

Series: The Confident, Loving Church – week 15

CDOBC – beginning on 2/14/10

Title: “Hated For Love”

1 John 3:11-15 ~ June 20, 2010 – FATHER’S DAY

OBJECTIVE: To encourage the believers in the local church to love one another.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Could you please announce a reminder about making payment if you have already reserved a Ticket. Also, reminder about Women of Faith and an Invitation to join us. Oct 1-2,2010... US Airways Arena... \$89/Ticket...ALL Payments and Ticket Purchases MUST be made by 7/15....so that is only 4 weeks away.
- Child Dedication – next Sunday – Father’s Day
- MUCC – Men Under Construction for Christ – Thursday nights

Opening Prayer

The true nature of hate and love

Hate is not inherently wrong or sinful. Scripture tells us that God hates sin (“There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him...” – Prov. 6:16). Likewise, we also should hate sin – especially our own sin (Ex. 18:21; Ps. 97:10). These passages don’t describe an evil hate, but a righteous hatred of evil that is based on and motivated by God’s holiness and our own call to holiness.

However, the hatred we will look at this morning is not a hatred of sin, but hatred toward others – especially those who are holy and identify themselves with Christ. This hatred is of the Devil.

In our passage today, the Apostle John will use the example of Cain to demonstrate the evils of hate. Hate toward others is one of the greatest evils because the end result of hatred is murder. We know this not only from watching the news and observing our own culture, but Jesus made this clear in the

Sermon on the Mount when He in essence equated hatred with murder (Matt. 5:21-22).

It is bad enough when someone murders another because they have committed some sort of evil against them or another person. However, Cain's murder was much worse because he murdered his brother because his brother was righteous (Gen. 4:1-16)! Abel was not an evil man who didn't deserve to live – but Cain murdered him because he was righteousness – and his own deeds were evil! It was Abel's love for God that motivated Cain to murder him!

Abel was hated and murdered for love...love for God and love for righteous living.

On the other hand, love is not only from God – but God is love (1 John 4:8), and we are commanded to love one another. There is no room for hate of others in the Christian life – and there is no room for hate within the church.

In our passage this morning, John's purpose is not to give a full exposition of hatred and love and all of their nuances, but to simply demonstrate how love and hate reveal our spiritual vitality...or lack of.

Turn to 1 John 3:11-15

Read passage

The command to love vs. 11

John begins this section by reminding his readers of the new commandment of Christ (John 13:34-35) to love one another as He has loved them. This ultimate form of love is the standard for all believers – not just believers who are really good at their faith!

Love is not the application of the "message" but the goal established "from the beginning." As Westcott (pp. 100-101) says, "*The whole aim of the*

gospel is the creation and strengthening of love.... The words ['love one another'] do not simply give the content of the message, but its aim, its purpose.” – Expositor’s Bible Commentary

Vs. 11 - “love” is the Greek word *agape* – the highest form of love that is willing to sacrifice for the other person – love which seeks to bless the other person. We see a vivid picture of this love in 1 Cor. 13.

So John begins on a positive note – reminding us of Jesus’ command to love one another.

The negative example of Cain vs. 12

Note the order here...Cain “belonged to the evil one” – and then he murdered. His sin of murder did not make him evil – he was evil before he murdered his brother in cold blood.

John also gives the reason why Cain murdered Abel – because of jealousy – he was jealous of Abel’s righteousness and good standing with God!

The verb John uses that is translated “murder” is a vivid term in the Greek – it means to slice open someone’s throat. It’s a word that is used often when describing what was done to an animal sacrifice. Many understand this term to have the idea of a ‘butcher’ or ‘slaughter’ – so the picture John paints of Abel’s murder is that Cain was extremely brutal in the act. When he murdered his brother, he did so intentionally, and with extreme brutality.

It’s not a big surprise here that John would say “Do not be like Cain...” Cain has always been viewed in a negative light – but John wants to drive home two points:

First, like Cain hated his brother for righteousness, the world hates believers in Christ.

Second, to hate like Cain violates Jesus’ command to love.

The Christian's standing in the world. vs. 13

“Do not be surprised” or “Marvel not...” (KJV) is a command in the Greek. Why is this a command? Why did John make this such a forceful statement?

I believe that he wanted his readers to understand the spiritual realities that they would encounter in the world. Living in the world can have the effect of numbing us to the spiritual battles that are taking place. This statement by John doesn't mean that every person in the world hates Christians...many of you may have friends and co-workers who don't believe in Christ and they are friendly and generous toward you – even loving toward you.

“...whenever the community of faith acts so as to expose the greed, the avarice, the hatred, and the wickedness of the world, it must expect rejection; and if it should go so far as to interfere with its evil practices, as Jesus did in the temple, it may expect suffering and brutal death.” Expositor's Bible Commentary

An active, holy church that is involved with the world – speaking truth in loving, gracious ways, will arouse the hatred of the world.

