



SCRIPTURE: 1 John 3:11-16: **love your brother**

Text updates: 4 weeks of prayer. TRC to 252-632-6650

Easter Offering: South City Christian Church, Lake Charles, LA

For the last few weeks we have been studying through the book of 1 John. This is a letter that the apostle John wrote to a church, or a group of churches to encourage them to keep the faith.

This morning I would like for us to start at the end...

Maybe this week you have been following along with us through the last week of Jesus life through our text message updates / 4 weeks of prayer.

(Last Sunday) was Palm Sunday. It was on Sunday that Jesus entered Jerusalem to a king's welcome. Thank God today that Jesus is our King!

(Monday) It was on Monday that Jesus cleansed the Temple and cast out the crooked money lenders.

(Tuesday) It was on Tuesday that Jesus spent the day teaching and correcting.

(Wednesday) Jesus rested and spent Wednesday with friends.

(Thursday) It was on Thursday that Jesus had the Passover meal with the disciples.

(Friday) Jesus endured trials, lashes, was nailed to a cross and died.

(Saturday) Jesus was in the grave.

But today we celebrate Easter. It was on Sunday morning that Jesus rose from the grave.

Many people throughout history have made huge sacrifices for the good of others. Some have even made the ultimate sacrifice. But Jesus is the only one who came back from the grave.

Tim Keller

Even if you can't believe in the resurrection, you should want it to be true.

But that's not the end of the story of Jesus. After he came back from the dead, he appeared to the apostles and to others. And just like he said he would he eventually left and ascended back to heaven.

Just before he ascended he said these words to his disciples...

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus leaves his disciples with a mandate... go and make disciples.

We are going to get to this in a few minutes, but for now lets go back to the beginning and look at 1 John 3...

Today I want us to think about this...

love: is the beginning.

1 John 3:11

¹¹For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

John begins this part of the letter by bringing us back to the beginning... Not the beginning of time, or the beginning of the Bible, but back to the story of Jesus and why he came to earth.

John 13:34-35

³⁴"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Jesus said these words to his friends at the last supper. Just before he endured the cross he solidified his mission by encouraging his disciples to love.

Love one another.

This is the message you have heard from the beginning, John says. Jesus message is a message of love.

By this (love) the world will know that you are my disciples.

Not because we are louder than others. Not because we are smarter than others. Not because we are holier than others, but only if we love one another.

That's the distinguishing mark. That's what should set Christians apart from others... the way we love.

Let's keep reading. John makes a contrast...

1 John 3:12-15

¹²Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. ¹³Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed from

death to life, because we love each other.
Anyone who does not love remains in death.
¹⁵Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a
murderer, and you know that no murderer has
eternal life residing in him.

Right in the middle of this beautiful passage about love, John reminds us of the alternative to love.

Do you remember the story of Cain and Able? These were Adam and Eve's sons. Cain killed his brother because of jealousy and anger.

Cain is a good example of the failure to love.

We can presume that Cain had a godly upbringing that should have equipped him to love, but he chose not to.

Cain's disobedience came from a lack of faith which resulted in first disobedience, then hatred. ([Hebrews 11:4](#)) Able is commended

for his faith, which leads us to believe that Cain's fault was the lack of faith.

Cain's disobedience and hatred was based in pride. ([Genesis 4:5](#)) The Bible says that God accepted Able's offering but rejected Cain and his offering. And that led to pride, jealousy and anger.

Cain's disobedience and hatred made him miserable ([Genesis 4:5](#)).

Cain refused the warning God gave him, and gave into the sin of hatred ([Genesis 4:6-7](#)).

Cain's sin of hatred led to action against the one he hated ([Genesis 4:8](#)).

Cain was evasive about his sin of hatred, and tried to hide it. But God found him out ([Genesis 4:9](#)).

Why does John focus on such a negative example? Because the opposite of love is where Cain found himself, prideful... angry... and it led to sin.

John says, "be aware!" Don't end up like Cain. Instead, love like Jesus...

1 John 3:16

¹⁶This 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 and sisters.

If Cain is the example of what not to do, Jesus is the example of what we should do. LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

This morning I want to give us three quick things to remember that will help us live out who God is calling us to be in this world.

First of all John says...

love is the answer.

1 John 3:11

¹¹For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

Love has always been the answer. Since the very beginning.

Jesus made it our mandate.

John 13:34-35

³⁴"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

I've always thought it was interesting that Jesus told the disciples "here's a new command."

Love wasn't so much a new command as much as it was a new level or example of love. Jesus is saying, "there is a new standard by which to measure love... love in the same way I have loved you."

This is just after Jesus had washed the disciples feet. And just before he went to the cross.

The old standard is gone. The new standard is in Christ.

“By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Love is so counter-cultural it will be the distinguishing mark on us as Christians.

And that's the way it should be for us as Christians. It should be obvious. We are different, and the thing that should set us apart is LOVE! It should be obvious.

And that brings us to the second thing I want us to remember...

hate is the enemy.

1 John 3:12

¹²Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.

Hate is the exact opposite of LOVE. And it leads to the worst in people.

John uses an extreme example to show the contrast between who we are supposed to be, and who we should avoid being.

Ok. So just don't murder anyone! I can avoid that, but Jesus put a little finer point on it.

Matthew 5:21-22

²¹"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²²But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister,

'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."

Jesus takes it to another level. He says, "don't even get so angry with someone that it causes you to hate."

Then he says, "anyone who says to a brother or sister 'Raca'". From the Aramaic language it means to call someone "empty head."

That's why at our house the "S" word has always been "Stupid." You don't call someone Stupid.

***Like Fred Sanford. "You big dummy!"
Funny, but headed down the wrong path.

Like don't even get so irate that you call someone

We get so used to getting angry and calling people names that we are desensitized to what Jesus is saying.

"Be kind. Don't hate. Love one another."

And we don't have to go too far to know what to do...

Jesus is the example.

1 John 3:16

¹⁶This 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 and sisters.

Love has always been the answer. Hate is the enemy. And Jesus is the example.

Full circle.

Jesus went to the cross because of love. Jesus rose from the dead to expose the power of love.

Just before Jesus went to the cross he told his friends, "love one another."

And just before Jesus ascended back to heaven he said, "go and make disciples."

"In the same way I have loved you, love others."

Matthew 28:19

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Small Group Lessons:

1. Easter is a special time of the year. What are some of your favorite memories or traditions you have celebrated?
2. Discuss Tim Keller's quote, "even if you can't believe in the resurrection, you should want it to be true".

3. Read John 13:34-35: what makes Jesus' commandment "new"? Is this not what God has wanted us to do since the beginning of time?
4. Discuss Cain's attitudes; first, towards God's response and second, his response towards his brother. What actions do we need to take to protect our hearts from these reactions?
5. Why don't we always react in love and kindness to others?
6. Read Matthew 25: 21-22. Why do you believe Jesus took the law further?
7. Read John 13: 34-35 - Why is this such an important passage? What does it mean for the church? What does it mean for those not apart of the church?
8. Read 1 Corinthians 13 - What does it say about Love? What are the characteristics of love written in this passage? What is the greatest of all gifts?
9. How can we practically practice love?