

Study Guide



“Authentic Christians Love in Deed and Truth”

1 John 3:11-18

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

John uses this passage to dive deeper into the thoughts he introduced earlier in 1 John 2:7-11. Our love for one another should be proof of our salvation and of God’s work in our life. He first contrasts it with the Cain, who is exemplary of the worlds values (vv. 12-15), then compares it to Christ’s example of sacrifice (v. 16). At the very end he gives his audience a final practical application and an encouragement to love one another; we should be sacrificial in our material giving to one another (vv. 17-18).

For more in depth study check out the following pages...

Walk Prayer & Missions

October 30th— Trunk or Treat
December 18-28—South Sudan
For further information visit
norrisferrychurch.org

Calendar

October 30th—Trunk or Treat
November 13th— Orphan Sunday
November 13th— Member’s Meeting

Reminder

During our 10:30am service: Kids 1st-3rd will worship with their parents at the beginning of service and will then be dismissed. We will also have another service available in the Annex with live music and video of the sermon.

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Jesus?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[My Victory](#)":

You came for criminals and every pharisee
You came for hypocrites, even one like me
You carried sin and shame the guilt of every man
The weight of all I've done nailed into Your hands

Oh, Your love bled for me
Oh, Your blood in crimson streams
Oh, Your death is hell's defeat
A cross meant to kill is my victory

Oh, Your amazing grace, I've seen and tasted it
It's running through my veins
I can't escape its grip in You my soul is safe
You uncover everything

Oh, Your love bled for me
Oh, Your blood in crimson streams
Oh, Your death is hell's defeat
A cross meant to kill is my victory

Behold the Lamb of God
Who takes away our sin, who takes away our sin
The holy Lamb of God
Makes us alive again
Makes us alive again

Behold the Lamb of God
Who takes away our sin, who takes away our sin
The holy Lamb of God
Makes us alive again
Makes us alive again

Oh, Your love bled for me
Oh, Your blood in crimson streams
Oh, Your death is hell's defeat
A cross meant to kill is my victory

Love One Another- Ideological Concept (3:11-15)

1 John 3:10 ends with the phrase “..does not love his brother,” which sets the stage for this entire passage, beginning in verse 11 (Kruse, 2000). John first restates that this is not an old message, “This is the message you heard from the beginning...,” echoing his previous statements that this has been, is, and always will be central to the Gospel. It is not some new knowledge he has to impart to his audience. He then tells believers, “we should love one another.” He anticipates the question of “What does love look like?” and proceeds to answer it in the following verses.

He first addresses it as a contrast to Cain, and by extension, the world we live in. We know the story of Cain (Genesis 4) and John’s audience would have as well; his sacrifice was not accepted by God while his brother’s was and because of this Cain murdered (the word in this passage is actually slaughtered (Stott, 2009)) his brother. John goes one step farther and supposes that this killing was brought out of jealousy. “...Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous (v. 12).” This assumption is important because if we are to understand Cain as a prototype of the world, then just as Jesus warned us and John tells us now in verse 13, we can expect the world to be jealous of us. This comes from the idea that we are righteous (v. 3:7b) and because of this righteousness the world will not only be jealous of us, but will hate us for it, just as Cain hated his brother.

John continues the thought with a positive to contrast to Cain. “We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers...(v.14a).” The next two verses can be read as direct cause and effect relationships; there is no gray area here, only the black of sin/death and the white of salvation/life. If “...we have passed from death to life...” then “we love our brothers.” If “anyone does not love” then he “remains in death.” If anyone “hates his brother” then “he is a murderer” and “no murderer has eternal life.” John, much like Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, does not leave a lot of room for interpretation or human failures; hatred for a brother is equated to murdering that brother and is grounds for investigation as to the truth of our walk with Christ.

Love One Another- Practical Concept (3:16-17)

John spent the previous verses explaining the ideological concept of love and now he turns to the practical application of love. He draws a line straight back to Christ as the perfect example of love, “...Jesus Christ laid down his life for us (v. 16).” He does not leave it at this though, expecting affirmation from his audience, he calls them to live in the same way, “...and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers (v.16b).” This is a direct echo of Jesus’ words to his disciples in John 15:13, appropriate considering our author was there when these words were first spoken, and the meaning is the same; if we truly call ourselves believers we should love our brothers the way that Christ loved us, sacrificially (Kruse, 2000).

An important distinction is made in these verses; John does not say we should love everyone or the world, though we are called to do so. John makes a clear mention of “our brothers,” including himself in this address. This is important because it clarifies an important component of the test John has been elaborating on. While we are called to love the world, we should give special care to loving and caring for our fellow believers. We should not neglect gathering as a body, nor should we be content with only surface level relationships with one another. Authentic believers desire to be with fellow believers and should remain in true fellowship with one another, encouraging and spurring one another on in our faith (Stott, 2009).

