

So That You May Know

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

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

126. Distinguishing Between Love and Hate- Part 10

WAOY Thursday 12/20/07

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.

John clearly teaches here that we are to love one another with a fervent love and make sure that we do not have hate in our hearts. And as we have discovered- the word, “hate” as used in this verse doesn’t necessarily mean to despise someone or to wish them harm- but rather to hate simply means that we get to a very frightening place where we no longer care about that brother or sister. John says that this is the equivalent of murder.

And there is no better way to look at this kind of hate than to see how we act towards a brother who has fallen into sin. If we are not careful, beloved- our love for each other will be based upon mutual benefit. In other words- we love those who love us back- but as soon as a brother or sister doesn’t love us back- we withhold our love for them. And many times, when sin is present in the life of a believer- he is ashamed and convicted- and so he hides from God and he hides from God’s people. It is at this time that this person needs a brother or sister the most and unfortunately it is at this very time that many withhold their love from this person because he is acting so strange.

Our love for each other must be based upon God’s love for us. It must be an unselfish love that requires no response. We must love without regard to how much we are loved back and as we pour ourselves out into this love- God will move in both our lives and theirs.

God loved us unconditionally from the beginning and so our love must be unconditional as well. True love; godly love; the kind of love that the list world has never known and will never know is unconditional love. Every other love is very lacking at best. Because genuine godly love is unconditional- it is by definition a miracle. No human being has the capacity or the power to love unconditionally in and by his own human power. You see, dear friends, it isn’t that some people can love like this while others can’t do it- no human being born of woman has the internal ability to love unconditionally. That kind of love is a gift from God to us and since that is true- we must all pray real hard and ask God to be merciful to us to grant us that kind of unconditional love.

It is unconditional love that exists in the Church of Jesus Christ because each believer has been confronted with this love from the Lord

Himself and nobody else on earth has ever been in contact with true unconditional love.

And every other kind of love that comes in and tries to duplicate this unconditional love is a fraud and will not pass the test. What is the test? John says it is never getting to a place where you no longer care about your brother. To get to this place does not do anything except prove that this godly love is not in you and if God's Love is not in you beloved- John says that you do not have eternal life.

"But Brother Blair- what if my brother offends me? Am I supposed to love him even then?" Well. let's look at what Jesus said about this in **Matthew 18:21&22:**

21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus said to him, **"I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."**

Now Jesus was not *limiting* the forgiveness of our brother to 490 times per day here. That is *not* what Jesus was talking about here. No, the *real* message that Jesus was teaching here is that our capacity to forgive should never be exhausted. Never.

Now I want to be real clear here because this is a real serious issue. I am not saying and neither was Jesus saying that we are simply to allow people to abuse us or to run over us. That is not what this passage is about. Neither was Jesus saying that it doesn't matter if a brother sins- because it does matter.

What Jesus was talking about and what John is talking about is that our relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ is so unique and so unlike any other relationship on earth and our relationship with the brethren is so glorious and such a wonder and is bathed in such unconditional love- that we will forgive and forgive because it is God's Will that we do so.

You see, the only reason that we are all joined together in the first place is because God wanted to join us together. We didn't join the Church because we wanted to- No, God is the One Who Sovereignly put us into the Body- and God put them in the body also- so it is God Who has joined us together and it is God Who has saved us and it is God Who has called us and it is God Who has washed us and redeemed us

and filled us and infused us with this unconditional love. Nobody in the Body of Christ has any say so at all over who is their brother and sister in the Faith. God is the One Who chooses whoever He wants to and that is not our prerogative.

It is our job to humble ourselves to the Will of God and to love and forgive the sinning brother no matter what the cost. Let's read **Galatians 6:1:**

Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

Here the Apostle Paul reaffirms Jesus' words to love and to forgive by commanding those in the Church to restore a fallen brother. To love the brother is to restore him. To hate him or to simply not care about him is to leave him to himself when he falls. That is the way the lost world treats people- but may it never be true in the Church.

Okay- a brother sins and we are supposed to restore him. Okay, I got that. But exactly how do we restore that brother? Just how does all this work out? Does God just leave all of this up to us to figure out or does He spell out specifically how we are to accomplish this loving restoration? Let's look again at **Matthew 18:15-17:**

15 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

16 "But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that *BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.*

17 "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Here is Jesus' command to the Church on how to handle a sinning brother or sister. It is a four step process that Jesus said was His Will on how we are to manifest love and accountability to each other in the Church.

The first step is to lovingly and humbly approach the sinning brother and confront him with his sin. This is not an accusation- but a loving confrontation about visible; blatant sin about which there is no

doubt. For example- if a brother has a disagreement with his wife and moves out of his house and is shackled up with his girlfriend. Those who love this man need to go to him and humbly confront him with his sin and call him to repent and return to his wife.

If the sinning brother comes to his senses and repents – then this process stops right here and goes no further. The sinning brother has been made aware that he is wrong; the Holy Spirit has convicted him; and he has cried out to God for forgiveness. There is great joy and God is glorified because a sinning brother has repented and now can be restored.

“Now wait just a minute, Brother Blair. This is none of your business. This is between this man and his wife. All we can do is love these people and hope and pray that they will reconcile. Nobody has the right to go to that person and confront him over his unfaithfulness. If they choose not to repent- that is not our concern.”

Ah- but that’s not true. An attitude like that is exactly what John is talking about here. If we do not warn a sinning brother- then we are proving that we do not care about him and if we do not care about another brother- John says that we hate him and if we hate him- John says that we do not have eternal life abiding in us.

Jesus said that we can do a whole lot more than just pray for them. It is not true to say that this is not our concern because this man is my brother- and because he is a member of the Christian Church then he and I are united in Jesus Christ and it matters what he does and it matters how he lives- just like it matters what I do and how I live. This man’s sins reflects not only on himself – but on the Church and on Christianity itself.

If a sinning brother can abandon his covenant wife and shack up with his girlfriend and still be in good standing with the Church and the other members of the Church- how do we encourage other people not to do the same thing?

Sin running unchecked in the Church undermines everybody and is a plague that absolutely will spill over to someone else. It is the same thing that happens in a family. If the parents allow one child to disobey then the reason that the other children need to obey is undermined and his rebellion will be imparted to the other children.

Now keep in mind that this process is not about kicking people out of the Church. This process is a manifestation of godly love whereby a

sinning brother is lovingly and humbly brought to a place where he can be restored. It is about bringing someone who is living in blatant sin to a place of repentance and coming back into right relationship with the Lord and with the Church.

And, most importantly of all- it is the humble obedience to do what Jesus told us to do about His people in His Church.

There is no doubt that Jesus said that this is what we are to do- the only real question is are we willing to obey the command of our Lord and implement Church Discipline or do we feel that our way is better than what Jesus Commanded?

If the sinning brother repents then all heaven rejoices- a brother has come home! But if he refuses to repent; if he is resolute in staying in his open rebellion against God- then Jesus said that we are to go to step two and Lord willing we will get into that on the next broadcast because I have to stop right here. But 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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