

1 John 3:11-24 This is the message

March 22, 2009

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This morning we are back in 1 John, picking up from where we left off a number of weeks ago.

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1 John 3:11-24

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.

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.

19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;

20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.

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 what pleases him.

23 And this is his commandment that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

One of the ways in which we learn anything new and then retain the thing we learn is through the use of repetition.

How do we learn a person's name that we meet for the first time?

We learn it through repetition. There are other techniques like association with famous people or through a nickname, but the main method is that we repeat the person's name and each time we do that it reinforces our retention of their name.

Years ago I was talking with a guy who I had met for the first time and within the first couple of minutes he used my name quite often and as we got talking this subject came up about how we remember names.

He said that he had been in sales for quite a while and one of the techniques they use is to repeat the person's name as often as they can in the very first conversation with that person.

This morning we are going to continue in our study of 1 John and one of the techniques that John uses to aid our memory is repetition.

This letter is very different from all the other letters in the New Testament in that there appears to be no logical straight line path to the points.

But there are certain themes that John keeps coming back to again and again, perhaps in an effort to reinforce our understanding through repetition.

These themes as one commentator has noted consist of:

These fundamental tests of the Christian life - doing righteousness, loving one another, believing that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh - are the connecting themes that bind together the whole structure of the Epistle.

And this same commentator describes the structure as a spiral rather than straight line logic.

The word that best describes the author's mode of thinking is "spiral." The course of thought does not move from point to point in a straight line. It is like a winding staircase - always revolving around the same centre, always recurring to the same topics, but at a higher level.

(International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia)

1 John 3:11-24

11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

This is the message - that we should **love** one another. John uses the word love 36 times in this letter and Paul describes the attributes of love from 1 Corinthians 13 in these terms

1. It is patient
2. It is kind
3. It does not envy
4. It does not boast
5. It is not arrogant

6. It is not rude
7. It does not insist on getting its own way
8. It is not irritable
9. It is not resentful
10. It does not rejoice with wrongdoing
11. It rejoices with the truth
12. It bears all things
13. It believes all things
14. It hopes all things
15. It endures all things
16. It never ever ends

John now goes onto to give a biblical example of how not to behave.

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.

Here we have a look back into the Old Testament past. The New Testament is full of these look backs at the Old Testament.

In fact we would have no New Testament if there were no Old Testament.

Just like we need before and after photos to show the new you - whatever it is your showing, God gave us his new covenant or New Testament or new will that was wrapped up in the blood of Jesus that speaks of a better will for us who would believe.

The Old Testament made demands for holy living from Israel but without the means to personally achieve this holiness except through the sacrifice of innocent animal sacrifices that cleared up and covered over their sins once each year through the ministry of an appointed high priest.

In God's New Testament or his renewed will which has been opened up to the whole world (no longer just for Israel) by the blood of the innocent Lamb of God. Jesus takes away our sin once and for all of which Jesus has also become both the high priest and the sacrifice.

He takes our sin and replaces it with his righteousness and gives us his spirit so that we can personally live a righteous life by his power

So, what about Cain & Abel?
Let's take a look at Genesis 4.

They both brought offerings before God.

Abel's was accepted while Cain's was rejected.

Instead of repenting and turning to God with an acceptable offering which God said he could do, Cain let jealousy rise up and fester in his heart against his brother that eventuated in him killing him. Not only that, he then added deception to his crime.

Cain had no regard for his brother and was jealous of him rising up in God's sight.

Let's also guard against this. God will raise up different people among us who may not have even been here as long as us and we can let ourselves get upset and become jealous.

Let's guard our hearts by loving our brothers and thinking well of them.

13 Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.

We may at times find people in the world hating us.

They may keep a lid on this hatred and it may not be obvious in its manifestation, but it is still hate and there is hate because we represent the righteousness of Christ while they believe that their own righteousness is all they need.

They are like Cain in their hearts.

Without Jesus being our righteousness not one of us would ever see God.

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.

John now seeks to confirm our status as believers with a test. The test is that we love the brothers and by this test we can know that we have passed out of death and into life.

There is no middle ground between these two extremes. There is no half life or no half death it is either life or death.

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

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.

And now this is how we know love - Jesus laid down his own life so that we could take up his life. We are to do the same. We need to honour one another to look out for one another to care for one another and let's never rule out the possibility of our actual lives being called to be laid down for our brothers.

Dying is not a nice thought. Not too many of us spend nights in bed thinking about it I'm sure, but what if you faced a choice between saving your own life or willingly laying it down to save a brother or sister?

I hope that none of us are ever called to that, but you could easily see that it would be the ultimate form of love.

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.

We may not be called to lay down our lives for our brothers but we are called to show our love through action and not just talk.

I heard a couple of stories recently of people who have blessed one of our own families in the church with bags of groceries in a time of need. I don't know who you are and I don't need to. But can I say that your reward is in heaven and when I heard about it, it made me incredibly proud to be a part of what God is doing amongst us.

19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;

Once again John repeats himself for emphasis. We can have assurance or reassure our hearts before him that we do indeed belong to the truth. Not to a form of truthful teachings, but to Jesus himself THE TRUTH.

Is God prompting you to show love to one another and are you doing it in the strength that Jesus provides? If yes, then be assured that you belong to him.

20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.

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 what pleases him.

If we find ourselves second guessing his love for us we need to relax in God's promises. He knows everything and is greater even than our hearts. When we have that assurance we have a certain confidence before God so that when we pray we receive from him what we have asked for.

Assurance is the opposite of insecurity and it produces faith.

Let me say that again,

Assurance is the opposite of insecurity and it produces faith.

And we know that without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please God (Heb 11:6)
And we also please God by our obedience to his commands.

23 And this is his commandment that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

And finally God provides another level of assurance for us - he gives us his Spirit as a seal of that which to come (2Cor1:22) so that he can live in us, to guide us, to comfort us, to glorify Jesus in us and to show the world that we belong to him.