

July 21, 2024
1John 3: 13-18

- First John has been a wonderfully diverse book with many different avenues to explore
- Jesus is real and He continues to impact us daily not just during His time as deity in flesh
 - We talked about light and the power of light to drive out darkness and that mankind often prefers darkness and hiding our deeds to being exposed to light.
 - We looked at the blood of animals and the blood of Jesus that purifies us
 - Then to what we actually believe and having to live it out.
 - We talked about getting it right in relationships. On to stages of life and maturity
 - Antichrists and demystifying and not catastrophizing situations
 - Understanding that God is not like man and He lavished His love calling us children of God –
God will not write you a “dear John” letter.
 - Craig explained how John goes on about being children of God and not knowing the full scope of it and that we need to live holy lives.
 - Then sin and lawlessness, amnesty and no one who is born of God will continue to sin.
 - Don’t be like Cain Genesis 4: ⁶Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷If 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 rule over it.”
 - Don’t forget the questions of: can do, should do and must do.

1 John 3: ¹³Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters,^[b] if the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

¹⁶This 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. ¹⁷If 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? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Opening Prayer

13. John does not address them as little children, but as peers (mature believers)
This must be an understanding we already have, not one that surprises us.

Commentary: The author does not say the world always hates believers: it did not always hate Jesus. But whenever the community of faith acts so as to expose the greed, avarice, hatred and wickedness of the world, it must expect rejection; and if it to go as far as to interfere with its evil practices, as Jesus did in the temple, it may expect suffering and brutal death.

People like angels and mystical things so much because they are spiritual, but don't require anything from you, or call you to any commitment and change. People love to be spiritual, but not truly Godly, for that involves real change.

Let's talk about the difference between spiritual and Godly for a minute
Knowing who or what God means to an individual is very important in having a conversation

Who is God according to different religions?

In theism, we believe this, God is the creator and sustainer of the universe,

In deism, God is the creator, but not the sustainer, of the universe.

In pantheism, God is the universe itself.

Atheism is an absence of belief in any God or deity,

While agnosticism deems the existence of God unknown or unknowable.

Spiritual – as a part of our triune make up, something we “createdly” desire relating to, consisting of, or affecting the spirit
of or relating to supernatural beings or phenomena
relating to or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things

Godly – we would define this as seeking after Him to do His will, It costs something.

conforming to the laws and wishes of God

obeying and respecting God

showing great reverence for god

Why are we talking about this here?

If we are only spiritual, the world doesn't care or rebel against that (satan is spiritual)

If we are Godly and Biblical in our approach (which requires us to repent of and turn away from sin, live according to His ways, follow His instructions, and sacrifice – we are now “up in people's business” and often they don't like that.

Hence, don't be surprised if the world hates you.

14. This is a self-test. How does one know if they are a believer.

To be unable to love means that a person is without spiritual life and remains in death

We have passed from spiritual death (our born state) to spiritual life (in Christ Jesus)

We were dead in sin and now alive in Christ

Love will not cause one's passage to spiritual life but will give evidence of it.

Know a lot, but live what we believe – check your life for love for one another.

15. Matthew 5²¹ “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder,^[a] and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister^{[b][c]} will be subject to judgment.

John here links hatred with murder.

It is a reference back to Cain – hate is to despise, and murder is the fulfillment of that attitude

When righteousness is exhibited, evil will want to kill it.

Remember, Sin is always crouching at the door, and there are eternal implications to the choice

16. In this verse, John is contrasting the negative example of Cain to the positive example of Jesus. This is how we know what Love is. “laying down of life for brother and sister”

Jesus life was not taken from Him, He freely gave it for us.

Because of Jesus sacrifice (love for us) eternity was opened for each of us.

The demand for love arises from His command and the meaning of love is found in His example

This is not some knowledge based (gnostic) understanding of an emotional concept.

It is putting our lives on the line and following the example of Jesus, both word and deed

Love is denial of self for another’s gain and that is selfless and hard!