John is giving us a general statement of the world's system – a proverbial truth of the world's attitude toward those who follow Christ.

Why is this true?

Why is this a general truth that the world hates believers?

Because, as Scripture points out – Satan is the “Prince of this world” (John 12:31) and as the Prince / ruler of this world, he will oppose the things of God and try to destroy the things of God – most specifically...the people of God.

So...don't be naïve about the world...don't be surprised when Christianity is mocked and demeaned in the culture.

Illus. – Comedy Central Cable Channel – ridiculing Christianity

I think John uses the force of a command here – an imperative – so that we don’t lose confidence or trust in the Lord when we encounter hatred or persecution because of righteousness.

Another noteworthy observation in this verse...John uses the term “brothers”. We have seen that his favorite term has been “little children” – but now he uses a term that speaks more to their commonality in the faith. Even though he is their leader, teacher, and an Apostle of Christ Himself, he is an equal to them – a fellow bond slave to Jesus who has experienced firsthand the hate of the world as he has taught and ministered over the decades.

This term is one of the reasons why love is so important within the Christian community...we’re in this together – we are family, and we need to love each other as family members.

The beauty of Christian love vs. 14

Confidence or assurance (“We know...”) of our salvation is found in the love we have for other believers.

Vs. 14 – “remains in death” – indirectly points to the Biblical truth of original sin. We don’t ‘*become*’ sinful – we are born sinful. When John says that we “remain(s) in death” if we don’t love, it points out where each of us begins...in death. We don’t *move* to death when we don’t love – we *remain* in death...we’re already there – we begin there – and we’ll stay there unless we gain the love of Christ in our life.

The ugliness of hate vs. 15

John is making general statements of character – general statements about our heart’s attitude. Once again, when John says in verse 15 “Everyone who hates his brother...” – he uses the present tense for ‘hates’ – meaning that John is talking about the person who is a hateful person. Not just on certain occasions, but each day they entertain hateful thoughts and they even act on those thoughts in some way – the most extreme expression being murder.

This is not the person who has occasional struggles with hate. John is talking about the person who practices hate – has no internal struggle with hate – and believes their hatred is justified.

When you look at Genesis 4 and see Cain’s hatred of his brother – there is no remorse – no struggle. Even after God confronted him and warned him (4:7), he went on to murder his brother – and when God brought judgment upon him, he never repented – he simply complained about his punishment. No repentance...no confession...only regret over his getting caught and his punishment!

Remember, John is trying to assure his readers in their faith – not discourage them or cause them confusion.

So, why does this verse cause us so much confusion?

Well, he makes some statements that seem overwhelming in their condemnation.

“Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer...”

This first statement indicts everyone in this room. We all struggle with hate. Personally, I’m the type of person that always tries to look at the positive side of someone – I look at their potential and I assume the best in someone. However,

even in my *Mayberry* mindset, there are times that I struggle with hate. If each of us were honest – we would all admit that we struggle with hate. Does this mean we are all murderers?

Well, yes and no. Even though we don't commit the act of murder, Jesus taught that if we are angry or hateful toward another, that we are deserving of the same punishment as a murderer!

His second statement: "...and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him." is also overwhelming. At first thought, we might agree wholeheartedly with this. Until, we remember what he just said in the first statement – and that in the eyes of God, we deserve the same fate as murderers since we are all guilty of being angry and/or hateful toward another.

Then we need to ask if murder is an unforgivable sin. The answer is "NO" – there is only one unforgiveable sin...the sin of unbelief (Matthew 12:30-32). We know that the Apostle Paul was a murderer before he became a Christian – and we certainly know that he has eternal life in him.

So what does this statement mean?

"hates" in the beginning of the verse is in the present tense – meaning someone who hates all the time – repetitively. Jesus equated anger/hatred and murder – so John is saying that the person who continually hates is an unbeliever since they don't have the love of God in them at all. They are just like Cain – hating righteousness.

The false teachers who had left the church, were probably acting in hatred toward those in the church – and John is helping his readers understand why they were being treated in this way – because the false teachers did not have the life of God in them.

Application

Are acting according to the family's characteristic...love?

If you don't love, but you are hateful, then something is wrong. You are not acting according to the family's characteristic...you are not acting like your Heavenly Father. There is a possibility that you aren't in the family, but maybe you are a disobedient child of God who needs to repent of your sin of hatred, and allow God's truth and love to transform your life.

We need each other...so we must love one another

The world will hate us – because of righteousness – because of Christ.

We are all we have. We need to love one another because the world will not love us – it will not love a 'lone' Christian.

Close in prayer

(9:00 – transition to baby dedication)