

LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN IS EVIDENCE OF SALVATION

TEXT: I JOHN 3:10-18

INTRODUCTION:

1. The word "love" is found seven times in our text (3:10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18). The word "hate" is found twice (3:13, 15).
2. One of the reoccurring themes in the first epistle of John is assurance of salvation – and how to discern between genuine Christianity and counterfeit Christianity (cf. I John 1:6).
3. In this epistle, John brings out frequently that one of the marks of genuine salvation is love for the brethren (2:9-11; 4:7, 8).
4. According to the book of I John, love for the brethren is an infallible test of one's salvation (3:10).
5. "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (I John 3:11).
6. Love is the basis for God's law. God gave us the law to protect us because He loves us. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Gal. 5:14).
7. John brings this out forcefully in this epistle – "love one another" is not an exhortation, it is a direct commandment from God. Our Lord said in John 13:34, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

I. THE PROOF

1. Love is the proof that one is a true Christian (3:10, 11, 14a; cf. 4:7, 8).
2. First John 3:14 -- "We know that we have passed from death unto life" -- reminds us of our Lord's words in John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."
3. The words "have passed" signify a permanent transfer from one place to another -- Christians have been spiritually transferred out of the realm of death into the realm of life.
4. In Scripture "death" means "separation." The father of the Prodigal Son said, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (Luke 15:24).
5. The "second death" is eternal separation from God in the lake of fire.
6. Ephesians 2:1 says lost sinners are "dead in trespasses and sins."
7. Spiritual death is separation from God, just as spiritual life is communion with God. There is no neutral ground between the two

- realms, just as there is no neutral ground between the children of God and the children of the devil.
8. Therefore, I John 3:14 -- "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" -- means those who do not love the brethren are not saved. They are alienated from God, and are spiritually dead (cf. I John 3:10).
 9. First John 3:14 -- "We know that we have passed from death unto life." Our Lord said in John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."
 10. John 5:24 tells us how to be saved. First John 3:14 is one of the evidences that we are saved.
 11. "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one" (3:12). In John 8:44, our Lord said the devil "was a murderer from the beginning."
 12. Since Cain was of the wicked one, the devil, he too was a murderer (3:12). In the earlier part of I John 3, John describes the conflict between righteousness and unrighteousness, between truth and falsehood (cf. 3:7).
 13. Then John goes on to explain the conflict between the children of God and the children of the devil (cf. 3:10), and that this conflict is experientially a conflict between God-prompted love and Satan-inspired hatred (3:11, 12).
 14. The example of Cain establishes the fact that love and hatred, which characterize the children of God and the children of the devil, have been operative since the earliest days of human history (Genesis 4:8).
 15. John asks a rhetorical question, "And wherefore slew he him?" (I John 3:12), and then he answers it -- "Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (3:12b).
 16. Jealousy developed into hatred, and hatred led to cold-blooded murder. It has always been this way. The murder of Abel by his brother Cain illustrates I John 3:13 -- "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you."
 17. Our Lord repeatedly warned His disciples that they should expect hatred from the world (cf. John 15:17-25).
 18. The righteous character and righteous conduct of true Christians arouse the world's hatred. Many Biblical examples could be given (e.g., Daniel cast into the lion's den in Babylon).
 19. John often refers back to "the beginning" (3:11), i.e., the incarnation of Christ. The Gnostics introduced new teachings, but John kept

- reminding his listeners to go back to "the beginning" (cf. 2:7, 24), back to the Word of God, back to the apostolic doctrine – this doctrine was public knowledge in contrast to the secretism of the Gnostics.
20. This message from the beginning was "that we should love one another" (3:11). Our Lord told His disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).
 21. This was the proof, the evidence that they were genuine Christians. Love for the brethren is evidence of new life in Christ, not the basis for acquiring it. What believers do reveals what they are.

