

WALKING IN THE LIGHT: Loving Each Other - 1 JOHN 3:11-18

11. *For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.*

12. *Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.*

13. *Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.*

14. *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death.*

15. *Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.*

16. *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.*

17. *If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?*

18. *Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*

LIGHT

Belong to Jesus

Love each other

Die for others

Righteous actions

Abel

Eternal Life

Kingdom of God

Share material possessions

DARKNESS

belong to the devil

hate each other

murder others

evil actions

Cain

death

world

withhold material possessions

"Love" = 6 x

"Hate" = 2 x

"Murderer" = 4 times

Context: 3:10: *This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.*

2 things set apart the children of God: they do what is right and they love each other.

As we said last week we are either children of God or children of the devil.

God's desire is that people do what is right and love each other. The evil one's desire is that people hate and murder each other.

Bookends: first and last verse:

1 John 3:11: *For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.*

1 John 3:18: *Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*

John's main encouragement in these verses as he contrasts love and hate is that the believers are to love each other with actions and in truth.

Verse 11: The Never-changing Message: Love one another

For this is the message you heard from the **beginning**: We should love one another.

That message has not changed!

God's heart has not changed.

Question: Love one another!!! What does that mean to you?

And why do you think that God through His word has to keep saying that?

John here takes a phrase from the very beginning of this letter:

That which was from the **beginning**, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have handled.

Who is he talking about? He is talking about the Author of Life and Love – Jesus Christ! First he identifies the person and then His action: **Verse 16:** *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us.*

1 John 2:7: Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the **beginning**. This old command is the message you have heard.

John 13:34-35: A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.

WE SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER. HOW? As I have loved you! He is the greatest standard and the best example.

One day a lawyer asked Jesus the question: Which is the greatest commandment in the law?

*You shall **love** the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.*

Love God; Love Neighbour – that sums up the OT. And that is God's heart also in the NT: that is to sum up the life of the church and the life of the individual follower of Jesus. That which was from the beginning – this was always God's heart from the beginning – that has not changed. **WE SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER.**

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.

By this all men will know that you are disciples of the evil one – if you hate one another.

God's desire is that people love each other. The evil one's desire is that people hate and murder each other.

Object Lesson: Toy Lamb and Sweet Potato

Verse 12: This is what Hate looks like: A negative example:

Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.

When you belong to the evil one certain actions will follow

When you belong to Jesus certain actions will follow.

John is very much into visible actions that demonstrate who a person is – by their fruit you shall know them.

1 John 2:6: Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.

“The proof is in the pudding.”

You claim to be a follower of Jesus, then walk – then live as Jesus lived.

We are told here quite plainly that the reason Cain murdered his brother Abel is because he belonged to the evil one.

The reason Cain hated his brother and then murdered him was because he was evil and Abel was righteous.

How did Cain know that his brother was righteous? He observed it! And he also observed God’s response to his brother’s actions.

Genesis 4:2-8: Both brothers bring a sacrifice to God. Cain brought some of the fruit of the soil as an offering and Abel brought some fat portions from the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering He did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

Hebrews 11:4: By faith, Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings.

Verse 13: Hatred – a Constant Reality

Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.

After all these years, since the time of Cain, hatred, inspired by the evil one, is still alive and well.

Why does verse 13 come after verse 12 – the story of Cain and Abel.

John moves from the first human family and the first murder committed on this planet, to talking about the world hating his readers.

At first I could not see the connection, but by the “world” he is referring to those who do not have a relationship with Jesus, but are children of the devil.

Right from the beginning the devil was against that which is right – in fact he hates God and any that follow Him.

He has not changed, so since the world listens to him, it continues to hate followers of Jesus, which is why John says:

13. Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.

Have you ever wondered why the best citizens on this planet are hated and persecuted? True followers of Jesus, who seek to live as Jesus lived are characterized by love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. Who wouldn’t want to have neighbors like this? Who wouldn’t want to have colleagues like this?

Yet in some parts of the world governments and people are threatened by these kind of people. I can make no sense of that other than the fact that the evil one is influencing them.

John had probably heard Jesus’ prayer when He prayed:

John 17:14-16: I have given them Your Word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that You take them out of the world but that You protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.

Jesus made a distinction between the world and His disciples.

Verses 14-15: Love - the Critical Test

14. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death.

15. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

John is giving a simple test: how do you know that you have passed from the kingdom of darkness, death and hatred to the kingdom of Light, Life and Love. How do you know that you have had your 2nd birthday?

We know we have eternal life, because we love

You either have Life or you are still dead.

2+2=4: if we love each other we know that we have passed from the kingdom of the evil one to the kingdom of the Righteous One.

2+2=4: if we hate we are a murderer and we know that no murderer has eternal Life residing in him.

Very simple but very critical!

“Hate” – that is a strong word. “You and I might think - I don’t think I hate anyone. Therefore this is not applicable to me.”

“There are some people that I may not like and if I were to be honest I probably have gossiped about them – talked behind their back.

There are some people in the family of God that have hurt me and I am bitter toward them, in fact I don’t like them at all. But I tolerate them.”

Jesus Definition of hate: (Read Matthew 5:21-24 and then Matthew 6:14-15).

If the shoe fits, wear it.

If you and I want to move ahead in victory and with God’s blessing then these kinds of things need to be dealt with.

If BCC is going to move ahead in victory and with God’s blessings then these kinds of things need to be dealt with.

