

~ 1 John ~

Lesson 28- The Action of Love in Truth

We are continuing our study of 1 John and today we are looking at another test of Truth that is part of a section that spans **1 John 3:10-18**.

John gives us these tests of Truth that we might know those who are trying to deceive us and make evident those who are truly children of God. These tests do three things: 1) expose the darkness... 2) convict the sinner... 3) give believers the assurance of eternal salvation. So all through the epistle we keep coming across these comparisons to guide us into Truth.

As we have mentioned before, John tells us there are two proofs that are evidence of our sonship in Christ: practicing Righteousness and loving the Brethren, these two give us tangible proof that we know we are born of God. When we have God's Righteousness and we have His Love flowing in us and out through us, it is then that we have the assurance we are born of God. There is tangible evidence based on our behavior and manner of life that shows that God is living and abiding in us, 1 John 2:29; 4:7; 3:10.

And so in our text today, specifically verses 16-18, we find ourself with another test. In this section that spans verses 10-18, we see two tests of Truth concerning love. Last week we looked at the first test: 1) the test of a murderous heart toward your brother. Those who continually hate the brethren and have a murderous heart toward those who are Righteous are just like Cain and of the wicked one. And the second part that we will look at today, 2) the test of closing your heart away from your brother. Deliberately turning your heart away from the Brethren.

This second test begins in verse 16...

¹⁶ By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

¹⁶ ἐν τούτῳ ἐγνώκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκε· καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς τιθέναι.

“**by this we know love...**”- ginosko, γινώσκω, this is an intimate knowledge by experience. John is saying... “by this we have come to know and have experienced God's love intimately...”

John continues verse 16 telling us how we know God's love intimately, “...**because He, ἐκεῖνος**, this One, **laid down His life for us...**”- We have come to know God's love intimately, and have experienced God's love because He sent His Son to die for us, **4:9-10**. And if we receive His love, by receiving His Son, which is the Father's manifested love, then He abides in us, we have Fellowship with Him, and His love has been perfected in us, and out from this Fellowship with God, we have Fellowship with one another and we love the Brethren as a result. This is experiencing God's love intimately, **4:11-13**.

When John says, “... **this One laid down His life for us...**”- This word, “laid down” is tithemi, τίθημι. This word has a much broader meaning than just to die for someone. This word means to lay down, set in place, or to appoint. To give your life for an appointed task. To set your life aside. To humble your life. To lay your will down. Just as Jesus said, “Not my will, but yours be done.” That's the idea of this word.

So John continues in verse 16 and he uses this word again...

“...**And we also ought to lay down**, tithemi, τίθημι, **our lives for the brethren ...**”- Over the centuries, millions of Christians have given their lives for Jesus. The Foxes Book of Martyrs is a 3-volume book containing thousands of Christians who were tortured and killed for the name of Jesus. And even now today there are thousands of Christians every year standing for Truth, and dying for Jesus. And when you lay aside your life, when you tithemi, τίθημι your life for the Brethren in the name of Jesus, this can result in physical death, but laying your life down is so much more than just the one-time event of death.

When John says, “...**And we also ought to lay down**, tithemi, τίθημι, **our lives...**”- this word tithemi, τίθημι, is in the present tense, tithenai, τιθέναι, meaning a continual and habitual laying down, not just the one-time event of death. We must be continually laying our lives down for the brethren.

Laying your life down continually is the act of being a living sacrifice even unto death, **Romans 12:1-2**.

John is telling us... Because Jesus laid down His life for us, we also have an *opheilo*, ὀφείλω, an obligation, a duty to continually lay down, tithenai, τιθέναι, our lives for the Brethren. Just as Jesus humbled Himself to the will of the Father, and laid down His life for us, we likewise have a duty to continually humble ourselves to the Father, and to continually lay down our life as a living sacrifice, even unto death, for the purpose of bearing fruit and glorifying Him. This is what Jesus meant when He said, “He who loses His life for My sake will save it”, Luke 9:24. We lose our life, we lay aside the will of our life so that we can serve Jesus and love the Brethren. Jesus gave us the example of humbling ourselves toward the Brethren when He washed the disciples’ feet the night before His death, **John 13:12-17**. That same night, Jesus said to His disciples in **John 15:9-13**- there is no greater display of love than to lay your life down for your friends. Laying your life down for the Brethren is being a living sacrifice in building each other up in the Truth, even unto death, for the sole purpose of keeping the bride’s focus on Jesus all to the glory of God. We are appointed as Christians to continue abiding in Him, bearing fruit, and glorifying God, even unto death. Jesus continues by saying this in **John 15:16-17**.