This is one of the key things that John mentioned previously as a mark against the false teachers, they did not remain in the fellowship, but instead left the gathering and struck out on their own, which John uses as evidence of them never truly belonging to Christ in the first place.

As much as John calls us to be sacrificial of our lives, he is not content to leave it at that. In verse 17 he quickly turns from the (thankfully) rare occasion of requiring literal sacrifice to the more everyday material sacrifices. “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him how can the love of God be in him (v. 17)?” There is a deliberate transition from the plural and more general “brothers” to the singular and more literal “brother” (Stott, 2009). This moves us from thinking about our theoretical brothers who we can say we love to the more realistic brother who we interact with on a daily basis and we know has a need we can satisfy. Yet again, John does not mince words or give any wiggle room, if you see your brother in need and have no pity on him you may need to re-evaluate your standing with God.” However we are warned by Marshall in his commentary that “love for our brothers is the evidence, not the basis, for spiritual life (p. 191).” This passage is not a movement to works based salvation, but a call for true believers who claim fellowship with Christ to quit acting like the world in regards to their interactions with one another; we should be ready to do anything for our fellow believers and should not look like the world, full of jealousy and hatred, when we interact with them.

Conclusion and Encouragement (3:18)

In verse 18 John gives a final thought to close off this train of thought. “Dear children,” he begins, reverting back to his role of father and pastor rather than fellow believer, “let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.” The meaning of this is easy to understand; John wants us to not only say we love one another, but to show it with our actions. We should not just talk different when compared to the world, but should act different and look different. We should be willing to lay down our lives for our brothers, contrary to the hatred of our brothers manifested in the world and demonstrated in Cain. We should also be willing to endure the more mundane, and sometimes more difficult, task of sacrificing our well-being for our brothers. We should give of our possessions, our time, and ourselves until it hurts.

Marshall summarizes it best:

“The need of the world is not for heroic acts of martyrdom, but for heroic acts of material sacrifice. If I am a well off Christian, while others are poor, I am not acting as a true Christian (Marshall, pp. 195-196).”

Sermon Questions

What does it Say?

1. What is the Message that we have heard from the beginning?
2. How did Cain fail to act according to this message?
3. Why does John say that Cain acted as he did with respect to Abel?
4. How do we know that we've passed out of death and into life according to verse 14?
5. Which "big" sin is hate equated to in verse 15?
6. Who does John hold up as our model for loving our brother and why?
7. What sin of omission does John insinuate signifies a lack of love?

Sermon Questions

What Does it Mean?

1. To illustrate his claim in verse 11, John reminds us of the story of Cain and Abel from Genesis 4. The implication is that Cain did not love his brother and that this hate manifested itself in murder. However, John says that Cain slew Abel because Abel's deeds were righteous and Cain's were evil. John never directly mentions hate in the retelling of the Genesis 4 account. Did Cain kill Abel because he hated him?
2. What is the application of the Genesis 4 story for John's readers?
3. Death and life are the prevailing themes in the early portion of our text. Those who love show signs of abiding in life and those who hate abide in death. In Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus addresses murder and anger. In your own words, explain how anger or hate is connected to murder.
4. How is Christ's sacrifice the epitome of love and the antithesis of hate?
5. Is John implying that a refusal to help a brother in need could be a sign of hate?

1. Are there seeds of murder in your life right now? Sure, it sounds over the top, but this is John's point. Hate and anger toward our brothers and sisters is a big deal. Examine places in your life where these seeds need to be rooted out and cast into the purifying fires of the gospel. Share with the group as you are willing.
2. What are some ways that you can help a brother in need with what you've been given. Please list ways that you are currently helping a brother in need. Please list ways in which you are failing to help, but feel compelled to start.

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in 1 John to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you lead your groups! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

What does it say?

1. That we should love one another.
2. He killed his brother.
3. Cain killed Abel because Cain's deeds were evil and Abel's were righteous.
4. We know this because we love the brethren; the ones that do not abide in death.
5. John equates hate and murder.
6. He holds Christ up as our example because he laid down His life for us.
7. Failing to use material blessings to help a brother in need.

What does it mean?

1. Answers will vary. John certainly seems to ground Cain's murderous act in the contrast between the two brothers. It could be that Cain's internal evil led to murder. It could be jealousy that Abel was righteous and Cain was not. God accepted Abel's offering but he didn't accept Cain's. Regardless of what the "last straw" was for Cain, the act of murder is an act of hate.
2. The application is that, just as Cain hated Abel because he was righteous, believers should not be surprised when the world hates them on account of their righteousness.
3. Answers will vary, but the point of this text and the Matthew text is that murder is the result of anger and hate that have been allowed to grow. Our hateful impulses don't feel murderous, but they are the seeds that sprout into violence.
4. Christ's love for his brothers is on full display in the crucifixion. He willingly laid down his life for the benefit of his brothers. This is contrasted with Cain's taking of the life of his brother out of pride and anger.
5. He certainly is. Professed love that does not act is not love at all.