

~ 1 John ~

Lesson 27- The Evidence of Love

We are continuing our study of 1 John and today we are looking at another section that spans **1 John 3:10-15**.

There is one word that John uses more than any other through His entire epistle, and that is the word LOVE. He uses it 46 times total: 18 as a noun agape, ἀγάπη, and 28 as a verb, agapao, ἀγαπάω. And John really focuses this word in chapters 3 and 4. He doesn't mention love at all in chapter 1, he mentions love 5 times in chapter 2, and 5 times in chapter 5, and the other 36 times are all in chapters 3 and 4. Another thing I find interesting is this word love ramps up, at the same time John introduces our being born again children of God. Remember it is in 2:29 that John first mentions our being born of God, and then in 3:1 is the first time he mentions our being children of God. So it is not a coincidence that our sonship and love is introduced at the same time. Because it was the love of God that made us His children, **1 John 4:9-10**. Needless to say, for the next couple of chapters our focus is going to be on love.

There are three types of love in Greek: 1) eros, ἔρως- sensual romantic love; 2) phileo, φιλέω, friendly love; 3) agape, ἀγάπη, God's divine love. Agape love is the only love John refers to in his epistle because it is God's love. In fact, it is who He is because John even says in 1 John 4:16 that "God is Love".

What is agape love? The best definition is **1 Corinthians 13**. Why is love the greatest? Because it is who God is. Love is what manifested itself as eternal life for us. Love is what provided the Way to eternal life, and Love is what will endure for eternity because love never fails. Our Eternal Salvation is completed in Love. This love is a selfless, self-sacrificing, giving love that is only made possible through His Spirit. And what's more is that God wants to share this love with us.

No unregenerate human being has the capacity to love with agape love. It is only when God's love has been deposited in our hearts when we are born again, **Romans 5:5**. And because this love is only present in a born-again believer, it is the proof of one who is born of God. John has many tests of Truth in this epistle, but only two of these tests result in the proof of our sonship of God. In 2:29 John tells us, "everyone who practices Righteousness is born of Him", and in 4:7 John says, "everyone who loves is born of God". Practicing Righteousness and loving one another are proofs that we are children of God. This is how we can distinguish between those who are of the devil and those who are of God. And we see John link these two together in **3:10** where we left off last week. In verse 10, John uses a negative connotation to make his point, but we can easily turn that around and say, whoever practices Righteousness is born of God, and also he who loves his brother (is born of God)." Practicing Righteousness and loving the brethren is the evidence, the tangible proof of those who are children of God. And the reason why these two are the proofs of our sonship is because neither Righteousness nor Love comes from any part of us. He only bestows His Righteousness and His Love on those who are called children of God, on those who have faith in His Son, 1 Cor 5:21; 1 Jn 3:1; 4:7-10.

From this point forward in our study of First John, the main topic is the Love of God and our display of this love toward the brethren. Who are the brethren? Is it just anybody in the world? No, the brethren are the fellow believers in Christ, **1 John 5:1**. Those who are begotten by God. And we who believe are His children, so that makes us brothers and sisters in Christ because we are born of God the Father. Notice how Jesus defines who the brethren are in **Matthew 12:46-50**.

The Love of the Brethren and our Fellowship with each other is a gift of God that is unlike any other relationship the world can give. People in the world yearn for this kind of relationship. But a relationship not rooted in God's love has no lasting foundation because worldly relationships are only based on feelings and emotions. Agape love is a self-sacrificing, giving love, that is shared and rooted in Jesus, and this love is eternal.

This is the heart of John as he is writing this letter to his little children. Remember how he begins the entire epistle talking about our Fellowship. He says I am declaring this message of Life to you so that you may have Fellowship with us, and truly our Fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. When we have Fellowship with God, when we are abiding in Him, there is a fruit, a tangible proof that comes as a result and that is this love of the Brethren. And this bond that we have with one another is supernatural. I have seen this in my own life personally. For years, I studied the Word and had my personal relationship with God, and it was wonderful, but something dramatically

changed when I started teaching this class. As I started surrounding myself with the Brethren, teaching His Word and experiencing the Fellowship with other Christians, the love of God began to overflow and it has brought me closer to not only all of you, but I have a closer, more intimate relationship with God because of this love of the Brethren.

This was the heart of the early church. You can just see this overflowing in John's letters, **3 John 1-4**. Paul has this same heart toward the brethren, **1 Thess 2:7-9, 17-20; Philippians 1:21-26; 2:1-4**. Peter says this in his epistle, **1 Peter 1:22**. This was the mindset of the early church, and this love begins to pour out of John's pen as he writes the next couple of chapters. Let's start looking at this section verse by verse and begin by reading verse 10 again before we dig into 3:11)...

