



SCRIPTURE: 1 John 3:16-24: **love your brother**

Text updates: TRC to 252-632-6650

Ladies Refresh Friday - This Friday. Refresh Bible Study - Next Sunday

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

This morning I want to start in the gospel of Luke...

Luke 15:1-2

¹Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ²But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Some translations: "grumbled" or "complained"

"This is the opposite of joy. It's what losers do. It flows out of a bitter heart. It's the language of a sad, sad soul."

—Arron Chambers (Eats With Sinners)

The religious (pharisees and teachers of the law) were upset because Jesus was with some less than desirables...

The tax collectors were Jewish in ethnicity, but not in practice. They actually worked for the Roman government. They were considered by their fellow Jews as the worst kind of people. They were known as extortioners: they made a living by overcharging their own people and then pocket the difference.

Verse 1 says... **Jesus was with tax collectors and sinners...**

Generally the term "sinners" would describe people who were not religious and pretty public about their sin.

This could include prostitutes and thieves, but also people who just went about their lives without paying much attention to God or the things of God.

Tax collectors and sinners were excluded from the religious community. And the Bible says that's who Jesus was spending time with. Not only that, but Jesus was eating with them.

The Pharisees on the other hand, would never be caught with such people. **The root word for Pharisee means to**

separate or detach. They were well known for being the holier than thou group. They did not spend their time with regular, run of the mill folks.

They were also considered the experts in the law. (1st 5 books of the OT) So they were not anti-God or anti-Bible – so what was their problem?

Their problem was that they viewed Scripture through a lens that focused them on the sins of others and absolutely blinded them to their own sin.

Do we love like the Pharisees, the religious, or do we LOVE LIKE JESUS?

The Pharisees were more interested in appearances and rules, Jesus was interested in people and love.

The people who were far from God were attracted to Jesus! In my experience, sometimes we drive people away.

In some ways we are more like the Pharisees than we are Jesus. We are good at building barriers that protect our way of thinking, instead, God wants us to tear down the walls that keep others away from Him.

Jesus attracted all kinds of people, why? Not because of marketing or gimmicks, but because of hope.

I think people today are looking for something. It's not a fancy building, or hype, or a bunch of rules. I think people today are looking for the same thing that Jesus offered these tax collectors and sinners... **HOPE.**

This morning I want us to go back to where we left off last week in 1 John 3. Here we find someone who is an actual expert.

His name is Jesus. And he is our example on how to LOVE in this world.

1 John 3:16-17

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.

Jesus is our ultimate example of how to LOVE in this world. Not only how to love, but what love really is.

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus laid down his life for us."

Does that mean we should give our lives like Jesus did? Maybe... but John gives us another starting point...

1 John 3:17-18

¹⁷If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be that person?

John was old enough and remembered how things were when the church first started. Listen to what was written about the early church...

Acts 2:44-47

⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The early church was in the habit of taking care of one another. Loving like Jesus started with loving each other.

John makes it practical. If you have something that someone else needs... be generous. John is saying, "don't let your worldly possessions become more important than the person next to you."

Jesus "ate with sinners" he loved the unlovely, John is just asking the church to love one another!

I love what John says next...

1 John 3:18

¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

True Christian love means loving in actions and in truth. The opposite of "in action" is "in word," and the opposite of "in truth" is "in speech."

James 2:15-16

¹⁵Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?

To love "in word" means simply to talk about a need, but to love "in action" means to do something about meeting the need. You may think, because you have discussed a need,

or even prayed about it, that you have done your duty, but love involves more than words—it calls for sacrificial actions.

To love “in speech” is the opposite of to love “in truth.” It means to love insincerely. To love “in truth” means to love a person genuinely from the heart and not just giving lip-service. People are attracted by genuine love, but repelled by the artificial variety. One reason why sinners were attracted to Jesus was because they were sure He loved them sincerely.

We can **SAY** we love others, but our **ACTIONS** speak clearly.

Don't you know people who are more talk than action?

UNDER PROMISE - OVER DELIVER

I think what John is saying is similar...

TALK LESS - LOVE MORE

1 John 3:18

¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Put your faith into action. That's how the world will know you are a Christian, not because you run your mouth... but only if they see it.

