

2 Corinthians 13:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Greet one another with an holy kiss.

Analysis

Greet one another with an holy kiss—The *philēmati hagiō* (φιλήματι ἁγίῳ, "holy kiss") was a customary Christian greeting (Rom 16:16, 1 Cor 16:20, 1 Thess 5:26, 1 Pet 5:14), signifying familial affection and reconciliation within the Christian community. The qualifier **holy** (*hagiō*, ἁγίῳ, "sacred/set apart") distinguishes Christian affection from erotic or merely social gestures—this is covenantal, sanctified love among God's people.

After chapters of confronting sin, factionalism, and false apostles, Paul commands visible reconciliation. The kiss requires physical proximity, mutual vulnerability, and public affirmation—precisely what fractured relationships resist. By commanding this, Paul pushes beyond intellectual agreement to embodied unity, making abstract reconciliation concrete and communal.

Historical Context

Ancient Mediterranean culture used kisses as greeting (family members, honored guests). Early Christians adopted this practice as distinctive Christian expression, visible marker of their new family identity transcending biological kinship, social status, and ethnic boundaries. By the second century, the "kiss of peace" became formalized in liturgy, part of Eucharistic worship.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does the 'holy kiss' teach about Christian community being embodied, not merely intellectual?
2. How do we practice the principle of visible, tangible reconciliation and affection in contemporary church culture?
3. Why does Paul command this greeting after confronting serious sin—what's the connection between discipline and restored fellowship?

Interlinear Text

ἀσπάσασθε	ἀλλήλους	ἐν	ἁγίῳ	φιλήματι
Greet	one another	with	an holy	kiss
G782	G240	G1722	G40	G5370

Additional Cross-References

Romans 16:16 (Holy): Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

1 Peter 5:14 (Parallel theme): Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

1 Corinthians 16:20 (Holy): All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

1 Thessalonians 5:26 (Holy): Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.