

Love or Hate?

#8

1 John 3:11-18

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The two most powerful forces at work in the world today are love and hate. These verses in 1 John will tell us that love comes from God and hate comes from the Devil.
- B. The conflict between love and hate can be traced back in history to Cain and Abel, and it still exists today. Whether it is a bullet, flamethrower or hydrogen bomb or the deadly swing of Cain's ax, the motivation in a man's heart has not changed. Until man has an inward change or revolution, he will never stop hating. This change can come only in a supernatural way through Jesus Christ.

II. THE EXHORTATION TO LOVE 3:11

- A. ***"This is the message you heard from the beginning:"*** – These Christians had been instructed since their conversion to Christ that they were to love one another. They were not only to have doctrinal accuracy but they were to evidence ethical holiness. The authority for moral and ethical living was to be the Apostolic teaching as set forth in the Bible.
- B. ***"We should love one another."*** – The truth of Jesus Christ came into a Christian's life in order to teach him to love. The context is about brotherly love.

The possibility of real love begins at conversion. According to the Bible, only a Christian can show genuine love and it is impossible for a non-Christian to love in the highest sense of the word. This can be seen in two Greek words for love.

1. ***Philia:*** This is a natural love of warmth and closeness of affection. It is a love that responds to attractiveness. This type of love is natural for all men. It is natural for a boy to fall in love with a girl. It is natural for a man to love his family. It is natural for a mother to love her baby. This explains how atheists can love their children as wholeheartedly and genuinely as Christians do. But even this kind of love is perverted in men because of sin. Thus this love becomes a self-centered love. It really, in the final analysis, is a love of our selves. We love our children because they are extensions of us. We love our parents because our life is related to theirs. We love the friends who please us and help us. Love is always directed to those who do something to or for, or receive from us. Therefore, what we really love is the projection of ourselves in others. **Matt. 5:46: "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?"**

2. *Agape*: This love applies only to a Christian. It is the highest expression of love because it is a God-given love. At conversion, God gives a new capacity for love. This is a love that never varies; it is greater than family ties and it finds no sacrifice too great. It is a love that loves the unlovable, the unkind, the unqualified, the ungrateful, the selfish and the difficult. It is a supernatural love given by God.

III. THE ABSENCE OF LOVE 3:12-13

A. ***“Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother.”***

– Cain’s hatred of Abel was so great that he slit his brother’s throat with an ax. John tells us that Cain was of the Devil, for hate is always of the Devil; it is devilish and hellish. Cain had fallen into the grip of the Devil, being a slave to devilish thoughts. **John 8:44: “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”** Cain sold his soul to the devil. Cain was responsible for his acts but he permitted Satan to control his life. The result was murder and hatred.

B. ***“And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous.”***

– The motivation behind Cain’s hatred was jealousy of Abel’s righteous acts. Jealousy brought seething hatred into Cain’s heart and mind. There was a slow, quiet takeover in Cain’s heart of the Devil’s desires, for he hated the good works of his brother. Jealousy moved to hatred and hatred ultimately brought murder. Cain’s hatred developed because there was no love in his heart for Abel. Without love in the heart, a human being is capable of any horrible, sinful act.

There was a void or absence of love. Hatred becomes disguised under other words – contempt, disdain, prejudice, which is nothing but synonyms of hatred at work among men today. We may call a skunk by another name but it still looks like a skunk and smells like a skunk. You can slap a new name on hatred, but it still remains the same ugly thing and it still produces the same ugly results in human life.

C. ***“Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.”*** – John now relates the hatred of Cain to the hatred of the world for Christians. As Cain was jealous of Abel’s righteousness so the world hates the righteousness of Christians because they get convicted of their own sinfulness. The world really hates Christ but it takes its hatred out on the representatives of Christ on earth, the Christians. The absence of love in the world makes them want to strike out at Christians or to ignore them. They just don’t understand. **John 15:18: “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.”**

Joseph Parker, an old time preacher, said, "The man who preaches repentance sets himself against his age, and will be mercilessly battered by the age whose moral tone he changes. There is but one end for such a man. Off with his head! You had better not preach repentance until you have pledged your head to heaven."

IV. THE NECESSITY OF LOVE 3:14-15

- A. ***"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers."*** -- The Apostle John states that one of the first evidences that a person is a true Christian is his love for other Christian brethren. True Christians will hunger for Christian fellowship! They will delight to meet together, to worship and pray together and talk together of spiritual things.

