



## **FBC Dickson**

UNFAILING LOVE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES • LIVE LOVE: TRUTH IN ACTION • 1 JOHN 3:10-18 •  
7/19/2020

### **MAIN POINT**

The essence of true love is a love for the truth of God that leads to right actions and deeds.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Crises have a way of displaying both the loving nature of people and also exposing the ugly selfishness contained in every human heart. For many during a time of crisis, love is on display. They are checking on their neighbors and helping them. Others during a time of crisis are selfish. They think only of themselves and buy up and hoard supplies everyone needs causing many to have to go without. Stress exposes our hearts.

**How do you respond to stress or crisis?**

**What or who do you turn to during those times to ease that stress?**

### **UNDERSTANDING**

Use this section to read the Bible together and talk about it.

The answer to dealing with any kind of stress in our lives is love. Love is a central theme in 1 John as we have already seen and will see even more. A variation of the Greek word for love is used well over forty times in the letter of 1 John alone. In today's lesson we will focus on three specific aspects of love mentioned in this passage in 1 John.

1. Love's Message Has Been Declared From the Beginning.

## **Read 1 John 3:10-11**

**What is the message that the church had heard from the beginning?**

**Why does God have to "command" love?**

We see from verse 10 that love for each other is a sign to the world that we are of God. We show that we are children of God by faithfully loving each other. We are co-heirs with Christ. Our love for each other should run deep. Love is the message John has been proclaiming to the church since its beginning. The love of God displayed in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, is the message they had heard from John. It's the message God used to draw them to repentance.

John's message of love is not unique to John. It's all over Scripture.

## **Read Romans 12:10, Galatians 5:13, and 1 Peter 1:22**

The gospel of the Lord Jesus takes a people who at one point were natural enemies and it unites them in love. It is a love that transcends all barriers the world would put between us. That's the message the Apostles have been declaring since the beginning of the church, and we continue in that message today.

**When was a time in your life when the supernatural love of God was on display?**

**How can we promote this kind of love in our church/groups?**

### 2. Love's Absence is Hatred Leading to Death

## **Read 1 John 3:12-15**

**According to v.12, why did Cain murder Abel?**

**How does that explain the reality of the world's hatred for the things and people of God?**

John begins this passage by providing an example of hatred towards your brethren that all would know of, Cain. Cain was an ultimate example of hatred because he murdered his brother. What makes the example of Cain key to understanding this passage of 1 John is this, Cain presented himself outwardly as a God-worshipper. Even though he presented himself as a worshipper, even bringing and offering to God, he was evil at heart.

The Greek word translated as "murderer" in verse 12 is a particularly gruesome word. It means to slay, slaughter, or butcher or to be put to death by violence. Cain hated his brother because

Abel was righteous. Cain was evil. That's why his offering wasn't accepted and Abel's was. If Cain hated Abel because he was righteous, then the world will hate those who follow Jesus for the same reason.

The system of the world is at odds with the imputed righteousness given to those who have trusted Christ for salvation. Believer, the very gift God has given you to justify you and make you right before Him is the very thing the world hates about you. Through faith you have been made right with God, but you have been put at odds with the world. But we are not to return this hate with more hate. No, we put the love of God on full display. I hope we see how seriously God takes love for each other. To harbor hatred in your heart for brothers and sisters in Christ, to John, was equated to murder. May we desire to be conformed to the image of Jesus more and more every day. May we live truth as love in action.

**Read Matthew 5:21-22**

**How does Jesus define murder?**

**How can we encourage each other as we deal with hatred from the world?**

3. Love's Evidence is Sacrificial Living

**Read 1 John 3:16-18**

**According to John, what is the evidence that God's love is in us?**

**What does sacrificial living look like?**

According to John, there is a very definitive test that reveals whether someone has come to truly know love. It is the test of sacrifice and suffering. Christian love is distinguishable in the world because it is self-sacrificing. The world measures status by what you acquire. The kingdom of God measures status by what you are willing to give away.

Jesus, of course, is the greatest demonstration of sacrificial love. We might be offended when we hear Jesus calling for us to lay our own lives down if he hadn't been willing to do the same. But he did. He doesn't just call for us to suffer. He suffers with us. He doesn't just call for us to deny ourselves. He denied himself first.

Being willing to die, is what is called for here in these verses, but verse 17 shows how this can play out more practically. A person who loves the way Jesus did would never see his brother or sister in need and turn a blind eye to them. James says the same thing in his letter.

