

“In Deed and Truth”
(1Jn 3:13-22)



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Overview of our passage



Theme: We are to love not in word only, but in deed and truth

☞ 1Jn 3:13-22

Doctrine: Jesus laid down His life for and we are obligated to lay down our life to one another

Application: Loving fellow believers will increase our assurance and strengthen our faith and confidence before God

Scripture Reading



1 John 3:13-22 (NASB)

13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. 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. 15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 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. 17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

Exposit: 1Jn 3:13



13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

☞ Pretty straightforward

☞ We are not to be surprised if the world hates us

☞ We covered this at length:

☞ 1Jn 2: 15-16

☞ “You Can’t Serve Two Masters”

☞ “Lust and Pride”

☞ Jesus summed this up well:

John 15:18-20

18 “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

Exposit: 1Jn 3:13



☞ Peter also speaks on this:

1 Peter 4:12-19

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER? 19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

☞ TRUTH:

- ☞ Christians live in enemy territory (so don't be surprised if the world hates us)
- ☞ If we are persecuted for our faith, rejoice because that shows we are truly God's children
- ☞ We must trust God in the midst of fiery trials for our faith

Exposit: 1Jn 3:14



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.

- ☞ John says we can know (oida) that we're saved...
- ☞ "passed out of death into life" (more on this)
- ☞ "because we love the brethren" (more on this)
- ☞ "He who does not love abides in death" (more on this)

“passed out of death into life”



- ❧ John may very well be recalling what he wrote in his gospel:
John 5:24 (Jesus speaking) “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, **but has passed out of death into life.**
- ❧ ‘death’ is ‘thanatos’ which means to die or death, and depending on context can be taken literally (i.e. to die because of a pestilence, or being destroyed, or judged/condemned) or figuratively (i.e. spiritual condition)
- ❧ In Jn 5 and 1Jn 3:14, John is referring to our spiritual condition or state
 - ❧ We are born dead in trespasses and sins, BUT
 - ❧ Believers are born again and made alive in Christ (no longer spiritually dead, but alive)
 - ❧ O death (thanatos) where is thy victory? O death (thanatos) where is thy sting?

“because we love the brethren”



- ☞ One way we can know that we passed from death to life and are born again is because we love Christians

PRACTICAL:

- ☞ Want assurance of your salvation?
 - ☞ Love your Christian family!
 - ☞ That'll give you lots of assurance!
- ☞ Contrast is true as well, want lack of assurance?
 - ☞ Do not love your Christian family
 - ☞ You'll certainly doubt if you're part of it!

“He who does not love abides in death”



- ☞ If you are not born again, you will not love believers
- ☞ If you are not born again, you remain in spiritual death and condemnation
- ☞ In v. 14's context: If you have no love for fellow Christians, you have a spiritual plague and remain in the same state you were when you were born (death) ☹

Exposit: 1Jn 3:15



15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

☞ As we've covered in previous studies, in God's eyes hate is at par with murder
Matthew 5:21-22

21 "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

☞ Earlier in this chapter John used Cain as an example who hated his twin brother Abel and that hatred led to murder

Exposit: 1Jn 3:15



- ❧ Paul tells us that we are to examine our faith (take a faith test):
 - 2 Corinthians 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you – unless indeed you fail the test?
- ❧ In harmonizing 1Jn 3:15 & 2Cor 13:5:
 - ❧ IF you have saving faith
 - ❧ THEN Jesus Christ (Holy Spirit) is in you
 - ❧ IF Jesus Christ (Holy Spirit) is in you
 - ❧ THEN this Jesus who laid down His life for you, will manifest in your heart
- ❧ If you presently hate someone and would kill them if you could, you failed the faith test!
 - ❧ You (like Cain) are a murderer at heart!
 - ❧ Sobering thought: if you hate someone to the point that you can kill that person, you're in spiritual death row
 - ❧ Even if they deserve to be murdered!
 - ❧ "Vengeance is Mine. I will repay says the LORD" - Rm 12:19
 - ❧ If you are in a perpetual state of mind in killing someone in your heart (especially a believer), John says you (like Cain) are not saved
 - ❧ You cannot have eternal life and at the same time have perpetual hatred and murder in your heart

Exposit: 1Jn 3:16



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.

- ❧ 'ought' is 'opheilō' which means indebted, obligation, responsible for
- ❧ John is echoing:
 - John 15:12-13 (Jesus speaking)
 - 12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, **that one lay down his life for his friends.**
- ❧ Jesus set the example
 - ❧ He literally suffered to the point of death to atone for our sins
- ❧ We are not only to be willing to suffer for being a Christian, but because we are a Christian **we are obligated** to Jesus to love one another
- ❧ Paul says the same thing...

Exposit: 1Jn 3:16



Romans 13:8-10

8 Owe nothing to anyone **except to love one another**; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

- ✧ From the Good Samaritan story (Lk 10), Jesus taught that the Samaritan who showed mercy was a “neighbor” to the man robbed
- ✧ In harmonizing 1Jn 3:16, if we are to love and show mercy to our neighbor (non family member), then much more are we to show love and mercy to a believer in need!