Paul gives us this example of this in Acts 20. In this account, Paul meets with the Ephesian elders before he goes off to Jerusalem. Paul had just spent 3 years in Ephesus with the Brethren and in Acts 20, Paul summarizes his manner of life toward them, and we see how Paul laid his life down as a living sacrifice to serve the Brethren, even unto death, **Acts 20:17-35**. The shepherd gives his life to protect the sheep from the wolves. All believers are appointed to this in some way or another. Whether you are an elder or a new believer, the love of the Brethren and our duty to the Brethren is to lay our lives down for the Brethren, and in laying our lives down, we lift up, edify, encourage, and comfort our Brethren in Truth. Lifting each other up in the Lord, praying for the Brethren, keeping the focus on Jesus Christ and His Truth and Righteousness. You don’t have to be a pastor or a teacher to do this. This is simply living Jesus together, glorifying Jesus in everything you do.

As Christians, this is what we have been appointed to, **1 Thess 3:1-13; 4:18; 5:11**. Humbling yourself to the will of God, serving, lifting up, and loving the Brethren among persecution even unto physical death all to the glory of God is the definition of laying your life down for the Brethren.

Take this thought into verse 17...

¹⁷ But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

¹⁷ ὅς δ’ ἂν ἔχη τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ θεωρῇ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν ἔχοντα, καὶ κλείσῃ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, πῶς ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ μένει ἐν αὐτῷ;

“**this world’s goods...**”- τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου, literally “the life of the world”- the world’s possessions. If you have the world’s possessions, the life of the world, and if you see your brother in need, and if it is in your ability, help your brother. We have been appointed to this as Christians, **Philippians 2:1-4**.

Remember what we just learned in verse 16, we have an obligation, a duty to take care of our brethren. To set our life, to appoint our life to helping and loving the Brethren. This ranges from worldly possessions, our time, our resources, edifying the Brethren in our determination to teach and preach the Word and even the giving our physical life if need be.

Therefore, John says in verse 17... “He who has the life of this world, and sees his brother in need...

and shuts up his inward affections away from him, how does the love of God continually abide in him?” This ought not be the heart of a Christian. We should be laying our life down for the Brethren, not shutting ourselves away from them. John is warning us of an indifferent heart because a selfish heart is completely contrary to the life of a Christian. Christians share life together; we do not shut each other out. Christians see the need of the Brethren and we help each other.

In Paul’s life, Paul had a deep desire and need for brotherly love in prison. We see this in all of Paul’s imprisonments. Paul knew the supernatural strength, and encouragement and comfort that the love of the Brethren gives and he greatly desired it. Not to mention that in those days if you didn’t have friends that would bring you food and water in prison, you would die, **Hebrews 10:32-34**. This is why just before this he says, do not forsake the assembling of

yourselves together, **Hebrews 10:23-25**. It is so important to stay together and help each other and build each other up in the faith. In 2 Timothy 1:8 Paul asks Timothy to share with him in the sufferings for of the gospel. Also, in the same letter to Timothy Paul mentions Onesiphorus visiting him in chains and how he was refreshed by him, 2 Tim 1:16-18. In the letter to Philemon, you can see the heart of Fellowship toward his brother Onesimus, Philemon 4-7. This is love in action and Agape love is always accompanied with corresponding action. This is what John is saying in verse 18...

¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. | ¹⁸ τεχνία μου, μὴ ἀγαπῶμεν λόγῳ μηδὲ γλῶσση, ἀλλ' ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ.

“**my little children...**”- *τεχνία μου*, you can just see the love that John has for his flock in this endearing address to his little children.

“**...let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth...**”- Love is action. It is showing love to the Brethren through your deeds. Not just saying I love you with words and tongue, but actually demonstrating this with corresponding actions of the heart in Truth. The Father did this when He sent His Son, John 3:16- “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” God loved, and He gave. Jesus did this when He was moved with compassion and He healed them, Matt 14:14. This is what James says in **James 2:15-16**.

John tells us to love in deed and “**...in truth...**”- What does John mean to love in Truth? This is the action of love rooted in the Truth. The Truth is the Word of God. The Truth is that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God who rescued us out from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, Col 1:13. It is edifying the body of Christ in Truth. It is admonishing and exhorting the Brethren to stay steadfast in faith and Truth, John 17:15-23.

The Truth keeps us from the evil one and guards our soul from deception. And as Brethren in the body of Christ we can edify and build each other up in the Truth as the Holy Spirit guides each one of us in the Truth, 2 Thess 3:10-15. This is how we love in Truth. We help each other grow in the Word of God. We build each other up in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And we do this through the admonition and exhortation of the Word of Truth in love for one another, **Ephesians 4:11-16**. The walk of love in Truth toward the Brethren is vital to our spiritual growth, **Col 3:12-17**. Think about Paul and Silas in their chains singing hymns and praising God, Acts 16:22-34. These two were loving each other in Truth.

The love of the Brethren is the most powerful witness to the world because it always gives glory to God, John 13:35; 17:21-23. And as we display this love to each other by loving in deed and in Truth, and as we edify each other, and pray for each other, and build each other up in Truth, it gives God all the glory and it is working in us this assurance of our sonship in Christ. It is a proof that we are born of Him.

And that is where we will pick up next week... in verse 19 with the assurance of Love.