

Series: The Confident, Loving Church – week 16
CDOBC – beginning on 2/14/10
Title: **“Actions of Love”**
1 John 3:16-18 ~ June 27, 2010

OBJECTIVE: To define and encourage regular expressions of love in the church.

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.
- MUCC – Men Under Construction for Christ – Thursday nights

Honor/Recognize Jeremiah Hanson and Tim Knodel

Opening Prayer

As we continue our study in 1 John, let me give a quick reminder of the overview and purpose of the book – the reason why John was writing.

First – there had been some false teachers in the churches throughout Asia Minor who had taught a Gnostic philosophy and belief – mainly, that their faith had little or nothing to do with how they lived. They also taught that they had a better – a newer – a more modern Gospel than the ‘older’ Gospel of Jesus and the Apostles.

Second – these false teachers, by their false teaching, had caused many Christians in these churches to misunderstand not only the foundational truths about their faith, but how they were to live as followers of Christ. They were professing with their mouth to believe in Jesus, but their lives contradicted their stated belief.

Third – Because of the first two realities (see above), John needed to affirm the original and only Gospel that Jesus taught and the Apostles preached. He also needed to clearly articulate how

Christians should live – what the result of their faith should be in daily life – especially regarding our love not only for all people, but especially for other Christians. He does this by what many Biblical commentators refer to as ‘tests of genuine faith’.

Last week, we covered 3:11-15 – where we read of Cain’s hatred for his brother Abel – and how Cain murdered his brother because his brother was a good person – a righteous person – and Cain was not – Cain was an evil person.

We talked about the importance of loving other Christians – especially in light of the world’s hatred of those who follow Christ (vs. 13).

Today – we are looking at 3:16-18

When we look at this section as a whole (vs. 11-18), we see a drastic contrast that John is making between the Devil and God – between those who act according to the Devil (Cain) and those who act according to God (Christ). We see:

1. Hate is from the Devil – Love is from God
2. The Devil’s hatred leads to murder – God’s love leads to self-sacrifice
3. The world’s trait is hatred – the church’s trait is love
4. Hate is evidence of spiritual death – love is evidence of spiritual life

Turn to 1 John 3:16-18

Love is defined by self-sacrifice. vs. 16

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

Greatest example of love: Jesus – He “...laid down His life for us.”
Once again – just as he did in vs. 14, John makes a bold and confident statement of his knowledge – “We know what love is”

– our knowledge is certain – it is true – anything that contradicts this is false and a lie.

What an amazing statement in our day...to know with absolute certainty what love is! One of the great failures in our modern society – our so-called ‘advanced’ society is our knowledge of love and our ability to love. One of the great mysteries in our culture is “*true love*”. Our culture claims to be so advanced, yet it is largely ignorant of one of our most basic needs.

I believe that being loved is one of our basic human needs – and the person who never experiences the love of God and godly love from others is never satisfied and always searching for “true love”.

There are so many today that are desperate to be loved – desperate to experience love – desperate to know love – that they will do anything if it promises love.

- ◆ Young girls or young men think love will be found if they say ‘yes’ to physical romance and sensuality – but they painfully discover that love is often missing in these things.
- ◆ Others think that they will be loved if they excel at sports, academics, or the arts – only to discover that people will love to watch them or be entertained by them, but their abilities do not satisfy the need to be loved.
- ◆ Still others who have been married for a number of years and believe that love has left their marriage – they are unsatisfied, frustrated, and unfulfilled in their marriage, look for love in the arms of someone other than their spouse, only to realize an increased level and scope of pain.

“Looking for love in all the wrong places

Looking for love in too many faces”

(Waylon Jennings(?) song)

So it goes with so many who are searching for love – to be loved...which is why John’s confidence is so dramatic to the modern, secular American mind.

On a human level, those who desperately search for love, hoping that their needs will be satisfied will be disappointed. True love is only found when a person gives up the pursuit of their own needs and desires, and seeks to meet the needs and desires of others.

The person who is so desperate for friends – and who strives to find a strong and faithful friendship – will only find true and lasting friends when they begin to be a friend to others – with no strings attached. The same is true of love – “...is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” 1 Cor. 13:5-

7

(Notice how true love is focused on the other person – all of these descriptions of love are actions and attitudes toward the other person.)

On a divine level – we see perfect love – the love of God in Christ Jesus. Jesus “...laid down his life for us.” This is the ultimate example of love – that God sacrificed Himself for us – period. No strings attached. He didn’t do this only if we promised to do something in return. He loved the world – all of humanity – and so He gave us what we needed most – He gave us what we couldn’t do for ourselves – the opportunity to have our sins paid for and forgiven. His love for you has given you the chance for a new life in Him – a new life that you don’t have to earn – a new life that you can’t earn – but a

new life that you can have by faith in what He has done for you on the cross.