Conversion gives a Christian a new capacity for love, for now he begins to love those he has never loved before and to love those he has loved before in a different way.

During W. W. II one of Col. Doolittle's crew who bombed Tokyo early in the war was shot down and captured. His name was Jacob DeShazer. He was put into prison and hated the Japanese. He was so fierce and violent that the Japanese even feared him. He just seethed with hatred. Through the providence of God, he obtained a copy of the Bible, and began to read it. Here, in the loneliness of his prison cell, he made the joyful discovery of Jesus Christ. There came an amazing change over this man. His hatred of the Japanese changed completely. He began to love his captors and they were utterly astonished at the change. He even began to pray for them, for he viewed them as potential Christians.

Eventually the story of his change of heart was written up in a little tract and after the war it fell into the hands of a young Japanese, Captain Mitsuo Fuchida, the man who led the air raid against Pearl Harbor. Mitsuo Fuchida was a hero in Japan after the war but his own heart was empty. By the providence of God, the story of the conversion of Dr. DeShazer fell into Captain Fuchida's hands. This challenged him to read the New Testament and he was gloriously saved. Now his heart was filled with love towards others. Captain Fuchida became an evangelist, going up and down the country of Japan telling the story of a love that can change human hearts.

- B. ***"Anyone who does not love remains in death."*** – Here are some very strong words for professing Christians. The person who doesn't love (agape) his brother in Christ is not a real Christian at all. He still abides in spiritual death. The sign of Christ's disciples is not whether they are pre-millennial, dispensational, immersionists and Calvinistic but whether they have love for one another. **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." The hardest people for us to love are our**

brothers in Christ, for they know us the best and we know them. It is those closest to us that can irritate us. John says if you can't love those nearest to you, you can't possibly be born again.

*“To dwell above
With saints we love
O, that will be glory;
But to dwell below
With saints we know
Well, that's another story!”*

- C. **“Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him”**. – A person who hates another has all the potential characteristics to murder that person. Whether one does the act of murder or not, the motivation is the same. **Matt. 5:21-22: “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”** If a professing Christian is seething with hate towards another, he could commit murder. If the circumstances were right and the penalty could be avoided, he would murder if he could. All that holds him back is fear of reprisal from God or man. A murderer by act or by thought cannot have eternal life abiding in him. This does not mean that these sins cannot be forgiven, for Christ will forgive the vilest sinner, but the professing Christian who continues to hate as a habit pattern of life has never really been born again. Are there some Christians you just can't stand and are you carrying a grudge in your heart towards them? The Apostle John says, “Check your own heart to see if you have really ever been saved at all!”

V. THE PRACTICALITY OF LOVE 3:16-18

- A. **“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.”** -- True love must be proved by real action. Love is positive and seeks the other person's good, resulting, if need be in total sacrifice of one's life for another. When one lays down his life for another, he gives up all self interest. **John 15:13: “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”** Any Christian should be ready immediately to die for another Christian if the situation demands it.
- B. **“If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?”**-- A true Christian will always come to meet the physical and spiritual needs of another Christian if he is able to do so. If we profess true Christianity and turn away a true Christian, providing we know there is a need, we probably are not Christian at all. Very few of us will ever be put in a position to lay down our lives for another but all can help meet

the physical needs of our brothers in Christ. This is shoe-leather Christianity.
LOVING EVERYONE IN GENERAL MAY BE AN EXCUSE FOR LOVING
NONE IN PARTICULAR!!

- C. ***“Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”*** – Christians are not just to talk about love but are to love in actuality. Actions speak louder than words. The world is crying for love today and they are searching for groups of individuals who can manifest it. Yet evangelical and fundamentalists have talked much about love but practiced very little of it. This is one of the reasons so many young people, especially those in college, are turning away from Christianity (at least the organized church). They feel that the church is nothing more than a fellowship of phonies. Yet God never intended it to be that way, for Christians have the capacity to produce the highest kind of love for one another and the world. Brethren, let us not just talk about love but let us practice it!

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. The Bible tells us that God loves, and God has proved His love in sending His Son, Jesus Christ to be a Savior for the world. Through the death of Christ, God has devised a way where sinful men can find the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The sinner must only believe in Christ alone as Savior and Lord to be saved.
- B. The forgiven sinner will then experience God’s love and will begin to love those about him with a real, genuine and true agape love.
- C. ***“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*** (John 3:16).