Do you have something against any brother or sister? God knows your heart.

If we truly desire to be salt and light, in the community God has placed us in, then we need to be obedient.

If you truly desire to love God and know Him more than you and I need to be obedient.

Verses 16-18: This is what love looks like – The Positive Example

16. This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

17. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

18. Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

We all need and we all should be positive examples.

Jesus laid down His life for us. We now, because of His death and Resurrection, have eternal Life – we have passed from death to Life.

Salvation is a free, amazing gift that cost Jesus His Life.

Now that we have been rescued from the kingdom of hatred we have a big and costly responsibility-to also be so full of love that we are willing to die:
And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

I don't know about you, but I don't really want to do that.

Sometimes, we want to excuse ourselves from costly obedience, or justify our actions; you know I'm quite busy in other good pursuits; I really don't have a lot of money or material possessions to give away. Sometimes in order to draw attention away from what we should do we ask questions.

On one occasion an expert in the Law stood up to test Jesus with a question. Then Jesus asked him the question: *What is written in the Law*; to which the lawyer replied: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘love your neighbour as yourself.’* *“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”*

And then that is when Jesus goes into the story of the Good Samaritan.

John reminds us here of the greatest example of love.

We know without a shadow of a doubt what true love is: Jesus laid down His life for us. But John doesn't stop there. He shifts the focus to his readers and the Holy Spirit does that for us: *And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.* What!

Illustration:

On March 23 about 10:00 am a 4 hour drama involving a terrorist in a grocery store began. On that day a French policeman gave a lesson in self-sacrificing love. Beltrame, 44, and recently married was known by family, friends and associates as a man of faith.

One of the striking features of the stories about him in the aftermath of the attack is that, among those who knew him, no one was surprised by what he did. From a ring of police who surrounded the building he went into the grocery store where the terrorist who pledged allegiance to the Islamic stage had already killed 2 shoppers. Then he took hostage a 40 year old cashier named Julie.

Beltrame approached as Lakdim, the Moroccan-born French citizen held Julie, the mother of a 2-year old and asked to take her place.

We know that after freeing Julie Lakdim took Beltrame and at some point slit his throat, an ISIS trademark tactic.

The Police Chaplain said he radiated his faith. “We can say that his act of offering is consistent with what he believed.”

A catholic priest who was with him as he died said:

It seems to me that only his faith can explain the madness of this sacrifice. He knew as Jesus told us, . . . There is no greater love than giving one's life for one's friend (John 15:13).

I'm reminded of what Paul wrote to husbands in **Ephesians 5:25, 28**: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. . . In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies.*

Love needs to begin at home – in the way we treat our wives; in the way we treat our children.

SONG: be like Jesus, this my song, in the home and in the throng; be like Jesus all day long, I would be like Jesus.

SO WHAT!

John calls on us to:

1. Lay down our lives
2. Share material possessions
3. Not just talk about love, but live it out.

Input from Congregation.

Ask them for examples of loving each other; laying down our lives, sharing material possessions and not just talking but living it out.

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Verse 12: This is what Hate looks like: A negative example:

Verse 13: Hatred – a Constant Reality

Verses 14-15: Love - the Critical Test

Verses 16-18: This is what love looks like – The Positive Example

PRAYER:

SONG: Blest be the Tie that Binds

1 Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds
is like to that above.

2 Before our Father's throne
we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
our comforts and our cares.

3 We share our mutual woes,
Each other's burdens bear,
and often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear.

4. From sorrow, toil, and pain,
and sin, we shall be free;
and perfect love and joy shall reign
through all eternity.

John Fawcett (1739-1817), a Baptist clergyman in England, gave us one of the most beloved farewell hymns of all time. Fawcett's parish in Wainsgate, was described as "a straggling group of houses on the top of a barren hill,"

Fawcett was converted under the powerful preaching of George Whitefield while the evangelist delivered a message to 20,000 people in an open field. It is said that upon telling Whitefield he wanted to preach, the evangelist gave Fawcett his blessing.

The people at Wainsgate were made up of farmers and shepherds, poor as Job's turkey; an uncouth lot whose speech one could hardly understand, unable to read or write; most of them pagans cursed with vice and ignorance and wild tempers.

John and Mary Fawcett went to live there in 1765. By engaging families house-to-house, he built a congregation that grew to the point that a gallery had to be added to the modest meetinghouse. With the addition of four children to the family, a modest salary that was supplemented by parishioners' donations of wool and potatoes was barely adequate, especially during the long winters.

The story is told that a prestigious parish with more financial resources in London, Carter's Lane Baptist Church, extended a call.

John and Mary decided to accept. The announcement was made to the church, and the farewell sermon was preached, the bulky items of his furniture and some of his older books were sold and the day of departure arrived. The two-wheeled cart came for the rest of his belongings, and likewise came the parishioners to say good-by."

The crowd was despondent and in tears. Mary could not handle it anymore and is quoted as saying, "I can't stand it, John! I know not how to go." John responded, "Lord help me Mary, nor can I stand it! We will unload the wagon. . . . [To the crowd], We've changed our minds! We are going to stay!" Mr. Bailey describes a scene of pandemonium as the crowd broke out in joyful acclamations.

We do know that John Fawcett remained in Wainsgate for 54 years and nearby Hebden Bridge. We do not know if he wrote this hymn in conjunction with his decision to remain in Wainsgate, but its language connects well with congregations, identifying with the struggles of life and our unity in Christ.