Exposit: 1Jn 3:17



17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

☞ James says almost the exact same thing:

James 2:14-17

14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 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? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

☞ If you have the means and ability to help a fellow believer in need, we are not to close our heart, we are to open our heart

☞ If you perpetually close your heart, that's a red flag that God's love (Holy Spirit) is not abiding in your heart

☞ This principal is also in the OT...

Exposit: 1Jn 3:17



Deuteronomy 15:7-8

7 “If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; 8 but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks.

- ☞ If a fellow Israelite was in need, the Jews were not to harden or close his heart to help, but instead is to be willing to help and lend whatever he lacks
- ☞ In fact, there is another principal in the OT, that when a Jew lends to a fellow Jew, he is not to charge interest

Deuteronomy 23:19-20

19 “You shall not charge interest to your countrymen: interest on money, food, or anything that may be loaned at interest. 20 You may charge interest to a foreigner, but to your countrymen you shall not charge interest, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land which you are about to enter to possess.

- ☞ In the OT: There was a distinction between foreigners and Jews
- ☞ In the NT: There too is to be a distinction between believers and unbelievers (in how we help)

Exposit: 1Jn 3:17



- ☞ If we lend to someone, we are not to expect repayment back!

Luke 6:34-36

34 If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount (their money back with no interest). 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, **expecting nothing in return**; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

- ☞ But if we do get repaid back from a believer, we are not to charge interest

Exposit: 1Jn 3:18



18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

- ❧ You heard the saying “action speaks louder than words”, this is precisely what John is saying in v. 18
- ❧ It is easy to love with words
 - ❧ In fact, the world is very good at this
 - ❧ Saying the right things
 - ❧ Making the right apology
 - ❧ Reading a script basically
- ❧ John says we aren't to love with just words, but in action informed by truth
 - ❧ The more truth we know, the more opportunity we have to apply that truth in love
 - ❧ Our sinful heart might say, let's not grow in truth, so I won't be held to a high standard
 - ❧ If that is you, that is between you and your Heavenly Father (warning)
- ❧ In context, and James as cross reference, if we are in a position to help a struggling brother, don't just say the right thing (talk Christianese), but instead be willing to help provide their material needs

Exposit: 1Jn 3:19



19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him

- ✎ Again, another tell-tell way to know if we are saved, is if we have an open heart to help fellow believers in need
- ✎ If we do so, we'll have assurance and joy
- ✎ If we don't, we'll lack assurance and joy

Exposit: 1Jn 3:20



20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

- ❧ As we learned, the human heart is woefully wicked and desperately sick and beyond cure
- ❧ It should be no surprise then if opening our heart to a fellow believer does not come naturally
- ❧ When we close our heart to a believer in need, the Holy Spirit will convict our heart and our heart will condemn us for that
- ❧ The promise in v. 20, is even if your heart condemns you, you have an opportunity to repent and get it right

Exposit: 1Jn 3:20



- ❧ So even if you initially closed your heart to help a fellow believer, John wants us to know that you have an opportunity to repent and open your heart
- ❧ Just because you didn't get it right the first time (you closed your heart and it condemned you for it), doesn't mean you don't have a 2nd chance
- ❧ v. 20 promises us that God is greater than your sinful heart and God knows (ginōskō) your struggle with sin is real
- ❧ If you don't love right the first time, it's ok, God is greater and still seeks for you to respond by opening your heart and love

Exposit: 1Jn 3:21



21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

- ❧ Whether we get it right the 1st time or 2nd or 3rd time, etc., and we respond to what's pleasing to God, we will have confidence before God
 - ❧ When we obey truth in love, we are blessed and our confidence (assurance) increases!
- ❧ Converse is true, if we remain to close our heart to help a believer in need, we won't have confidence before God, but rather shame and lack of assurance

Exposit: 1Jn 3:22



22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

☞ “whatever we ask we receive from him” (more on this)

☞ This is conditional

“whatever we ask we receive from Him”



- ❧ It is easy to twist v. 22 to suit our selfish ambitions
- ❧ “whatever we ask we receive from him” is:
 - ❧ Conditional and
 - ❧ Tied to keeping His commandments
- ❧ Let’s look at John 14 for those conditions...

“whatever we ask we receive from Him”



John 14:9-15 (after Jesus's the Way, the Truth, the Life claim and after Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father)

9 Jesus *said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. 12 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. 13 **Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.** 14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. 15 **“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.**

“whatever we ask we receive from Him”



- ❧ The condition in v. 22 is this:
 - ❧ Whatever we ask (in faith) that will glorify the Father in the Son; AND
 - ❧ If we are walking in His commandments (loving God and one another)
- ❧ The promise is this:
 - ❧ God will grant your prayer request!
 - ❧ Whatever you just asked, you will receive from God
 - ❧ Your faith will show love for God and for one another
 - ❧ We will show ourselves approved in deed and truth!

Application



- ❧ Love your neighbor (unbelievers)
 - ❧ Show mercy to them
- ❧ Love your brother (believers)
 - ❧ Show even more mercy to them
- ❧ In doing so:
 - ❧ We will pass the faith test
 - ❧ Our faith will be strengthened
 - ❧ Our assurance will increase!
 - ❧ Our confidence before God will increase as well!