

The Brotherhood Test (#6)
I John 3:11-15

June 24, 2007

A. Introduction

1. what is one principal them in John's writings?
2. why is there this emphasis?

B. The Message I John 3:11

1. What three fundamental messages are noted in I John?
 - a. John 1:1-2?
 - b. John 1:5, 7?
 - c. I John 2:9-10, 3:11

2. What are some of the fundamentals of the Christian faith?

3. Standing up for the truth ...

- a. did John do it (2 John 1:10-11, 3 John 1:10)?
- b. how should it be done (Ephesians 4:15)?

C. The Counter-Example of Cain I John 3:12

1. Genesis 4:1-7 - what things made Cain's sacrifice unacceptable?
2. Philippians 2:3-5 - what Cain-like attitudes must we abandon?

D. The Counter-Example of the World I John 3:13

1. John 17:14; why will Christians be hated?
2. What is Satan (prince of this world) seeking to do to the church?
 - a. I Peter 5:8?
 - b. Galatians 5:15?
 - c. I Corinthians 3:3
 - d. Romans 14:10-13
3. Proverbs 10:12, I Peter 4:8; what will Christian love do?

E. Love is the Proof of Life I John 3:14-15

1. and hate is the proof of ...
2. the brotherhood test is that we ...
3. Romans 5:5; This can be possible only because ...

—{1}. **1 John 3:11-15** **The Brotherhood Test (#6)**

A. Introduction

1. our message this morning, entitled “The Brotherhood Test” is from 1 John 3: 11-15, “For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous. Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” (NAS)
2. Love is a principal theme of John’s writings
 - a. this letter, though short, contains the word love some 35 or so times, more than twice the times found in any other of the New Testament Epistles
 - b. the Gospel of John has more references to love than the rest of the Gospels combined
3. why this emphasis on love?
 - a. Steve Roy, the Associate Pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church (where John Piper is pastor) has this comment: —{2}. “I would guess that 95% of you have heard this command hundreds of times. You’ve heard it from parents, SS teachers, Bible study leaders, preachers; you’ve read it yourself from the Bible many times. And the danger that can rise for all of us is the temptation to stop thinking about love. After all, we’ve heard that before, we say to ourselves. We already know that we’re supposed to love each other. Let’s not spend our time thinking about such basic things. Let’s get on to more advanced, more important things. That’s a temptation we all face as Christians and the tragic result of giving in to it is that we often spend little or no time thinking about the meaning or implications of the biblical command to love one another.” – end of quote
 - b. Love should be a distinguishing, dominant feature of the church of Jesus Christ. Heathen people who observed brotherly love of Christians toward one another marvelled at what they saw and cried out, “Behold, how they love one another!” The renowned Roman lawyer Marcus Minucius Felix, who lived in the second century, became a true Christian, and he testified of the early Christians: “They loved one

another, even before knowing one another (personally).” Of course, many heathen people remained what they were and scoffed at Christianity. For example, Lucian, who also lived in the second century, and sneeringly wrote of them: “Their Master (Jesus Christ) has made them believe that they are all brethren.” —^{3}.

- c. it may be, then, in part, that John as the beloved disciple, came closest to understanding the love of God the Son during His earthly ministry, and the fact that our Father God wants this family trait to be found in His children

B. The Message 1 John 3:11

- 1. For this is the message which you heard from the beginning, "Let us love one another."
- 2. this, according to John, is a fundamental of the Christian faith
 - a. it follows upon other fundamentals already mentioned
 - b. first, the fundamental truth of the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the salvation He has provided: 1 John 1:1–2a, "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life — and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, ..." (NAS)
 - c. second, the fundamental truth that because we have been saved by Jesus Christ we are to have a new, cleansed relationship with a holy, pure God: "And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ... but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:5, 7 NAS)
 - d. these first two fundamentals deal with relationship to God – called walking, or living, or being in the light
 - e. from this relationship, John has introduced the matter of the relationship of born again believers one with another in 1 John 2:9–10, "The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him." (NAS)
 - f. now, says John, the command "Let us love one another" is a primary rule of conduct, a Christian fundamental

3. Fundamentals

- a. in 1878 at the Niagara Bible Conference, a fourteen-point confession of faith was adopted in the battle against the incursion of modernistic teaching into churches
- b. this was followed by the **World Conference in Christian Fundamentals which convened at Philadelphia, May 1919 and required its members adhere to nine doctrinal points:**
 - (A) "the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture,
 - (B) the Trinity,
 - (C) the deity and virgin birth of Christ,
 - (D) the creation and fall of man,
 - (E) a substitutionary atonement,
 - (F) the bodily resurrection and ascension of Christ,
 - (G) the regeneration of believers,
 - (H) the personal and imminent return of Christ, and,
 - (I) the resurrection and final assignment of all men to eternal blessedness or eternal woe." ⁻⁽⁴⁾.
- c. under this definition, I must label myself as being a 'fundamentalist' despite the disrepute of that term today
- d. but, missing from the list, and from the practice of many of the fundamentalists, was '**Let us love one another.**'
- e. for during the first 75 years of their existence, they fought the modernists; they fought each other; they just fought
- f. now by the advocacy of love, John does not advocate acceptance of false teaching for in his second epistle he warns, "**If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house {presumably where her children, the church, met}, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.**" vv 10-11 NAS
- g. and, in third John, concerning Diotrophes who was ruining the church, he says, "**For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does**" (v 10a NAS)
- h. no, John believed in taking a strong stand against false teaching and sin, but yet would have us practice, in the words of Paul, "**speaking the truth in love**" (Ephesians 4:15)

4. this is the sixth test, then, that we have fellowship with God
 - a. that we are part of His redeemed people, that we are saved
 - b. and it is derived from our relationship to God:
 - c. it has to do with our relationship to the brethren
 - d. which term is used almost invariably in the New Testament as a synonym for Christian, for the church
 - e. it is that as Christ loved the church, giving His life for it ... for each and every individual in it as their personal Saviour ... we, too, should love her ... each and every individual

C. The Counter-Example of Cain 1 John 3:12

1. Not as Cain whose nature was of the wicked one and slew his brother; now why did he slay him? Because his works were wicked, whereas those of his brother were righteous.

