to “put on” (i) “Christ” (Gal.3: 27), (ii) the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom.13: 14), (iii) the armour of God (Eph.6: 11), (iv) the armour of light (Rom.13: 12),

(v) the new man (Col.3: 10, Eph.4: 24), “bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another” (Col.3: 12 & 13). And our verse adds charity each day before heading out into the battle, and the only way to do that is through prayer.

Challenge & or encouragement.

\* When the commander and chief inspects the barracks he knows which soldiers have spent time putting on their armour, their uniform, and which have thrown it on in haste. The challenge for all of us today as we walk in the Spirit of God is to remember that our Commander and Chief knows the effort we put into putting on charity, whether we spend time in haste, or not at all, or take our time. Whichever we do let us remember “above all these things, put on charity” (Col.3: 14).

## 2. Above all things have **fervent** charity among yourselves.

Supporting Verse.

1Pet.4: 8 “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.”

Context and meaning of our verse.

\* Peter points out that “as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh”, and believers are to arm themselves with the same mind, because “he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” (verse 1). As Christ suffered for us in the flesh so He requires those who believe in Him to live the rest of their lives not in “the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (verse 2). Peter is admitting that they (Jews) “have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness” (verse 3), “wherein they” (the Gentiles), “think it strange that ye” (Jews) “run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you” (Verse 4). Verse 5 points that they shall give an account to the Lord who will “judge the quick and the dead.” Verse 7 “be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” Then we have our verse, “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (verse 8).

Other scriptural support.

1Pet.1: 22, 5:14 and 2Pet 1:7.

Application of our verse today.

\* Christ appointed Peter to be an apostle to the Jews, Paul affirmed that, just as he was given the gospel to the uncircumcision, “the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter” (Gal.2: 7). And in this first book of Peter he states he is writing to the Jew (1Pet.2: 12 & 4: 3). But given that this doctrine is similar to Paul’s teaching to the Gentiles, this verse is applicable to us today.

Illustration.

\* “Labouring fervently...in prayers” is seen as a godly thing to do. Many books and sermons have been written on prayer. The minister of the first Presbyterian church I went to wrote his PHD thesis on prayer, perhaps because the scriptures teach us to be “labouring fervently” for our brethren in prayer (Col.4: 12). Just as we are to be “fervent in spirit” in serving the Lord (Rom.12: 11).

Learning from our Illustration.

\* I know many of us struggle to pray fervently for our brethren, so imagine how much of a struggle charity is, let alone being fervent (with passionate intensity). When you have mastered waking up each morning and put on charity and as a result you have shown charity to your brother once a week, see how you cope with having **fervent**, passionate charity. Hence, we are not just simply to put it on, but to be “intense” and therefore do **all** things with charity (1Cor.16: 14).

Challenge & or encouragement.

\* Just when you thought charity was achievable on the odd occasion, you are now being challenged to be intense in its implementation. You are now being encouraged to be charitable without ceasing. This is where you put up your hand to God and say, I cannot do this. It is like His commandment to His disciples in Matt.5: 48 “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” How therefore, do we attempt each day to be charitable to your brother without ceasing? Not in the flesh (Gal.3: 3), but rather, when we “walk in the Spirit” (Gal.5: 16 &

25), and die to the flesh each day (1Cor.15: 31). Then in God's strength we have a hope of obeying this commandment to "above all things have fervent charity among yourselves".

### 3. Be an example to the believers in charity.

Supporting Verses.

1Tim.4: 12 "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

Context and meaning of our verse.

\* Paul is writing to Timothy and begins the chapter with a reference to the "latter times some shall depart from the faith." They will give "heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils". You can identify them, because they speak "lies in hypocrisy: having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (verse 2). The out-working of having a seared conscience is they forbid marriage, and command "to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." Verse 4 reiterates the need for such meats to be "received with thanksgiving", because "it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

Verse 6 "If thou", speaking to Timothy, "put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained." Now we have a but, "refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness" (verse 7). Why? Because "godliness is profitable unto all things" (verse 8). Paul says in verse 11 "These things command and teach", and then we have our verse, where Paul instructs Timothy to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

Application of our verse today.

\* The letter to Timothy is part of Paul's instruction to the Gentile church, and is therefore applicable to us today.

Illustration.

\* This is our final study on the word charity in the scriptures, and there are many illustrations that have been a help. But the most significant for me is my mentor who is older than I am, and is sound in charity in fulfilment of Tit.2: 2. And although I am not with him 24/7, he appears to put on charity, and show fervent charity to his brethren, and hence for me is an example. But when his historical writings rebuke those who deny the scriptures or stand for Rome and her wiles, was he exhibiting "spots in your feasts of charity" (Jude 12)?

Learning from our Illustration.

\* Not according to the scriptures, because charity in the scriptures is only commanded of us toward our brethren, and is therefore different to love, which we are to show to our enemies. But if you use a corrupt copy of holy scripture, then you may say that he does not show love to his enemies because love is identified (for them) in 1Cor.13. But when a brother rebukes the Pharisee of today who "consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Tim.6: 3-5) he is not disobedient to God's commandment to show fervent charity, but rather his good deeds to his brethren remain an example to the believers of fervent charity.

Challenge & or encouragement.

\* As we conclude this study on "charity" we point out that the challenge to us is: to identify our brethren, those who are brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, and show **them** fervent, passionate charity, without ceasing, which is put on each day. The tension for us all is to speak in love to the heathen, identify the true believers, and show **them** longsuffering, kindness, without envy, or vaunting of ourselves, rejoicing in the truth and not in iniquity, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, not being easily provoked and thinking no evil, and to do so fervently as an example to our brethren, just as Paul was to his brethren (2Tim.3: 10).

Summary of our three points.

(1) Above all things put on charity, and (2) above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, and (3) be an example to the believer in charity.