One of the great paradoxes of love is we can never find it if we are trying to achieve it. Love is unachievable – it can only be received if someone is willing to give it to you – and in the process, sacrifice their desires or rights in the process. This reality is seen in the last half of the verse. John applies the truth about love and the sacrificial nature of love – when he says:

Application: “...we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” (& sisters in Christ)

Our first and greatest need is to know and experience the love of God – and we can do that in Christ – and His sacrifice “for us”.

Second – to experience love on a human level – do the same for your fellow believers.

This is easy to say – difficult to do.

We all have a “self-preservation” mode! But, by the power of God’s love in our life, we can say ‘no’ to our natural desire toward self-preservation and self-interest – and serve the needs of another.

Unspectacular but significant love vs. 17

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?

Loving someone day in – and day out – is not glamorous – it’s not spectacular. Everyday love is not flashy enough for the headlines. But this is not to say it’s not significant. Hollywood has created a fantasy of life and love. When we watch a movie, even the simple things seem so grand.

However, our real life - day to day routines rarely come close to the grand, climactic moments in the movies.

When we speak of love – most of us will never be in a position to give our life for another – to die so they might live. Even to the churches of the first century that John was writing to – he knew that most of his readers would not be forced into such a position either. So, he moves to a more practical – a daily application of love.

Remember, a few paragraphs earlier John had told his readers “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” 2:15

Now we can clearly see one of the practical reasons why it’s important not to love the world – because it will prevent us from loving others – especially those in need.

“...material possessions” is the Greek term *bion* – which is a form of the word *bios* (where we get our English word *biology*). So, it’s a term that refers to the things of this life – the “good things of life”. A more literal translation is – “*the good things of this world*”.

The contrast John is utilizing here is between Jesus giving up His life – giving up everything for us – for the world...and this person who is not only unwilling to sacrifice themselves for another – but they are unwilling to sacrifice out of the abundance of their stuff to help another who doesn’t have the necessities of life!

The severity of their sin...the sin described in this verse is doubly bad.

First, they are selfish – they love their stuff more than people.

They place a higher value on things than on people.

Second, they refuse to give compassion.

Lit. “*closes the intestines of him from him*”

Intestines refers to the inner person – we use the word ‘heart’ when speaking with this imagery. The Greek verb here (active voice – *kleiō*) tells us that the person with the possessions has closed their heart off toward the needs before them. It’s not that they don’t have any compassion – they do have compassion – but they have deliberately closed off their heart – closed off their compassion toward the person in need because they love their stuff more than the other person!

John’s question at the end of the verse is a natural one –
“...how can the love of God be in him?”

His question expects a negative answer – it can’t be in this person...definitely in practice – but quite possibly in substance, referring to their lack of salvation.

Your actions reveal your love. vs. 18

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

“Dear children” – John’s favorite description for his readers – which speaks to his great love and concern for them and his concern for them. This is not a derogatory term, but one of affection.

He then encourages them to make sure their love is practiced not only in words – but in their deeds – their actions.

This is a great frustration for many people in their marriage or in their family. ***The husband or wife*** who voice their love, yet their actions never support their claims.

The parent who says they love their children, but rarely act in ways that demonstrate their love to their kids. Or, ***the teenager*** who says they love their parents, yet they degrade

and disrespect their parents by their actions and their words with friends.

Notice how John has given us two pairs of things here. First pair is 'words' and 'tongue'. The latter – tongue – is the driving force for our words.

The second pair is 'actions' and 'truth'. Once again – and this is very important – the truth (of God – “The message we have heard from the beginning...”) is the driving force of our actions.

Love is never contrary to the truth of God.

Love never runs opposite to the truth of God.

Sex outside of marriage is not true love – because it is contrary to the truth of God.

Abusing someone (spouse / child) is not true love – because it is contrary to the truth of God.

Loving things more than people is not true love – because it is contrary to the truth of God.

Phil. 2:4 “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Application

Examine your love life...are you loving as Christ loved us?

Do you love sacrificially?

Do you love by meeting the needs of others?

Do you love by sharing your possessions with those in need?

Love in word and action.

Saying that you love others...yet doing nothing to serve them and meet their needs is akin to lying.

Don't give lip service to loving others – love is an action that will require sacrifice on your part. True love is costly – but worth the investment. It always seems like a large price tag on the front end – but when we truly love others and then we see the results of that love, what we thought was an expensive price becomes a great bargain.

Close in prayer