

I John 3:11-18 ▪ Two Ways to Live

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Love; Hate; Death and Dying; Eternal Life
Love in action is evidence of being born again

Intro: When we began this series in 1 John, I mentioned how the book can divide into two major themes.

God is Light.

God is Love.

You may have picked up on the theme of love recently. It now becomes the dominant theme as we enter into this new section.

Picture with me an intersection. You are in a very remote part of the country; GPS does not work—so you have to make a choice which way to turn.

Both roads run in two opposite directions; and both will land you at complete opposite destinations.

› That is the reality this passage confronts us with.

There are two roads to travel; two ways to live.

--One way is the way of Love—leads to eternal life (heaven)

--The other way is the way of hated—leads to eternal death (hell)

One message to hear (11,18)

- V13 begins with “For”, an important word that connects us to the previous section (v10)
- Vs 11 mirrors 1:5—this is the message—but now brings us into the new section; God is love.
- This is not a dry and static message: It has the life supplying, faith sustaining, power of the gospel behind it. The reason it is life supplying is because it centers on love.
- When this church first heard the gospel message—they heard about the priority of love—the self-sacrificing love that the Gospel is built on.

John 13:1 ESV

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

- This message is so very basic to discipleship and being a Christian.
- So nothing new; nothing that we have not heard.
- Yet if we are self-aware enough, we can know what we need to know, but *fail to act*.

James 1:22 ESV

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

- We can see the connection in the last verse of this passage.

(v18)—Love is not mere talk but backed up with action.

Love in Action—a way to summarize this section.

The first action step is to avoid.

One way to avoid (12-15)

There are some paths that are so dangerous that they come with warnings.

Let's take a look at this dangerous, destructive, and deadly path.

Cain—

- We are given a picture of a person who traveled down this path ([Gen 4](#))—that led to murder.
- Cain is antithetical to a Christian—*the path he travels is completely void of love*.
- The word for murder here is a unique word used to describe a brutal murder, a slaying or slaughtering.

It's the word that describes Jesus's crucifixion in

Revelation 5:12 ESV

saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,

to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might

and honor and glory and blessing!”

- It would be the word we describe the type of brutal murder done in a shooting spree: merciless violence.

Now it’s easy to say: I’m not a murderer in that way and just check out. You may say— “I’m not the guy who goes on a shooting spree.”

And it’s true, those are the slayers.

- Yet John is addressing the church and a way that we should ask: “Do I have a murderous heart? What’s in my heart?”

Yes, slaying another human life may be the worst case—but it’s a heart filled with hate that has traveled that path.

Cain’s murder story is found in [Gen 4](#)

Before he slaughters his brother, he is specifically challenged about his unchecked anger

Genesis 4:5–6 ESV

but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?”

- Cain was on the road of a lifestyle of anger.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus specifically addressed anger and hate in our hearts—and calls us to take it very seriously.

Matthew 5:21–22 ESV

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.

We get the challenge in v15 as well.

If your default and disposition is anger...you are on the wrong road.

[Gal 5:19](#)—says that works of the flesh are evident:

“enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger” ...those who do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God

There are some who profess Christ who can just be mean-spirited. We can't brush it off by saying “I grew up in the northeast, or have Irish-Italian blood”.

If our identity is Christ--then we must love.

- Further instruction is found in 13: Don't be surprised that the world hates you—the world is filled with those under the control of Satan, who share the same heart of anger, jealousy, and murder that filled Cain.
- In John 15, after Jesus instructs disciples to love, he offers the same warning: the world will hate you

John 15:18–19 ESV

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

The picture then, is that the church is to be a loving refuge, or haven from this world of hate. *The thing that world cannot possibly do well, the church should excel in.*

- (v14)—shifts positively & evidence of assurance—which is where God wants his children to live.
- The verb here passes over—it describes a permanent movement (Akin); there is an abiding new reality.

Loving the Christian family is evidence that one is truly a Christian. And, no small deed goes unnoticed. Even a small glass of water given. Small acts of kindness add up.

