

**Ecclesiastes 3: 8; “A Time for Love and Hate”, Sermon # 17 in the series –  
“Remember Your Creator”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall, on  
September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

In many of the sermons that I have taken you through in this section, I have told you that the first phrase in a verse is a further explanation of the second. In this last verse of this section it is harder to see that this is true. Are love and war really complimenting each other in this verse? Do hate and peace really go together here? Well, this afternoon I want to attempt to show you that spiritually they do. Even though we might all love the state of physical earthly peace and hate war between nations, we as Christians need to understand that there is a righteous love and righteous hatred; a righteous war and a righteous peace. There is also an unrighteous love and unrighteousness hatred; unrighteous war and unrighteous peace. So let's think first tonight about each of these subjects in relation to God Himself first, and then we will think about these subjects in relation to our fellow human beings secondly.

**1<sup>st</sup> – In relation to God Himself.**

A time to love God and a time to hate Him; a time to be at war with Him, and a time to be at peace with Him. It does not sound right to our ears as I say this, but I believe that I can show it to be true from the Bible itself. Turn with me to Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 1 and we will see first of all what we as men and women are commanded by God to do in relation to Him. “Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.” “Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you – a land flowing with milk and honey.” “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!” “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”

You can see here that this first and greatest commandment was not given to all the nations of the world but to God's people the Jews. Not that all men do not have the obligation to love God with all of their heart, they do. This is because Adam, the first man, had this law written upon his heart when he was created. It was the law of nature to him as he was created in the beginning of the world. But sin entered the world through Adam's disobedience, and the nature of Adam was marred and he fell from His original righteousness. God, when He determined to take the Jewish people to be His own people in Old Covenant times, reiterated this law to them in this place. They were to love God with all of their heart, and soul, and strength. This commandment, as the sum of the whole of the Ten Commandments, was to be kept by them as the sum of all of God's commandments to them. And even though we are Gentiles, we should realize that this 1<sup>st</sup> and greatest commandment is God's expectation of us as well. It was, and it is God's expectation of all men. It is to be kept always and forever. It was given to God's ancient people the Jews first, as the nation which God set His love upon, and determined that His Son would be born a Jew and under the Law. And then it is reiterated from the lips of our Lord in the New Testament as the first and greatest commandment, to all men. God's commandments are given to all men to observe in both Dispensations, in both Old and New, but in neither dispensation has any man been able to observe God's law perfectly, save One; our Lord Jesus Christ. Still, it is the love commanded of all men and the time for it to be observed is at all times, not just sometimes.

But we should also understand, as we study this verse, that there is a problem with man which shows that each of us believes that there is a time to hate God. Turn with me over to Romans chapter 8. Here in Chapter 8 the Apostle Paul is setting forth the beauty and power of the Holy Spirit's ministry to help him on to pleasing God. He shows us the difference between living a life in

the flesh, and living a life according to the Spirit. Verse 5 says, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Why? "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." The Apostle is enunciating these two great principles of living; to live by the flesh and to live by the Spirit. To live according to the flesh; that is to live for what pleases me, myself, and I, as the ruling principle of my life is "enmity" against God. Webster's Dictionary says that the word, is taken from the Old English word, "enemytee". It means "the quality of being an enemy; hostile or unfriendly disposition." "It suggests positive hatred which may be open or concealed." John Brown in his Dictionary of the Bible says that enmity is a "very bitter, deep rooted, irreconcilable hatred and variance." He says, "The carnal mind, or minding of fleshly and sinful things is enmity against God; is opposite to His nature and will in the highest degree; and though it may be removed, cannot be reconciled to Him, nor He to it."

So we see that the time of men to hate God is their time in which they live according to the flesh; their time where they refuse to worship and serve God; the time when they refuse to repent of their sins, and do not believe that they need the grace of Christ to change their heart, their thinking, and the whole direction of their life. Man in his natural state, in the state where his mind is fleshly and carnal, hates God, and he doesn't see that this should change. We should hasten to say that many moral men of the world hate God, even though they do keep many of His commandments outwardly. They hate Him for having the power to judge them, and for the power to exercise authority over them. They want to evaluate themselves and to conclude that they are justified for trying hard to do what is right; for keeping God's commandments in the way that they think they ought to be kept; that is, by their own strength and wisdom. God wants something more. He wants their heart, and for them to give Him their heart, and do all their works for His glory. Since they do not want to do this, they are just as much in the flesh; just as much at enmity with God as the carnal and sensual unbeliever, who they despise.

This enmity is the time to hate for every man; the time before his or her conversion to Christ. If there is no conversion, the hatred continues. The sinner's time to love sin and to hate God would be forever, were it not that God Himself intervened. Let us understand that there is a time for God to hate. It is this same time; the time of the sinner's rejection of His Son. It is the time of the sinner's loving His sin. It is mentioned in Psalm 5, verse 4 and following. "For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with You." "The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity." "You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man." What changes all of this hatred between God and men. What is that ends all this the war? What is it that establishes the time of peace for sinful men? Well turn over with me to Ephesians 2, verse 13. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both (that is, Jews and Gentiles) to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity."