2. the sacrifice of Cain

- a. last week, in the Sunday Bible Class where we are looking at Great People of the Bible, we reviewed the years between Adam and Noah ... and came to Cain and Abel
- b. "... And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell." (Genesis 4: 2a-5 NAS)
- c. now why did God not accept Cain's offering of fruit?
 - (A) after all, the offering of fruit is commanded in the Law
 - (B) it is possible to form a number of answers to this
 - (C) we can see from these words his attitude was wrong, in fact, in talking to Cain God first addresses his attitude: 'Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"' (Genesis 4: 6 NAS)
 - (D) with the rest of God's revelation before us, we can see that Cain had not dealt with his sins, "And according to the Law, *one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*" (Hebrews 9: 22 NAS) and surmise that God had already instructed

them on this his need

(E) but God's next words highlight what John has said, "If you do well, will not *your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.*" (Genesis 4:7 NAS) – but Cain didn't; he went out and killed Abel

(F) Cain was wrong in both attitude and action: he did not do well, his works were wicked; he was angry, envious, because Abel's works were righteous and acceptable; the self-righteous works of his own hands were not

d. Herbert Stevenson has said, "No man can, by general busyness or specific good deed, no matter how noble, merit salvation. Activity is never a rival to faith. We cannot gain God's commendation by presenting to Him – as Cain desired – the works of our hands." –{5}.

3. those who have been bought by the blood of Jesus Christ

a. who have given up self-righteousness for his righteousness

b. should also give up the self-centeredness which is the main obstacle in our loving our brethren, in loving one another

c. "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus," (Philippians 2:3-5 NAS)

D. The Counter-Example of the World 1 John 3:13

1. So do not be amazed, brothers, if the world hates you.

a. as we read today in Christ's high priestly prayer

b. "... and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:14 NAS)

c. "let us love one another" that we not be of the world

2. the spirit of Cain is the spirit of this world

a. what is the title of Hal Lindsey's book of some years ago?

b. 'Satan is Alive and Well and Living on Planet Earth'?

- c. regardless of what the rest of the book may say, the title certainly is true ... "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary {= Satan}, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." says (1 Peter 5:8 NAS)
3. and Satan seeks to stir up strife in the church
- a. Satan is a devourer, seeking to make Christians like himself "But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another." (Galatians 5:15 NAS)
- b. lack of brotherly love is an evidence of our clinging to our old nature: "for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?" (1 Corinthians 3:3 NAS)
- c. Judging shows a lack of love "But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, 'as I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.' So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way." (Romans 14:10-13 NAS)
- (A) judging a fellow Christian on how they serve God
- (B) judging a fellow Christian on how he or she dresses
- (C) judging a fellow Christian on any of the 101 things that make them a distinct individual, a personality
- (D) such judgement is hatred and has no place in the life of the believer because it comes from self-righteousness
- d. This week I put onto computer an old study of mine on the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. I was impressed again of how the Pharisee put everyone else down, especially the publican, to build himself up so that God could see how lucky He, God, was to have such a servant as the Pharisee! How easy it is to take the same attitude!
- e. Proverbs 10:12 tells us "Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions." (NAS) which Peter applies for us: "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8 NAS)

E. Love is the Proof of Life 1 John 3:14–15

1. ¹⁴ We know that we have been transported out of death into life, because we love the brothers; the one who is not loving remains in death. ¹⁵ Everyone hating his brother is a manslayer {or, murderer}, and you know that no manslayer has eternal life abiding in him.
 - a. the New Living Translation renders this as follows: ‘If we love our Christian brothers and sisters, it proves that we have passed from death to eternal life. But a person who has no love is still dead. Anyone who hates another Christian is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don’t have eternal life within them.’
 - b. contrariwise, hate is the proof of still being dead in sin
2. the brotherhood test
 - a. that we have fellowship with God
 - b. that we are part of His redeemed people,
 - c. that we are saved
 - d. that we have eternal life
 - e. is, then, that we love our fellow Christians
 - f. failing this test, as you will see by these verses, has some fairly dire consequences
 - g. yet succeeding this test can only be accomplished “because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Romans 5:5 NAS)

F. Conclusion

1. is there anyone here who is holding a grudge, nurturing ill feeling, denying forgiveness, showing resentment, envy or a judgmental attitude to a fellow Christian?
 - a. if there is, make it right as soon as you possibly can
 - b. “let not” says the Bible, “the sun go down on your wrath”
 - c. your bad example could be standing in the way of some one coming to salvation in Christ
2. if you have never trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - a. if you are standing outside of this great brotherhood, the church which Christ established to the glory of God

- b. then come in faith to Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of sin and the rebirth into God's family by the Holy Spirit
3. with all its faults, the church of Christ is the sweetest society given to mankind, one in which we are able to be a blessing to men and women within the church and outside of it.

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. “Love: a Matter of Life and Death”, by Rev. Steve Roy, Kerux sermons #6111
3. Fredericksburg Bible Illustrator Supplements, Kerux illustrations #14911
4. Baker's Dictionary of Theology, © 1960 Baker Book House; “Fundamentalism”
5. “James Speaks for Today” by Herbert Stevenson, Kerux illustrations, #33544