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

¹¹ ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους.

“**the message that you heard from the beginning**” is a common expression of John. In fact, this is how he begins his epistle, 1:1, 1:3, 1:5... “that which was from the beginning, which we have heard...” John is referring to the beginning, who is Jesus Christ and the message of Life that He gave to us. And the message is the same as the commandment that they heard from the beginning, 2:7-8. 1 John 3:23- “**And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.**”

Jesus came to give the message of Life, the message of Light and manifest the Father's Love. And those who believe in Him and receive this message, “**to them gave He the right to become children of God**”, John 1:12. And those who are abiding in Him, holding fast to His Word and His commandments are those who have Fellowship with Him, and out from this Fellowship comes a Fellowship with one another and the love of the Brethren as a result.

Which is exactly what John says in 3:11- “For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, **that we should, ἀγαπῶμεν, habitually and continually love one another**”. Because we receive His message and obey His commandment to believe on Him and as a result, love one another.

Now in John's style, he gives us another test of Truth and this time it is concerning love and he begins to compare those who love the brethren versus those who hate the brethren. Again, comparing those who are the children of God versus children of the devil. We saw this last week when John compared those who practice Righteousness to those who practice sin. And now he is doing the same thing under the test of love.

Now in this test of love, in chapter 3, John weaves back and forth giving us two tests concerning the love of the brethren. And both tests are related to the condition of the heart: 1) the test of a murderous heart toward your brother and 2) the test of closing your heart away from your brother.

Today we will look at this first test, the test of a murderous heart. Let's read verse 12 again starting with verse 11...

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

¹² not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

¹² οὐ καθὼς Κάιν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν, καὶ ἐσφαξε τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ. καὶ χάριν τίνος ἐσφαξεν αὐτόν; ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν, τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαια.

This is the only Old Testament reference in this epistle and he goes back to the very first murder recorded in human history, when Cain kills his brother Abel. Let's start by reading this account in **Genesis 4:1-5**. The first problem is that Cain brought an offering of the works of his hands and not an offering from his heart, and God rejected this offering. Abel brought an offering from his heart, the acceptable and required sacrifice of a first-born animal. I personally don't think the offering God wanted had anything to do with their trade. Even though Abel was a keeper of sheep

and Cain was a tiller of the ground, the required offering was an animal without blemish, foreshadowing Jesus Christ. But Cain rejected this and offered his works instead. That was Cain's first mistake, but then it gets worse, **Genesis 4:6-7**. God is giving Cain a chance to repent. God knows the murderous intentions in Cain's heart and gives him a warning. "*Sin is crouching at your door and its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.*" But Cain gives himself over to sin and kills his brother, **Genesis 4:8**.

John says, "we should love one another, **not as Cain, who was of the wicked one, and slaughtered**, sphazo, σφάζω, **his brother**"

"**slaughtered**"- sphazo, σφάζω, this is the same word used in the LXX for sacrifice. Cain was "of the wicked one" because he slaughtered his brother. But it's not just the act of murder that made him a child of the devil. That was part of it, but there was something much deeper happening. This is a rebellion against God and His Righteousness, and John reveals this in the remainder of verse 12...

"**And why did he slaughter him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.**" Cain murdered Abel in hatred and jealousy because Abel was Righteous. Hebrews 11:4 says Abel was Righteous. What is the only way someone can be made Righteous? By having faith in God. Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for Righteousness, Galatians 3:6. The same was true with Abel. This is what John is focusing on. It wasn't just that Cain brought the wrong offering of works instead of faith, that's bad, and it's not even that Cain killed his brother, that's also bad, but the evil that John is referring to is the fact that Cain killed his brother for being Righteous. That is the murderous heart John is trying to portray to us. Cain despised the one who was Righteous and killed him. In the same way, the world is evil, and the world hates Righteousness and they want to kill and destroy anyone who is Righteous.

And this is why John says verse 13...

<p>¹³ Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.</p>	<p>¹³ Μὴ θαυμάζετε ἀδελφοί μου, εἰ μισεῖ ὑμᾶς ὁ κόσμος.</p>
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This is what the world does. The world is of the wicked one and the wicked one wants to steal, kill, and destroy... therefore John says... do not marvel my brethren, this is to be expected.

