

1 John 3:18-24
“The antidote to hate”

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I. Intro

This morning we take up the antidote to the three examples in “types of human relationships” that should NOT be in the body of Christ.

1. Vs. 12 Murder
2. Vs. 13-15 Hatred
3. Vs. 16-17 Indifference

As we shall examine what abiding in Christ’s love should produce in our hearts towards each other in verses 18-24, **Compassion** and it is this compassion that is the antidote to the flesh. John revealed to his readers that there an unholy “trilogy of the flesh” in that we see: “Murder” starts in the flesh when “hatred” has progressed beyond the continual attitude of “indifference” towards someone in the family of God. The apostle points out in verse 13 that **Christian’s should not be surprised by the attitude of the world towards us, but the world ought to be continually surprised by our attitude and action towards them.** There are certain characteristics that are mutually exclusive: **Love and hate, like light and darkness, life, and death; you are either one or the other but never both at the same time! No person can maintain both residences:** A person who is staying at home in the world cannot keep their home with Christ also! John will spend the bulk of this section reassuring believers on the assurances that God provides for the believer who is: Practicing righteousness and loving their brothers and sisters in Christ!

II. Vs. 17-18 In deed and in truth

Vs. 17-18 First John has a further clarification on the type of practical love that he is writing on. The followers of Christ need to remember that “**Love is SEEN and NOT just HEARD!**” **Our Love for the body of Christ is the evidence of our having received the Love of God!** It is the Holy Spirit speaking through *the Apostle John that reminds the believer that Love can NOT be understood solely by:*

- *What we **THINK**, no matter how accurate*
- *What we **FEEL**, no matter how passionately*
- *What we **SAY**, no matter how often and eloquently*

Instead, **the only genuine proof that we can offer is practical, self-sacrificing activity directed towards our brothers and sisters in Christ.** The body of Christ is to be the object of our affection and it is to be seen practically and not theoretically, in reality and not profession! It is in the “small things” that are the best tests of the love that Jesus commanded the Christian to have to one another. But the negative of this also true that when the professing Christian on willing to help their brothers and sisters in need it makes it certain John says that at that moment and perhaps for certain that God’s love is not indwelling that person. There must be in every believer a “**Reality of God’s Love**” that is seen expressing Gods love by three things:

- a. A heart that wants to help their fellow follower of Jesus
- b. A heart that seeks to know others needs
- c. A hear that is willing to sacrifice their comfort for the needs so others

While on a mission trip the missionary told me the story of a visitor on the foreign field that always spoke of their love for the believers in that country. They were always speaking to him

with words that expressed their affection. The missionary was shocked to find out that not one time had they ever contributed anything to meet the needs of those they had said that they loved. The love they had was to be known as loving but not to be loving! The words “HAS THIS WORLDS GOODS” with “AND SEES HIS BROTHER IN NEED” combined with the words, “AND SHUTS UP HIS HEART FROM HIM” shows the true condition of “self-love”. It is to this person that John now asks the question, “How does the love of God abide in him?” The true believer knows what “Loving in, deed and in truth” is. The comparison here is between: DEED and WORD and TRUTH and TONGUE. James in his letter wrote of this in 2:15-16 when he wrote that “*If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, depart in peace, be warmed, and filled, but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?*” To love in “WORD” means that the person is only interested in “TALKING” about the need. Whereas as “IN DEED” means that the believer is doing something about it. To merely discussed a NEED or to even have prayed for a need is NOT the same as doing something about it. The love that Jesus commanded involves more than words, it calls for sacrificial deeds! To love in “TONGUE” is the opposite of to love in “TRUTH”. To love in tongue suggests an insincerity, whereas to love in truth speaks of genuine true heart! People will soon find out if a person is all talk or a person of action. A person of FAITH or a mere FRAUD!

III. Vs. 19-24 By this we know

Vs. 19-24 The context of this passage is found in the phrase at the start of verse 19 where John writes, “By this we know” and begs the reader to ask to question what is the “THIS” that John is writing of? The answer to that is obvious as these next verses describe three blessed assurances that God gives a true believer who practices Christian love.

1. Vs. 19-24a *Assurance of authentic relationship*: In these verse John reveals 7 signs of an authentic relationship with God in *three specific areas*: **Relationship**, **Prayer**, and **Abiding**. John does this so that the believer would KNOW that they have passed from death to life:
 - a. **Vs. 19a That we are OF THE TRUTH**: Notice that **John doesn't say, "IN TRUTH"**. The **difference between "IN TRUTH" and "OF TRUTH"** is that we are **"IN MONTANA"** which **describes a geographical position** whereas if we said we are **"OF MONTANA"** we are **declaring that we are made up of** Montana, that it is impossible to separate the two. John is declaring that the first assurance that the true believer has because they are practicing truth is that it isn't just head knowledge if heart knowledge!
 - b. **Vs. 19b Confident hearts in the presence of God**: The true believer has no fear before the presence of God as they practice living before Him in truth. Because they practice truth they don't have a condemning heart or accusing conscience and because of this they walk with God in love with an open heart knowing that God only disciplines those He loves.
 - c. **Vs. 20 Freedom from condemnation and doubt of God's love**: Even if our own heart condemns us we can have the assurance that that God doesn't condemn us. God is greater than our doubt and never judges us wrongly. Though we should never treat sin lightly we must also never be harder on ourselves than God is.
2. Vs. 21b-22 *Assurance of answered prayer*: These next two both deal with our communication with God:
 - a. Vs. 21 **We have confidence with God**: The first confidence in communication to say

what is really true in our hearts before God. We don't have to pretend or be hypocritical to God. Not only is such action foolish as He is all knowing, in the believer who is practicing truth we can talk with God about whatever is on our hearts knowing that He loves us and longs to hear from us. The freedom of speech gives us greater boldness in approaching in confidence!

- b. Vs. 22 **Assurance of answers**: Here is that the truth that says, "***If we seek to do God's will as if it was ours than He will work through our will as if it was His.***"

John is not saying that somehow by doing right things we will earn answered prayer instead what John is declaring is that a "***Christian who ever lives to please God will soon discover that God will always find ways to please His child.***" That is what Psalm 37:4 says, "***Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.***"

3. Vs. 23-24 **Assurance of abiding commitment**: John restates the expectation that God has for his children, but this twofold expectation is that which a relationship with Him has assured the follower of the ability to live this out. They we should trust Jesus and because of this that we should love one another. Because of this John declares that they have the assurance of a continued "abiding relationship with Christ".

- a. Vs. 24a **Abides in Him**: What we see in this is that such abiding relationship with Christ is reciprocal in nature. Sometimes we think that it is only as clinging to Him, and it is clearly God that we have made the daily decision to "stay at home with Jesus" but it is even greater to understand that He has made the decision first to stay at home with us!
- b. Vs. 24b **And He in us**: This assurance also comes with a guarantee of the continual

indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which our hearts are constantly reassured of our abiding relationship. The Holy Spirit in our hearts is the guarantee of authenticity of our ongoing relationship with God. Paul wrote to the Roman believers of this in 5:5 saying that the “**Love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given us.**”