

November 05, 2017 -

I John 3: 11-18 “The Need to Love one Another”

### Introduction:

This past week we all heard the news that military judge Col. Jeffery Nance spared Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl from prison for walking off his post in Afghanistan in 2009. He sentenced him on Friday to a dishonorable discharge and a reduction in rank and said he had to forfeit pay equal to \$1,000 per month for 10 months. He was freed from any time behind bars... Chances are you haven't heard of the six soldiers who died searching for him after he went missing. According to military officials, Staff Sergeant Clayton Bowen, and members of his team; Walker, Curtiss, Andrews, Murphrey, Martinek were part of the 4th Brigade Combat Team.

The principle of leaving no one behind — no matter the cost — is deeply embedded in the U.S. military. Those in uniform believe that no stone will be left unturned to get them home if they fall into enemy hands. Yes, a real price was paid for Bergdahl's release; upholding this value is not cheap. This is the protocol of the US Military and it is the core of sacrificial love.

This is a good illustration of the kind of love that John writes about in this passage. In the Christian life, loving one another is “standard protocol” it is not “optional.” Regardless of the circumstances, how unlovable one might be, or how they have hurt us, if we are true Christians, we may not like someone but we must love them. Jesus said in John 15:13...

**Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.**

The word love “agapao” in Greek is found over twenty times in 1 John, and in this particular passage we learn two characteristics of agape love.

### I True love cannot hate (3:11-15).

1. This passage begins concerning the message John heard from the beginning. That “message” from the beginning refers to the time Jesus first told His disciples to love one another in John 15:17; “These things I command you, that ye love one another.” This command is a crucial part of being a “true” Christian.

John warns us of the consequences of not loving with true love by writing we should not be as Cain, who was of that wicked one ... (1 Jn 3:12a). When we refuse to love, our hearts are filled with resentment and bitterness, which are forms of hate. When we are filled with resentment and bitterness, our minds and emotions are controlled by the wicked one, and he will exploit this advantage he has over you to hurt others, to hurt you, and the church.

2) To hate is to be like Cain, who ... slew his brother. (3:12b). This verse takes us back to Genesis, to Cain and Abel, Adam and Eve's first two sons. Cain, the first-born, brought some of the fruit of the ground as an offering unto the LORD (Gen. 4:3). Since it was not the prescribed blood offering. God rejected it. However, Abel brought a blood offering of the firstlings of his flock, which the Lord accepted (Gen. 4:4). Because Abel's sacrifice involved

blood, it testified to the need for the death of a substitute. It was a shadow of the cross. Jesus describe Abel's offering in Matthew 23:35 as a righteous offering.

3) By refusing to bring the prescribed sacrifice and instead presenting the fruit of his own labor, Cain was saying, "My good works and character are enough." He was saying, "My sin isn't so bad. Many people today are like Cain; they bring the wrong offerings to God. When Cain's offering was rejected, what did he do? (1 Jn 3:12)- He killed his brother Abel; and wherefore slew he him? ...Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

4) We need to realize that refusing to love usually shows up first in the form of envy, as it did with Cain. According to James 3:16...where envying and strife [is], there [is] confusion and every evil work. When we refuse to love, our hearts become filled with jealousy, gossip, resentment, bitterness, and anger. These sins lead to all kinds of evil acts... **examples.**

The basic Christian message has not changed. Perhaps some have thought that because Christians talk about a "personal relationship with Jesus Christ" that it is only us and Jesus who matter. But how we treat others – how we love one another – really matters before God.

**--- Matthew 25; 41-45**

5) John continues: **Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hates you** (1 Jn 3:13). A good Christian testimony makes people who aren't living for God feel uncomfortable. A pure Christian life acts as a light that exposes sin in the lives of others (Mt 5:14). Only one thing prevents all of us from being like Cain, and that is love. If it were not the love by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us we could not love as God does.

John writes: **We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death** (3:14). We all expect to pass from life to death; but in Jesus, we can turn it around... I John 3:15 states- **Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer**: We all sometimes feel like that. There is no greater contrast than murder and love; they are polar opposites. You might say, "I would never murder anyone."

6) The word translated hateth (me' sa o) in verse 15 is present tense and refers to continuous hate that cannot be appeased. Hating someone is like wishing that person were dead. The attitude is the same; the only difference is the outward act. That's why Jesus said: **Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment** (Mt 5:21). Then, what does our Lord say in Matthew 5:22a?

To habitually hate is to be a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him (1 Jn 3:15). The outward proof we are really Christians, is our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is difficult to love some people yet God teaches us to love. He puts unlovable, difficult people in our lives to reveal our lack of true love. Have you failed the "love test" lately?

There are three tests to measure the proof of a genuine Christian: the truth test, the love test, and the moral test. If we believe in what the Bible teaches as true, if we show the love of Jesus

to others, and if our conduct has been changed and is becoming more like Jesus, then our claim to be a Christian can be proven true.

## II True love cannot hoard (3:16-18).

1) In contrast to hate, which desires to kill, true love is willing to sacrifice for the well-being of others. Love helps others with no thought of reward.

**Illustration:** Reader's Digest had a section entitled "Life in the United States." Several years ago a man wrote to share an experience that occurred in his family. He said his mother and father were having an argument. In the middle of the argument his father suggested that they each get a piece of paper and make a list of the others faults. He said his mother wrote a long list in fact she needed a second sheet of paper. However, instead of writing faults, his father wrote the words "I love you" repeatedly down the side of his paper. Our words, actions and thoughts should communicate love to the other person.

2) John writes: **Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (3:16).** Knowing most of us will never face the necessity of dying for someone, John gives us another way to know the love of God in us. **But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (3:17).** This doesn't mean we should give out money indiscriminately to everyone in need. If you are not willing to work Paul stated then don't eat. When people are able and have opportunity to work, but they refuse, we are not to help them.

3) However, when someone is in legitimate need and we habitually have no compassion on him or her, the love of God is not in us. According to the Bible, sin is more than doing something bad or wrong. James said in chapter 4:17 of his epistle...

**Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth [it] not, to him it is sin.**

4) There are two basic kinds of sins: sins of commission and sins of omission. To keep us from being guilty of the sins of omission, John concludes this section by writing: **My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth (1 Jn 3:18).** Lip service without doing something to help is just hypocrisy. True love doesn't just talk; it acts. There is an old saying: "Talk is . . ." What? "Cheap!" Romans 5:8 describe how Christ demonstrated His true love for us.

## Conclusion:

In Galatians 6:2, Paul issued one of the fundamental principles of Christian human relations. **Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.** God has puts us in the communities of believers precisely because we need one another so much. We are mutually indispensable! Our responsibility is to help one another in times of need, thereby love one another.