## **Read James 2:15-17**

So there are two types of sacrifice required of those who truly love Jesus and follow his example: the sacrifice of dying and the sacrifice of giving. It's a noble thing to be willing to die in service of the gospel. But it is equally honorable to give sacrificially of yourself for the good of others. What good is it to tell someone you love them enough to die for them, but turn a blind eye to their needs and suffering. If you know of a brother who has no heat in the winter because he can't pay his electric bill, and you have the means to help him but don't, then John would say that the love of Jesus is not truly in you no matter what you may say. If a widow in your church is suffering from loneliness and you are not willing to sacrifice time to fellowship with them, then John would likewise say that the love of Jesus is not evident in your life.

**What hinders us from this type of sacrificial living and giving?**

**What ways can we practically make evident the sacrificial love we have for each other?**

True love is truth in action. Live what you believe. In uncertain times, it isn't enough to just say what you believe. You must demonstrate it. You must live a radically sacrificial life. Living the gospel means being willing to suffer and die, but it also means having open hands and hearts for those around you.

## **APPLICATION**

**Is there any hatred or bitterness in my heart I need to repent of in order to love like Jesus has called us to?**

**Is there anything I am holding on to that I need to lay down to live more sacrificially for the sake of the gospel?**

## **PRAYER**

## **COMMENTARY**

Write or insert any Bible study notes or commentary from your preferred sources.

**1 John 3:10-11**

We should love the Lord Jesus, value his love, and therefore love all our brethren in Christ. This love is the special fruit of our faith, and a certain sign of our being born again. (taken from Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary)

This love is to be the mark of Christ's disciples. John says "what I am telling you is not new. You have heard this from the beginning. The Lord taught it to us, and all the apostles have taught this. We have heard from the beginning that we should love one another". Love of other believers is something that is woefully lacking today in many places. (Taken from J. Vernon McGee's Thru the Bible Commentary, Vol. 5)

### **1 John 3:12-15**

"Do not be like Cain", this alludes to Genesis 4:1-16 which recounts Cain's murder of Abel because Abel's offering was accepted by the Lord while Cain's was not. (It may be inferred from Genesis 4:7 that the Lord did not accept Cain's offering because Cain was an evildoer). (Taken from Zondervan NIV Study Bible)

Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." He acted under the influence of envy. He was dissatisfied that his own offering was not accepted, and that his brother's was. The apostle seems desirous to guard those to whom he wrote against the indulgence of any feelings that were the opposite of love; from anything like envy toward more highly favored brethren, by showing to what this would lead if fairly acted out, as in the case of Cain. A large part of the crimes of the earth have been caused, as in the murder of Abel, by the want of brotherly love. Nothing but love would be necessary to put an end to the crimes, and consequently to a large part of the misery, of the world. (Taken from Barnes Notes on the Bible)

Do not be surprised or caught off guard when people of this world, people like Cain, hate you. It is their nature. However, don't you be like Cain. Don't descend to their level. Resist that primal urge to return hate with hate, murder for murder. The gospel has changed you, and love is at the heart of the gospel message. Where the gospel has taken root, love will be the natural fruit. (Taken from Christ Centered Exposition Commentary of 1 John)

### **1 John 3:16-18**

Thus, the Saviour laid down his life for the good of mankind; thus the apostles exposed their lives to constant peril in extending the principles of religion; and thus the martyrs surrendered their lives in the cause of the church and of truth. In like manner, we ought to be ready to hazard our lives, and even to lay them down, if in that way we may promote the cause of truth, and the salvation of sinners, or serve our Christian brethren. In what way this injunction was understood

by the primitive Christians, may be perceived from what the world is reported to have said of them, "Behold, how they love one another; they are ready to die for one another."

Perhaps the following would embrace the principal instances of the duty here enjoined by the apostle:

- (1) We ought to have such love for the church that we should be willing to die for it, as patriot is willing to die for his country.
- (2) we ought to have such love for Christians as to be willing to jeopard our lives to aid them - as in case of a pestilence or plague, or when they are in danger by fire, or flood, or foes.
- (3) we ought to have such love for the truth as to be willing to sacrifice our lives rather than deny it.
- (4) we ought to have such love for the cause of our Master as to be willing to cross oceans, and snows, and sands; to visit distant and barbarous regions, though at imminent risk of our lives, and though with the prospect that we shall never see our country again.
- (5) we ought to have such love for the church that we shall engage heartily and constantly in services of labor and self-sacrifice on its account, until, our work being done, exhausted nature shall sink to rest in the grave. In one word, we should regard ourselves as devoted to the service of the Redeemer, living or dying to be found engaged in his cause. If a case should actually occur where the question would arise whether a man would abandon his Christian brother or die, he ought not to hesitate; in all cases he should regard his life as consecrated to the cause of Sion and its friends. Once, in the times of primitive piety, there was much of this spirit in the world; how little, it is to be feared, does it prevail now! (Taken from Barnes Notes on the Bible)