

11.22.20 ~ 1John 3:10-18, Loving God, Loving Others...

Last week, while we were studying 1John3:4-11, I mentioned the *Greatest Commandment* [Foremost, Supreme, Number One Commandment] which is all about Love [*agape = the sacrificial, uncompromising, unmerited, and intentional act of serving God and anyone who is in need*].

The foundation for this commandment is found in **Deuteronomy 6:5**, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might," and

Leviticus 19:18, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord."

We find those commands in the New Testament, coupled as one command: Please turn to the references in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Matthew 22:37-40, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Mark 12:30-31, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Luke 10:25-29, "And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?' And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' And He said to him, 'You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.' **29**, But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"

Jesus then uses a parable to illustrate the priority of His teaching about loving God, loving others. Please turn to **Luke 10:30-37...** Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands? And he said, 'The one who showed mercy toward him.' Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

The command from **Leviticus 19:18**, "*you shall love your neighbor as yourself*," that is found in **Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27**, is also repeated in **Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14**; and **James 2:8** [Royal Law, Golden Rule], reiterating that God expects His children to demonstrate *agape love* [God's love] toward others.

Read 1John 3:10-12... John reminds us of how Cain murdered (**1John 3:12**) Abel. Cain was so angry that Abel's offering was accepted by God, and his own was not, that he murdered his own brother (SEE **Genesis 4:1-8**).

God is righteous and merciful, and though it is not recorded in Genesis, both Cain and Abel had to know what was required of them as an offering unto the Lord. How do we know that (SEE **Hebrews 11:4**), "By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks."

Abel obeyed the Lord and offered a firstborn lamb from his flock. Cain did what he felt like doing, he brought some of his produce; but this was evidently not in accordance with what God had directed him to do.

Not only did Cain disobey God by what he brought as an offering; but I believe Cain got angry with God and jealous of his own brother all at the same time. Cain couldn't take his anger out on God, but he could take it out on his brother, and so he did.

By his actions, Cain showed himself to be a child of the devil. As I said last week, in the eyes of God there are really only two groups of people on earth: God's children and the Devil's children. Those who are unwilling to do what God requires are showing hatred, not love, toward God; whereas, God's children, all those who have received eternal life, will not act like Cain who expressed hatred; but instead they will show love because God is Love (see **1John 4:7-10**).

Read 1John 3:13-16... Jesus Christ is God's sovereign example of what God's love is, i.e., to love sacrificially, showing compassion toward others.

God's love is demonstrated completely in Jesus Christ, who gave up His own life so that we might have life from God (**John 10:10**), "I came that they [those who believe in Christ] may have life, and have *it* abundantly," (**John 15:13**), "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends," (**Philippians 2:5-8**), "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

We are called to demonstrate love for God. What does that look like? How do we do that? By demonstrating God's love toward others.

Read 1John 3:17-18... Love is not a feeling, it is behavior that reflects the gracious and unmerited love we have received from God. When a Christian

brother or sister is in need, we are to reach out and help as God has prospered us to be able to do so.

God doesn't want us to express our love toward Him through sacrifices on the alter, as was required all through the Old Testament under the Law. God's requirement for New Testament Christians, living under Grace, is very practical and easily exhibited through day to day situations and circumstances.

1Timothy 6:17-19, "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed."

James 2:14-17, "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself."

If a person is unwilling to reach out and help those in need, it is questionable as to whether or not that person really belongs to God's family. Anyone who lives in a manner that does not demonstrate a loving concern and willingness to help those in need, is either being disobedient, or they are not a child of God.

According to the Bible's eschatology in reference to future events, at the end of the Seven Year Tribulation Period (which follows the Rapture of the true Church, i.e., all born-again Believers and Followers of Jesus Christ. **Matthew 25:31-33**), "when the Son of Man comes in His glory... ..He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep (believers) from the goats (unbelievers); and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

See **Matthew 25:34-40**... The believers (sheep) on His right are those who lived through the most turbulent time in eternity, a time when God's wrath is poured out upon those who take the mark of the beast, those who reject the Word of God, Jesus Christ; in fact, **Revelation 8, 9, 16** is a narrative of the catastrophic destruction of the earth's salt water and fresh water turning to blood, the trees and vegetation will burn up, and the planets and stars will fall from the sky.

The faith of true believers during this time is made evident by their actions toward Christ, symbolized by their care for those who belong to God. In **Matthew 25:37**, the believers ask, "when did we do these things, when did we provide food, drink, clothing, care and comfort to You?"

All the writings of the Prophets and the Apostles, both Old and New Testament, is summed up in the Greatest Commandment: Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and Love your neighbor as yourself.

Believers living during the last 3.5 years of the Tribulation will be in great need of food, drink, shelter, clothing, hospitality, and encouragement, because the Anti-christ, the False Prophet, and all those who take the mark of the beast (666) will be hunting them down.

See **Matthew 25:41-46...** Those on His left (goats=unbelievers) didn't show care or compassion toward God's children; and so they will be cast into the eternal fire, where there will be no care or compassion shown to them for all of eternity.

God's Love (Hebrew, *ahab*; Greek, *agape*) will be eternally experienced by those who believe in His Son, but those who rejected His Son will exist apart from the love of God for all of eternity.

The first time the word for God's love is used in the Scriptures is in reference to Abraham's love for the long awaited son that God promised and finally gave him (**Genesis 22:2**), God tells Abraham "take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love [Hebrew, *ahab*], and offer him as a burnt offering." In **Genesis 22:12-13**, it is clear that God never intended for Abraham to harm his son, for God provided a ram to be sacrificed in his place; this was an illustration of the future sacrifice of God's One & Only Son.

In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the first use of the word love [*agape*] is by God, speaking from heaven about Jesus Christ saying (**Matthew 3:17; 17:5**), "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

In John's Gospel the first use of the word love is in **John 3:16**, "For God so loved the world that He gave His *one and only Son* [*unique, one of a kind*], that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

God the Father's love for His One & Only Son, Jesus, is the standard by which all love is evaluated, given, and received; and we can only realize, be redeemed by, and become recipients of God's love through the once for all sacrifice of God's Son; everyone who calls upon Him for the forgiveness of sins is eternally saved, becoming a child of God the Father in Heaven.

Claiming to be a Christian and claiming to love your brothers and sisters in the Lord is not enough. The love we demonstrate must be more than words of concern or wishing someone well; our actions must be rooted in a desire to do that which pleases God, and what we do must align with that which is taught in God's Word .

1John 3:14, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death." **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." **18**, "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."

So, let's sum up what we have studied today: If you belong to God the Father through Christ the Son, you have God the Holy Spirit indwelling you, compelling you to express your love for God by demonstrating your love for others.

And all God's children said? Amen!

Pastor Mike >'(((><