

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 14- The Second Line **1John 3:11-18**

118. Distinguishing Between Love and Hate- Part 2

WAOY Thursday 12/06/07

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "The Distinction between Love and Hate". So let's read **1John 3:11-18** again together:

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

12 not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Now on the last broadcast- we were looking at how important getting the Gospel right was to the Apostles. And we saw that because the false teaching of the Greek philosophers and the Gnostic mystics had infiltrated the Church in the first century and was deceiving people- that John was moved upon by the Holy Ghost to pen down these eight verses that we just read to counteract what these heretics were teaching.

So John is drawing another line in the sand here with these eight verses by showing us the great distinction between Love and Hate. Now you may recall that John has already drawn one line in the sand by teaching the great difference between Sin and Righteousness in verses 4-10 and now he deals here with the issue of Love versus hate- so let's begin our examination of this distinction today by looking closely at verses 11 &12:

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

12 not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

Now first of all- John is reminding us here in verse 11 that what he is teaching about Love is not a new thing that he just made up. No, love is the cornerstone of the Christian faith and John is reminding us here that that this is the same teaching about Love that all believers heard from the very beginning- and it is that God Himself- is Love.

Now when we use that word, Love- we must understand what John meant by it. To John and the other Apostles- Love was not the spineless cowardly emotion that is afraid to correct anyone or that agrees with anything that the dog drags in the front door that we think about in our day.

To many in the modern Church- love means that if it feels good- it must be right or if it makes you happy- it must be of God or if it prospers you- then it must be God's Will. But none of those concepts correctly defines what true love is. Many believe today that if you love someone- you must agree with whatever they say or do and that it is somehow unloving and even unchristian to rebuke a false statement or to say that sinful behavior is- sinful and an insult to God.

That kind of wishy- washy, unstable emotion is *not* what John was referring to and we should not use that definition when we speak of love either.

Love of course is our Lord's Command in **John 13:34** and the absence of that godly love flowing like a river in our hearts and minds proves that something is rotten in Denmark.

Now there are several objects that we are commanded to love in

Scripture. First and foremost- the Bible demands that we love God. The Bible teaches that loving God is the best and highest form of love that any human can accomplish on this earth. Every other type of love is less than the love that we are to have for God.

You see, because God is holy- because God is unique and different from everything else that He made- God is supremely *deserving* of our love. And He is more deserving of our love than anything else in all the Universe. But when we say that we are to love God- we must be clear about this. Many people love God- in the sense that they have fond thoughts about some obscure supreme Being. I hope that I don't have to tell you that this is *not* the love that Scripture is talking about.

So let us begin to explore our love for God by stating the obvious. It is not hard dear friends- but it is *impossible* to love what you do not know or understand or appreciate. So if you do not know God; if you do not understand God and if you do not appreciate God- it is not hard- but it is *impossible*- for you to love Him. So our love for God flows directly from a correct knowledge and a personal relationship and a deep seated appreciation for God. And that knowledge and that relationship that we are supposed to have with the Owner and Creator of the Universe is found in Scripture.

First of all- when we talk about our love for God- we must remember that we do not possess any love for God at all in and of ourselves. Part of the effect that the Fall of Adam had on Man was that all love for God was radically ruined. So it is impossible for people who are fallen and who love sin and self to suddenly begin to love God. So our love for God is not simply a choice or an act of our will that we make like what color socks we put on. So the Bible teaches that our love for God is a gracious gift from God. So we who are saved love God only because God first loved us. And part of loving us was for God to give us the single greatest gift that anyone could ever have- and that is a love for God. And the Bible says that God did this first.

Now if you want to learn more about the effect that the Fall of Adam had on Man- I invite you to get a copy of a book written many years ago by a man named AW Pink- who wrote a book entitled- "Our Accountability to God". And in that book- you will find a great study on the Fall and the powerful impact that the Fall of Adam had upon all of those who were born after him.

But suffice it to say that we as fallen human beings have a great

need for God to give us those things that we do not possess in ourselves- and part of what we do not possess in ourselves is any love or devotion for God. We must remember- and you need to get this down inside you very deeply, beloved- our love for God is a gift from God. So we have a great need to pray and seek after God that He would be merciful to us and grant to us more love for Himself.

