

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 14- The Second Line **1John 3:11-18**

128. Distinguishing Between Love and Hate- Part 12

WAOY Thursday 12/27/07

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "The Distinction Between Love and Hate". So, let's read **1John 3:11-18** again together:

11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;

12 not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Now over the last several broadcasts- we have been looking very closely at verses 14 & 15 of this passage- and today I want us to read those verses again:

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Now we have been discussing just how we are to manifest this great love toward one another and refrain from descending into a place where we no longer care about each other by looking at a forgotten but very scriptural concept called Church Discipline.

As we discussed last time, Church Discipline was instituted by no other than Jesus Christ Himself and is spelled out for us to examine in **Matthew 18**.

Church Discipline is based upon the Biblical concept that saved people not only belong to the Lord- but that saved people belong to each other as well. It is based upon the concept that my love for you and your love for me doesn't stop when the Church service is over- but extends all throughout the day; the week; and goes with us in every area of life.

In our modern culture that promotes individualism as a virtue- Church Discipline and the notion that we are all joined together and are accountable to each other is looked at today as being wrong, strange, weird, unloving and in some cases- this concept is even called unchristian- even though Christ Himself initiated it.

As we discussed last time, it is not loving, dear friends to watch another brother or sister descend into sin and not at least try to stop them. That is not a manifestation of selfless love- but is a manifestation of us getting to a place where we simply do not care enough about each other- which is what John was talking about in this passage.

I completely understand that it is far easier to just turn your head and pretend that you don't see- but Jesus said that the Christian Church cannot and will not operate like the lost pagan world. In the Church- there is love. In the Church there is mercy and restoration and forgiveness and longsuffering and an undying effort to bear one another's burdens.

It is not a Christian concept, beloved to think that we are free to interpret Scripture anyway that we choose and to live anyway that we chose and to be unattached and unaccountable to each other. Even though any today think that those concepts are good or even desired-

you simply cannot find those concepts anywhere in Scripture. That is the way the lost pagan world operates- but not the Church.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Church and as the Lord- He is to have the preeminence in all things done in and by the Church and those who are part of it. And the one single way that we know what Jesus wants done in His Church is to follow those things that are clearly laid out for us in Scripture. The issue of brotherly love and Church Discipline is no exception.

In **Matthew 18**, the Lord of the Church spelled out for us in red letters what is to be done when a saved person falls into sin. This is a four step process that is called Church Discipline. Jesus said that if we sincerely love each other- this is one of the ways that we will manifest that love.

Now I want to remind you that Church Discipline is not something that I made up or that I am blowing up out of proportion. Jesus Christ said that this is what we are to do if we really love each other. So if you believe that Jesus is the Lord of the Church and if you believe that the Bible is the Word of God- then you really don't have much choice here.

You either are actively engaged in Church Discipline or you either believe that your way is a better way than Jesus' way or you don't believe the Bible to be true- either way- you're in trouble. Brothers and sisters- I don't believe that we have the right to pick and choose which parts of the Bible to believe and obey while we leave other parts out because we don't like them or they make us uncomfortable. We either need to believe it all and obey it all or else let's just not even go down that road at all.

Now on the last broadcast- we were going over this issue by using the example of a man who is a member of the Church; who for whatever reasons- abandons his wife and moves out and rents an apartment to live with his girlfriend.

We have already gone through steps one and two which says that we are to go to that brother and confront him with his sin and call him to repentance and to be reunited with his wife. If he rejects us- we are to get one or two more witnesses and then return to confront him the second time.

If at any point during these first two steps, God grants this brother the heart to repent and he does so and moves away from his

girlfriend and is reunited with his wife- then praise God!- a souls is rescued from sin and all heaven rejoices. Our brother who we love has escaped his rebellion and God is glorified! The process of Church Discipline ends with true repentance and genuine restoration.