II. THE PRINCIPLE

1. In warning his readers, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you," John reminded them that hatred by the world is to be expected (3:13).
2. Our Lord said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:11, 12).
3. Dr. Kent Brantly was working as a missionary in Liberia. Recently released from Emory Hospital after experimental treatment for the Ebola virus, Dr. Brantly held a brief press conference.
4. "I want to express my deep and sincere gratitude to Samaritan's Purse, Emory and all of the people involved in my treatment and care," said Dr. Brantly. "Above all, I am forever thankful to God for sparing my life."
5. That simple statement of thankfulness to God for sparing his life was met with an avalanche of hatred from God-haters.
6. Our Lord prayed in John 17:14, "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."
7. This principle goes back to Cain and Abel, and we see it throughout Scripture. Hebrews 11:7 says, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world..."
8. The world knows we reject their philosophy, their lifestyle, their music, their values, etc. and they hate us because we will not compromise.

9. Ironically, when believers do compromise, the world regards them with contempt. The wicked Sodomites said to Lot, "This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee" (Genesis 19:9).
10. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (I John 3:13). Hatred by the world is to be expected.
11. The apostle Paul said, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12).
12. Paul knew this from firsthand experience. He was there when Stephen was stoned to death by an angry Jewish mob.
13. Later on, Paul said, "And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him" (Acts 22:20).
14. A Christian writer said whenever Christians "expose the greed, the avarice, the hatred, and the wickedness of the world, it must expect rejection; and if it should go so far as to interfere with its evil practices, as Jesus did in the temple, it may expect suffering and brutal death (cf. John 15:18-19, 25; 17:14)" (Glenn W. Barker, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*).
15. The practice of hatred reveals a murderous personality (3:15), and there are many examples of this in Scripture. Genesis 27:41 says, "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob."
16. Genesis 37:4 says that when Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, "they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him."
17. Second Samuel 13:22 says, "Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.
18. In the book of Esther, we see how Haman hated Mordecai, and because of his fierce hatred, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were living in Persia. Haman caused a gallows to be made fifty cubits high, to hang Mordecai, but in the providence of God Mordecai prospered, and they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.
19. The sixth commandment says, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord explained that all hatred is potentially murderous, when He said, "Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is

- angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (Matt. 5:21, 22).
20. Man's law condemns a murderer for the overt act; God judges the murderous hatred that is in the heart of man.
 21. First John 3:15 says, "and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." This does not mean that a murderer cannot repent and find forgiveness. King David had the innocent Uriah the Hittite killed. David repented and was forgiven.
 22. First John 3:15 refers to the present state of an impenitent murderer, not to his future destination. "No one governed by destructive hatred has eternal life abiding in him" (Hiebert).²³ Impenitent murderers will wind up in hell. Revelation 21:8 says murderers, along with whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

III. THE PATTERN

1. Love was manifested at the cross in Christ's sacrificial death. Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
2. Christ's love is perceived (known) by what He did: "He laid down His life for us." And love is seen in our service (3:16, 17).
3. Warren W. Wiersbe said, "'Self-preservation' is the first law of physical life, but 'self-sacrifice' is the first law of spiritual life" (*Be Real*).
4. Our Lord said in John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
5. In his epistle, John draws a contrast between the children of God and the children of the devil; and between the love that inspires Christians and the hatred that drives sinners. Our Lord said in John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
6. In I John 3:17, John gives a practical illustration regarding the lack of brotherly love. It is a hypothetical situation where a man has the ability to help someone, but instead he "shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him."
7. John asks, "how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

8. His selfishness shuts up his heart from his brother. His interest in his own concerns leads him to shut out consideration for the needs of others.
9. We are also reminded of the parable of the Good Samaritan. When the Good Samaritan saw the man who fell among thieves, lying on the side of the road half dead, "he had compassion on him" (Luke 10:33).
10. True Christianity demonstrates "the love of God" (cf. 4:19-21).
11. One cannot separate the love of God and the love of others. Our Lord said the greatest commandment in the law was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."
12. Then He said, "This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).
13. To love with the tongue, but not "in deed and in truth" is sheer hypocrisy (3:18). James 2:15 and 16 says, "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

CONCLUSION:

1. A preacher gave a good illustration for I John 3:18.
2. It is also a good illustration for James 1:22 -- "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."
3. A man visited a certain church and was not sure what time the service started. As he approached the front door he could hear the people were singing.
4. He wondered whether it was the hymn before the preaching or the final hymn sung after the preaching.
5. Putting his head inside the door, he asked an usher, "Is the sermon done?"
6. To which the man replied, "No, it's got to be done" (cf. I John 3:18).