We also need to know that our love for God is the result of God loving us first. We do not love God first and then He loves us- that is not the way this works. Spiritually dead, and sinful, and separated, and fallen people have no ability or desire to love a holy and a righteous God. So the Bible teaches that God has to set His love upon us first and then we respond to His love by loving Him. Read with me what John said about this in **1John 4:19**:

We love, because He first loved us.

You see, brothers and sisters, everything that God has revealed about Himself that is true is found in either His Creation or in Scripture. Basic or general Revelation about God can be found all throughout God's Creation. For example- we can look at a sunset or a mountain or a waterfall or a baby's eyes and we can learn much about God's Sovereignty; His Omnipotence; His Power and His Glory.

So general information about God can be found by studying God's Creation. But when we want to learn *specific* things about God; when we desire to learn about God's Character and Nature; when we want to learn about God's Will and how a lost sinner is saved and when we want to learn about God's love and how to develop our love for God- we must turn to the pages of inspired Scripture- because it is in Scripture and Scripture alone that God chose to reveal specific details about Himself to Man.

So when we don't know Scripture- when we do not spend the time that we need to in reading and studying the Holy Bible- we don't really know God- because we do not know what God has said about Himself and when we don't know God- our love for God can only be a vague- and distant love at best.

So part of our worship of God is taking the time- and *making* the time- to push other insignificant things out of the way and spend time learning about God by reading and studying Scripture. And when we

do this- we get a correct and an accurate picture of Who God is and what God does and what God loves and what God hates and how God operates and what God expects and demands from those who belong to Him.

But when we allow other things to rob us of reading and studying Scripture- our view of God is skewed; it is warped; it is filled with ideas and concepts and attributes that are not true or which are contradictory and which conflict with what God has said about Himself in Scripture.

When we allow the lost pagan unsaved world to define who God is for us; when we allow shallow or false teachers to formulate our view of God- we do not get a true and full portrait of the one true living God and thus our understanding of God is built around incomplete and contradictory concepts and when that is true- our knowledge of God is goofy and thus our love and devotion and worship of God is not what it could be and not what it should be.

During his ministry- the Apostle Paul went to the city of Ephesus to preach the Gospel to those whom God had chosen in that city. While he was there- Paul noticed that the people of Ephesus had built a statue of the goddess Diana and under that statue – they had placed this inscription:

To the Unknown God

Now Ephesus was a major city of both commerce and learning in that day. The people of Ephesus were above average in intelligence and wealth. Commerce thrived in that city and philosophy and religion were everywhere. But with all their money and with all their possessions and with all their learning- they didn't know God and referred to Him as the unknown God.

And I fear beloved that God is becoming more and more unknown to us today. The more we refuse to spend time with God; the more that we refuse to study and learn His Word; the more that we refuse to bow our knees to the authority of Absolute Truth; the more we believe the easy gospel of loose living and hard sin; the more we buy into the notion that gain is godliness or that financial wealth is a sign of God's Favor; the more we believe that we are free to do what is right in our own eyes as long as we tip the Lord some recognition periodically; the more we live lives of self- indulgence and self-fulfillment instead of self- denial-

the more we rob God of the Glory that is due only to Him. And the more we do these things- the more we will become just like the people of Ephesus and we will begin to worship a “god” that we do not know and do not understand and do not love.

Listen you cannot worship or love a god that you do not know; and you certainly will not obey a god that you do not know. So whether this suits us or not- it is true- our love for God is a gift from God and the ability that we have for our love for God to grow is inescapably connected to how much time we spend with Him.

Now the Bible is very precise in how it defines God. Scripture uses very interesting and descriptive terminology to give us a clear and deep understanding of both the Character and Nature of Almighty God. And sadly, some people pick and choose which Attributes about God that they like while excluding other Attributes they find to be offensive. But in reality- beloved- that is not loving God. When we don't like certain Attributes that God Himself revealed about Himself in Scripture- we are not loving the God of the Bible- we are only, at best, loving a god that we have manufactured in our own minds. And that is a classic case of being ashamed of God. True Love- real love- dictates that we love God in all that God revealed about Himself in Scripture- not just the parts that bring us personal satisfaction.

Brothers and sisters- for us to deny or to reject any Attribute about God that God Himself revealed about Himself is for us to redefine God after an image and likeness that the Bible does not teach. And to do that is to rob God of the Wonder and the Worship and the Devotion and the Loyalty and the Love that He is rightly entitled to receive from us- and that- my friends is the classic definition of idolatry- and we must never be guilty of doing that.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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