"**do not marvel**"- thaumazo, θαυμάζω, do not marvel in amazement, be astonished or astounded. "*Do not think it strange*" as Peter says it, 1 Pet 4:12-14, "**if the world hates you**". This is what the world does. It hates Jesus and His Righteousness and because it hates Him, they will also hate us, John 15:18. "*the world does not know us, because it did not know Him*", 1 John 3:1. "*all who desire to live Godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*", 2 Tim 3:12.

And then John transitions into verse 14, even though the world hates us, rejoice, because we are the ones who have eternal life. We are the ones whom Jesus loves.

<p>¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.</p>	<p>¹⁴ ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι μεταβεβήκαμεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν, ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς.</p>
<p>He who does not love <i>his</i> brother abides in death.</p>	<p>ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν μένει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ.</p>

The world is abiding in death, but rejoice because we know we are abiding in Life, **1 Peter 4:12-14**.

"**we know**"- ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν, emphatic we (the children of God, those who are Righteous, those whom the world hates...), we know... "**that we have passed out from death and into life**"- "passed"- metabaino, μεταβαίνω, to change your step or course. To change your course of life. We know that our course has changed out from death, ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου, and into life. Our course, our manner of life, our behavior has changed, Colossians 1:13- He has delivered us, rescued us "out from" the power of darkness and conveyed, methistemi, μεθίστημι, our stance has changed into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

John tells us we know this “**because we love the brethren.**” Our habitual and continual loving the brethren is the proof, the tangible evidence that we are no longer heading down the path of death and destruction, and we know we are now on a new path unto life.

Again, John immediately gives us the contrast... “**He who is not continually loving the brethren abides in death.**” Not only is the one who is hating the Brethren on the course to death, he is continually abiding in death. Why would somebody choose to abide in death? John 3:19–20-¹⁹ *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* ²⁰ *For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.* These people are abiding in death because they choose to hate God.

¹⁵ Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

¹⁵ πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστὶ· καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι πᾶς ἀνθρωποκτόνος οὐκ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσαν.

Again, this word “**hates**” is present tense meaning... “**Whoever is habitually and continually hating his brother is a man-killer**”- Jesus made this clear on the sermon on the mount, Matt 5:21-22. In God’s eyes, the one who has hatred in his heart is guilty of murder, whether he commits the act physically or not. Jesus was making the point that we all have sinned, and we all need a Savior. But John is not trying to distinguish who has sinned, but rather he is making evident those who are continually committed to sin. Because the one who has murder in his heart continually, this is a child of the devil. John’s not saying that someone who commits murder cannot be saved. We’re not talking about who can be saved, we’re talking about those who **we know are saved**, and those who have murder in their heart continually are not children of God. John is not talking about having an occasion of sin. This isn’t having an occasion of getting into an argument with another Christian. This isn’t emotional anger. This is having a continual and habitual murderous heart toward one who is Righteous and wanting to kill those who are Righteous. This is truly a **hatred of God at its core**. And this is why John continues in verse 15 saying...

“**...and you know that no man-killer has eternal life abiding in him.**”- no man-killer who is continually hating his brother for being Righteous has eternal life abiding in him. This man-killer, this one who hates Righteousness is continually abiding in death and the one continually abiding in death cannot have eternal life continually abiding in him at the same time. Look at this drastic contrast that John is portraying. This is why John said in verse 10 saying, “*In this, the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest.*”

The world tries to disguise evil by masking it behind a veil of false love. They say that since God is love, He should tolerate my sin. And some of these people even call themselves Christians, but they just are using love as an excuse to continue in their sin. But when the veil of false love is pulled back by shining the Truth and exposing their darkness, we see their murderous heart toward God and anyone who is Righteous.

Progressive Christianity, Ecumenism, and post-modern Christianity are just a few examples of those who are haters of God and they hate His Righteousness. They have a murderous heart toward anyone who stands for Truth, because they themselves have corrupted truth so they can keep on habitually and continually sinning with no call to holiness. They are disguising evil by compromising Truth.

But love does not tolerate evil, and it will never compromise the Truth. They say love is tolerance, but then they tolerate everything but Truth. As soon as you speak Biblical Truth in love, the world will hate you. Because they love their evil deeds. They love the darkness rather than the Light. But think it not strange, do not marvel, my brethren because this is what the world does. But rather rejoice. Rejoice in the fact that we know THE TRUTH, who is Jesus Christ... and we know that we have passed out from death into Eternal Life in Him. And how do we know this... because we have Fellowship with God, and we love the Brethren.