

So Far in 1 John...

Central Argument of 1 John... If you claim to be in Christ, you must walk as Jesus walked

Central Theme: Walk in the Light (1:5 - 3:10)

- Light vs darkness God is Light and in Him there is no darkness at all
- Love vs Hate Walking in the light is taking the path of love. Hate is the path of darkness
- Truth vs Error there is a battle going on for your soul and affections... lies are the enemy's main weapon
- Path of Righteousness vs Path of Unrighteousness your life is either dedicated to right living or sinful living

1 John 3:11-18

¹¹ For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever 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.

1 John 3:11-18

¹⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

The Message You Have Heard...

- The first "message you have heard" is, God is light and to walk in his ways is to walk in light
- The second "message you have heard" is, God is love (4:8) and to walk in love is to walk in light
- What is this message?
 - John's Gospel "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." (13:34, 15:12)
 - Result "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (13:35)
- Foundation of Christianity is love (God & People)

Love, Hate and Murder

- Don't be like Cain!
 - Don't be surprised that the "world" hates you
 - World = opposition to Jesus and his purposes
- Evidence we have passed from death to life: love!
- No love = "abides" in death
- Hating your "brother" is murder
- Imagine a world without hate, envy, malice
 - This is how God designed the church to be

A Reflection of His Love

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us

- 1. Our love for others is to mirror God's love for us
 - This is why hate is out of bounds: Hate is darkness and there is NO darkness in God
 - Therefore, to reflect God's love is to eliminate hate
- 2. What does this love look like?
 - We lay down our lives for one another
 - We are generous with what God has given to us
 - The love God calls us to is not merely nice words and good intentions, but rather deeds and truth

D. Moody Smith

John's understanding of what it means to love is quite down-to-earth and practical (3:17-18). Will or intention is closely bound with action. Talk is cheap. Not actually doing something for brothers or sisters in need is to close one's heart against them. Love is not just a special way of feeling; it is an orientation of life and action.

James 2:14-17

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

What Does God Expect of Us?

- 1. Get rid of hate
 - To walk in love (walk as Jesus did) means eliminate hate
 - If you hate someone, it is time to deal with it
 - Murder is a very serious charge we cannot hate and claim to be in right standing with God
 - According to John, the love God desires to replace our hate is not merely words and talk, but in deed and truth
 - Where do you start, if your feelings are negative toward someone?
 - Ask God to help you see them the way he does
 - Pray for them
 - Act in a loving way towards them

C.S. Lewis – Mere Christianity

Do not waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him.

What Does God Expect of Us?

- 1. Get rid of hate
- 2. Become a community of people who reflect God's love and character
 - Imagine what would happen to this body of believers if we forgot about everything else for a moment and simply concentrated on truly loving one another
 - I believe that this kind of love would revolutionize our church and have the kind of incredible impact on our city that we could not even dream of
 - This is where it starts. It starts with love.