This is where the hatred turns to love, for all of God's Elect people. And surely, it is in accordance with His Electing purposes that God loves His Elect people. But they are all children of wrath, even as the rest, before their conversion it says in Ephesians 2: 3. But God's love was always there for His Elect, even so, and even then. Turn over to Jeremiah 31: 3. "The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: 'Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.'" "Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel!" "You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, and shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice." This is the picture of the rejoicing of those who believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. There was a time for God to show His love to them. There was a time for us to show our

love to God, for espousing us to be His bride, a part of the bride of Christ. There was a time before time in Eternity where God loved His Elect. And there was a time within time to love the whole world; and for the whole world to know that, in the sending of His Son. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3: 16) It is believing in this love of God, that peace is established between God and men.

Turn to Isaiah 57: 19 with me. Speaking of what He will do in the conversion of any sinner to Himself, God says, "I create the fruit of lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near, says the Lord, and I will heal him." "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest whose waters cast up mire and dirt." "There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked." So here we find the time of love and hate, the time of war and peace between ourselves and God. If we would be saved from our sins and have peace with God we must believe in His love through Jesus Christ. 1 John 4: 16 says, "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us."

**Now 2<sup>nd</sup> – Let us look at these subjects in relation to other men.**

Having now seen that all righteous love and hate are defined by God and are demonstrated perfectly by God, let us now proceed on to see what is the time for righteous loving and hating of other people. I think that we must say for a certainty that a true Christian must love what God loves and hate what He hates. The Lord Jesus did this perfectly. But we do not. We are warned of it over in James chapter 4, verse 1 – "Where do wars and fights come from among you?" "Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?" "You lust and do not have." "You murder and covet and cannot obtain." "You fight and war." "Yet you do not have because you do not ask." You can see here that even those who are Christians can fall into this kind of behavior if they do watch their own hearts. The murder that is being talked about is being angry with your brother. The warring that is being talked about is seeing other people around you as your enemy, whom you are supposed to be loving as yourself. The only way that these things stop, is when the Christian looks to God for the grace to become a peacemaker through our Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to Matthew 5: 9 – "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." It is only the person who has Christ's grace who can truly be a peacemaker; who can truly love those who are at war with him personally.

I hope that you can see that before conversion to Christ there is much unrighteous love and hate, war, and peace which goes on in our hearts. But think now about how it was with our Lord Jesus Christ as He is described in prophetic language in Hebrews chapter 1, verses 8 and 9. "But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom." "You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." Now I want you to notice the connection which is so plainly made here between righteousness and gladness. The text plainly says that the Lord Jesus had more gladness than any man; more than all his companions, because He loved righteousness. He saw the truth and beauty of being righteous and doing righteously, and He pursued it with all of His heart. He loved God with all of His heart, and He hated wickedness with all of His heart and because He knew the time to love and the time to hate. The Lord the Spirit made Him glad; He caused His heart to rejoice, that His cause would triumph, even though He had to go to the cross and die to see it established. His time to love was the wicked man's time to hate.

Turn with me over to John 15: 16. "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask in My name, He may give you." "These things I command you, that you love one another." "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you." The time for the Christian to love and to show that love is when the world hates. Otherwise they will never know the truth which will set them free. This is how we grow into Christ-likeness. Verse 23 – "He who hates Me hates My Father also." "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no

sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father.” “But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’” You and I must understand that unbelievers in their hate, hate Christ and true righteousness, without a cause; without having a legitimate reason for their hatred. This means that they will hate you and I without a cause as well. This should not stop us from showing them that there is a time to love; even the very time that they hate us.

The Lord Jesus also knew when to hate, and how to hate, perfectly. And He communicates to His people by His Word and Spirit when that time to hate is. Turn with me over to Psalm 139. Here in this marvelous Psalm, we find many words expressed by David which communicate the blessedness of God’s knowing all about what was happening to him. He was persecuted and his life would be hounded and sought for by wicked men. Even so, he knew that God would help him and bless him, and see him through this trial. However in verse 19 he shows us the time to hate. “Oh that You would slay the wicked, O God!” “Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.” “For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain.” “Do I not hate them, O Lord, who hate You?” “And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?” “I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them as My enemies.” You see here that this is not a prayer for personal revenge. It was a prayer that God’s enemies, men who take His name in vain; men who are bloodthirsty, men who don’t have any intention of repenting of their sins, would be slain. His hatred of them is because they are dishonoring God, not because he has sinful anger against any of them or desires their death personally for wrong reasons.

This is a perfect hatred, and David asks God to verify it by searching his heart and knowing him, trying him and seeing if there is any wicked way in him, and leading him in the everlasting way. This is what you and I need to do as well. Ask God to search our hearts and ferret out all of the wrong, God-dishonoring attitudes which we might be harboring; and then to lead us in the right way. There is a time to hate. It is at that very time when men would hate God. And even there, we have seen, is a time to love. Perfect love and hate co-existing in the Christian’s breast at the same time. And at the right time and in the right way these are manifested to others. Jesus takes it to the limit when He says in Matthew 5: 43, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’” “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” Let us each one remember, that God would have us to make progress in knowing that there is time for love. We are to be perfect even as He is perfect.