Loving the Christian family is evidence of where our real estate is.

But not all are on that road. Christians often describe non-believers as lost. It fits the lost sheep analogy in the Bible.

Metaphorically, it can also picture that you are on the wrong road—one that leads to eternal destruction.

If you are ruled by anger and hate; if it's your default - it's a good sign you are in the wrong road.

One way to live (16-18)

- One pastor challenged his people: “You all know John 3:16 well; do you know 1 John 3:16 the same?”
- Jesus is always the model of how we should live in self-giving, sacrificing love.
- So in v16, we see love defined through the display of the cross: that is how Jesus loves!!
One commentator: “hate leads to taking another’s life, love leads to laying down one’s own.”

› The ultimate example of that is found in the Lord Jesus (v16)

John 10:11 ESV

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

John 10:15 ESV

just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

- We also see here the beautiful, particular love Jesus has for the church, his bride—his treasured possession.

Apply/Gospel: Being lost is being on the wrong road; it’s also not knowing this love.

What draws many to Jesus is this self-giving, lifesaving love.

You can have Jesus...and his lifesaving love today if you simply believe.

Look to him.

Find life & love.

- In vs 17 we get to the nitty gritty practical side.
- We see here the beautiful, particular love Jesus has for the church, his bride—his treasured possession.

It’s as if Jesus says to us: “these other believers are my most treasured possessions—you need to treat them extremely well...you need to love.”

1. Since Jesus is marked by sacrificial love, so should we (16b)

- The word “ought” is not a mild suggestion—it’s a strong word that mans to owe, be indebted to, bound to—obligated

Same word is used in Romans.

Romans 13:8 ESV

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Romans 15:1 ESV

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

If you are a fan of Dave Ramsey, the Christian financial guy—his goal is debt free living.

That's good advice for consumer debt.

But biblically speaking, a child of God will always carry a load of debt—the debt of love to others.

John 15:12–14 ESV

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

2. Love is measured by how much it gives (17-18)

Think about how different it is in the world we live. A person's worth is measure by what? What they own. Everyone has some sort of net worth. Google a famous person and it will likely show their net worth.

People know the name Warren Buffet—why...some obscure man who lives in Omaha Nebraska.

People know the name Buffet because his net worth is 93 billion dollars.

- › Yet in God's economy value is placed not in what we own, but how generously we give.
 - There is likely the OT background of Dt 15:7-9 which warns against becoming hardhearted and tightfisted toward the needy.

Deuteronomy 15:7 ESV

“If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother,

- In v17— there is a shift from the collective and general, to the personal and individual.

“It’s easier to be enthusiastic about humanity with a capital “H”, than it is to love individual men and women, *especially those who are uninteresting, exasperating, depraved, or otherwise unattractive....Loving everyone in general may be an excuse for loving anybody in particular*”
(G.P Lewis)

The question is—who have I loved in particular? Who specifically am I going out of my way, sacrificially, to love.

- V18 sends us home—don’t be all talk.

How easy it is for us to slip into spiritual talk, instead of practical help.

“I’ll be praying about that”.

“Trust that God is sovereign over your circumstances”.

“Maybe God is teaching you contentment and trust”.

Maybe God is teaching me generosity, sacrifice...love.

Conclusion

There are two ways to live. The way of love and the way of hatred.

Each one of us is either traveling down the road Cain traveled, or Christ traveled.

My grandmother died in 2004 when we were living in SC. The next day Emily and I make a quick trip to her funeral. Jumped on 77N and got past Charlotte in the AM rush hour.

We stopped to grab a quick breakfast and coffee and back on the road.

About 15 mins later, I started seeing signs for Charlotte—and dread came upon me: I’m on the wrong road. I was going the wrong way.

Instead of jumping on I77N, in the busyness and rush I got on I77S.

Even after traveling on the right road for some time, we can find ourselves going in the wrong direction. Maybe through carelessness or distraction.

Revelation 2:2–4 ESV

“ I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

A sober word when we find that we lost the way of love.

Revelation 2:5 ESV

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.