But what do we do if that brother tells us to take a hike? What is our duty when this sinning brother refuses to repent and tells us that this is a private matter between him and his wife and is none of our business? Is our love for this brother over at this point? Does Jesus give us the freedom to just leave him alone at this point and pray for him? Does he have a point? Is this a private matter which does not concern us?

No. In this case- we must first understand that marriage is not a private matter. When a man is joined together with a woman in holy matrimony- they are making three covenants- not just one. Firstly, they are making a covenant between themselves. The man is covenanting with his wife and she is covenanting with her husband to love each other exclusively for as long as they both shall live.

But the covenant of marriage doesn't stop there. This couple has also made a covenant with God. They have covenanted to God that they are going to live together and love each other and serve God together for as long as they both shall live. You simply cannot and you should not be able to walk away from that kind of arrangement just because you've had a bad day.

But it doesn't stop there. This couple was joined together publicly- in the Church among the believers and as such they have also covenanted with the entire Church the very same covenant that they made with God and with each other. And that means that the success of this marriage is not a private matter at all- but is the responsibility of the entire Church.

Beloved this is what makes the Church so unique and so different and so much better than the pagan world. We do not eat our wounded- we take care of our own and we love our own and we make sure that we issue mercy and love and longsuffering and kindness to those who are of like precious faith.

The lost world teaches that we should just leave them alone to sort all this out between themselves. Perhaps it might be acceptable under certain circumstances to maybe drop a little hint here or there-

but basically- this is none of our business and our responsibility begins and ends with just praying for them.

Now that sounds real good and that sound logical and that sure would be a whole lot easier to do- but the only problem with that method is that Jesus didn't say it.

No, Jesus says that I am my brother's keeper and Jesus said that we cannot and we must not just pray for them. But we are to inject ourselves into their lives and we are to be accountable to one another and we are responsible to one another and we are to love each other enough to care and to go into action if need be to rescue each other out of sin.

So if the sinning brother refuses to repent even after we have brought one or two witnesses- then what? Are we done with this guy yet? No- we now go to step three. Let's read the first part of **Matthew 18:17:**

If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church...

Now what did Jesus say here that we are to do if the sinning brother refuses to listen to the wise and loving counsel of those who genuinely love him and who guard his soul? Jesus Christ said that we are to tell the Church about this problem.

The Lord of the Church loves this man so much and hates his sin so much that Jesus Himself instituted a process whereby his sin becomes more and more burdensome for him to carry out. Jesus desire to rain on his parade. Jesus desires to keep him up at night. Jesus desires to spoil his dinner. Jesus desires to make his life so miserable and so hard that he will break under the load and fall on his face and repent and come home.

Now again- this is Jesus' method of loving a sinning soul back into right relationship to God. When the Church is told of the problem- now the entire Body of believers goes to prayer and not only that- but at every opportunity- every time this man is seen or run into- at the store- at work- at lunch- or at the game- those in the Church will humbly and graciously call him to repent and abandon his sin and return to his wife.

The goal here is to allow the Holy Spirit to put so much pressure on our covenant brother- that he cannot stand to remain in his sin.

Now if you accept the premise that marriage is a private matter; if you accept the premise that we are free to run the Church any way that we see fit; if you accept the premise that we are in charge of the Church; and if you accept the premise that nobody has the right to tell anybody else how to live- then Church Discipline will be looked at by you as being barbaric, cruel, mean, and very, very strange.

But if you accept the premise that Jesus is Lord and that His way is better than our way; if you accept the premise that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of the living God; if you accept the premise that we are responsible for each other and accountable to each other for how we live and what we do; if you accept the premise that the Church is to operate and function differently than the lost pagan world- then Church Discipline will be seen as being what it really is- a manifestation of the Love of God and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, what if this brother refuses even the members of the Church? What if he is resolute in remaining in his sin? What are we to do next? Lord willing, we will go into that on the next broadcast. So please join me again on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of 1John. May God help us all.

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