And if you do, there are...

three blessings:

of loving like Jesus.

assurance.

1 John 3:19-20

¹⁹This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

John says, "this is how we know..."

Don't we want to know? When you are dating someone, isn't there a point when you want to know that they are into you?

When we turn in a test, don't we want to know how we did?

The great theologian Tom Petty said, "the waiting is the hardest part."

Don't we want to know that we are living the right way?
That we are in Christ?

We don't want to have to wait until we get into eternity to see how we're doing in our walk with Christ.

John says...

There is an assurance we achieve when we are demonstrating love in the name of Christ.

A believer's relationship with others affects his relationships with God.

Jesus brings our attention to how we should interact with each other as Christians...

Matthew 5:23-24

²³Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the

altar. First go and be reconciled to them;
then come and offer your gift.

Jesus says if you are headed to worship but have something going on between you and a brother or sister in Christ. Go make that right - then go worship.

If there is something between you and another it blocks your ability to connect with God.

A Christian who practices love grows in his understanding of God's truth and enjoys a heart filled with confidence before God.

–Warren Wiersbe

A believer's relationship with others affects his relationships with God.

If you are in Christ and LOVING LIKE JESUS... consistently loving God and loving others, you can have the assurance of eternity with Christ.

answered prayer.

1 John 3:21-22

²¹Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²²and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him.

Love for one another produces confidence toward God, and confidence toward God gives you boldness in asking for what you need.

Not because our actions earn God's approval, but loving others simply is evidence that we are living for God.

1 John 3:21-22

²¹Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, **we have confidence before God** ²²and receive from him anything we ask, **because we keep his commands and do what pleases him.**

Could it be that your prayers are ineffective because you need to make something right with someone?

Remember Jesus said, "go and make things right with your brother then come and worship."

We are quick to say, "God hasn't answered my prayers." But maybe there is some issue with someone else blocking the effectiveness of those prayers.

A Christian who lives to please God will discover that God finds ways to please His child.

Psalm 37:4

⁴Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

When our delight is in the love of God, our desires will be in the will of God.

abiding.

1 John 3:23-24

²³And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

John 15... Jesus compares His followers to the branches of a vine. So long as the branch draws its strength from the vine, it produces fruit. But if it separates itself from the vine, it withers and dies.

Jesus was not talking about salvation; He was talking about fruit-bearing.

John said it this way...

²⁴The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them.

When a believer LOVES LIKE JESUS, he finds it easy to obey God, and therefore he maintains a close communion with God.

John 14:23

²³Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

When a believer LOVES LIKE JESUS, he finds it easy to obey God, and therefore he maintains a close communion with God.

John mentions for the first time in his letter, the Holy Spirit.

When a believer obeys God and loves others, the indwelling Holy Spirit gives him peace and confidence. The Holy Spirit abides with him forever.

Here in 1 John 3, John describes 4 levels which one can live...

One can choose lowest level is the enemy's level. That's the level of **murder**.

Or you can choose the next level. **Hatred**. But as we talked about last week, in God's eyes, that's the same as murder.

Or you can choose the third level, **indifference**. This level is better than murder and hatred, because you can be a Christian and live with indifference. But is that how you really want to live?

Or you can choose the highest level. LOVE LIKE JESUS.

This is the life of joy and liberty, the life of answered prayer. It assures you confidence and courage in spite of the difficulties of life.

SGL questions:

1. How do we love those who are far from God when

2. Why does the church sometimes build barriers between itself and those who are marginalized?
3. Read 1 John 3:16 - Jesus is our example of loving people. Does John literally mean to die for your friends or family?
4. Read 1 John 3:17-18 - what do you think our church, community would look like if we lived this scripture out each day?
5. Why is it more important to act than it is to just talk?
6. Read Galatians 5: 22-26 - what does this passage say about how our character needs to be?
7. How does a Christian know that they are living the way God calls us to live?
8. Read Psalm 37:4 - what confidence does this passage give us?
9. What does it mean to keep God's commands? How do we not become Pharisaic about living according to the law?
10. Close your group with praying for peace and unity in your lives.