This is what we are to do as the people of God.

This is Godly, not just spiritual

Set the example – do as I do not just as I say

Jesus did what He did for us, and then He asks us to follow (model) His ways He did not die for us so we could become spoiled brats and live Gnostically dualistic lives.

A pastor from Oxford named Vaughn Roberts put it this way:

"When you love people who are like you, that's ordinary. When you love people who are unlike you, that's extraordinary. When you love people who dislike you, that's revolutionary." That's the kind of love John is calling us to—the kind of love the world is waiting to see.

What does love look like?

Look at [3:17-18](#): "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? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

Love is very practical, according to John. It's not just words; it's action.

It's giving of ourselves every day. It's doing good for people in ordinary ways.

Not just in action, but in Truth (asking hard questions) that call us to holiness and Godliness.

This should be a way to distinguish, between Godly community and worldly community.

It can also include being aware of our permissive sins.

Permissive sins – these are areas that reside between the 10 commandments and Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and Love your neighbor as yourself

The “leash” God is giving us is decreasing in length.

If we want His presence – there are parameters around it – it is not a right it is a privilege

David understood this in Psalms 51 ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

The path to that is narrower and few will enter it.

It is a truly loving community that requires us to look like Jesus.

How is your On-line presence? Is this a permissive sin?

Let's talk physiology for a minute, when we encounter some issues, our heart rate goes above 100 and cortisol is released into our blood that shuts down the prefrontal cortex (reasoning center) and puts us in a fight or flight (reaction and self-preservation mode). We may feel justified as we “match their tone,” but that that does not reflect the nature and character of Christ. Often we react here and then sometimes have to go on an apology tour

You don't have to defend what you did not say.

There is a book by James Bryan Smith called *The Good and Beautiful Community*. In one of his chapters, he offers some simple suggestions for living unselfishly.

For children, let them choose how to spend one evening this week, any way they want.

At work, stop by a co-worker's desk and ask, "What are you working on today that I might be able to help with?" Make some fresh coffee for the office, or clean up the break room.

At church, care for people, ask, listen and care about what is happening currently in their lives

When driving, be on the lookout for opportunities to let people get in front of you.

Honor one another.

[Romans 12:10](#) says, "Honor one another above yourselves."

And [1 Peter 2:17](#) says, "Show proper respect to everyone."

Serve one another.

[First Peter 4:10](#) reads, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others." If love is giving of ourselves for the good of others, then love means giving our time and talent and energy to and for one another.

Commentary: If we are in a position to see with our own eyes someone's need (as, for example, the good Samaritan did) and can offer help, then we cannot do otherwise than act. To withhold help in such a situation is to shut off compassionate action and deny the presence of God's love in our own heart."
Kindness does not cost. Kindness pays

When you disappoint someone who loves you deeply, they love you anyway! So instead of punishing you or rejecting you, they forgive you. They're patient with you. They give you a second chance, and a third, and a fourth, and however many it takes.

That's how God has loved us, so that's how we love one another.

When you're loved like this, you're free.

You're free to make mistakes.

You're free to disagree.

You're free to take a risk.

You're free to be yourself.

That's why love is the greatest gift we can give to one another: it gives us the freedom to become the people we long to be and were meant to be in Christ.

We don't want to pigeon hole people

To pigeonhole someone is to classify them without considering their qualities or characteristics.

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

Love requires more than idle talk or exalted theology.

It demands simple acts, which anyone can see in order to meet the needs of others in distress.

This is not a deep theological message, but a simple and challenging one to allow to take root in our heart and challenge our current thinking about how we are living.

Let's go in that understanding and do what is right.

Discussion Questions:

How do you respond to Godly vs. Spiritual?

Last week we talked about: What can I do, what should I do or what MUST I do?
Has that impacted you this week?

What are a few tangible ways, this week, you can commit to in showing true love to those around you?