

## Putting our Love into Action # 10

1 John 3: 11-17

Our text this evening continues to deal with the great theme of love that John has already dealt with extensively. I suppose there is no wonder John felt so impressed to emphasize love among the believers. He was blessed to walk with the Lord, studying His life and ministry, clearly seeing the love Jesus expressed to others. Jesus is the great example of love that each of us need to emulate. Jesus didn't just speak of love, He exemplified love. He was moved with compassion as He witnessed the multitudes scattered as sheep without a shepherd. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, encouraged the lonely, and gave Himself on the cross for our sin. He gave His life so we might have life and have it more abundantly.

As we follow Jesus' great example and seek to heed the words of John in the Scripture, we too must be willing to put our love into action. It is easy to talk of love. It is easy to express concern for the pressing needs of our day, but it is quite something else to be moved to action. Our love must not be limited to conversation; it must compel us to act! Let's take a few moments to consider the [challenges](#) John speaks of as we think on: [Putting our Love into Action](#).

**I. The Exhortation for Love** (11-13) – John exhorts the believer to love one another. His exhortation is:

**A. A Timely Message** (11) – [For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another](#). Again this is nothing new; John isn't sharing a message they have never heard. From their earliest encounter with the gospel and the beginning of their relationship with Christ, they had been encouraged to love one another. This is essential to the Christian faith. We cannot serve the Lord and please Him apart from love. Loving others accompanies salvation.

- This remains a timely message for our day as well. Surely we all could love more, and in our day of self-indulgence and intolerance, love is certainly needed. We are never more like our Lord than when we love others. [John 13:34 – A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.](#)

**B. A Tested Message** (12) – [Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous](#). The message of love and expectation associated with it were not new to John's generation. This was not a new doctrine Jesus taught as He walked among men. The people of God were always expected to show His love toward others. That expectation wasn't always honored however. It didn't take long

for love to be tested and even resisted. John reminds us of how Cain slew Abel in a moment of rage and anger. Abel showed love while Cain revealed the hatred within his heart. Cain despised his brother because Abel's sacrifice was accepted in God's eyes and his wasn't.

- Again we see that the heart is always revealed in time. What we possess within our hearts will eventually be revealed through our actions. One can know of love and understand God's expectation for love, and yet refuse to love. Genuine love cannot be fabricated or imitated. It is either present within our hearts from Christ or not. We cannot offer what we do not possess!

**C. A Tempered Message** (13) – *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.* John didn't want believers to be ignorant of the evils of the day. Upon conversion the love of Christ fills our hearts. We are compelled to show that love because we belong to Him. However, not everyone will appreciate our love, and some will even hate us for our relationship with Christ. We can show love to all we meet, but that doesn't necessarily mean our love will be received or appreciated.

- Really this should come as no surprise. Jesus is love. He showed and shared love with all He met. His love moved Him to action, but He was not received of all. Many hated Him in spite of His love. If our Lord was hated even as He loved, we need not expect everyone to love us. In fact, we might as well expect opposition and hatred from the world. *John 15:19 – If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

**II. The Revelation in Love** (14-15) – Here we discover that love, or its absence, will be revealed in the lives we live. Consider the revelation in love. We find:

**A. It Reveals Internal Character** (14) – *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.* A tree is known by its fruit. Those who are born again in Christ will inevitably possess love for their brethren. We cannot help it. Love simply flows naturally from the heart of a believer. John reveals such love stands as a genuine mark of one's salvation. Those who belong to Christ will love others. That love may not be received or reciprocated, but we will love nonetheless.

- Just as love shown for others is a good indicator of salvation, the absence of love stands a good indicator of the lack of salvation. If one cannot love his brother, he continues to abide in death, never being brought from death unto life in Christ. That isn't to say we have to love the actions of others or their sin, but we must possess love if we belong to Christ!

**B. It Reveals Eternal Consequence (15)** – [Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.](#) Here John deals exclusively with those who lack love for their brother, those who possess genuine hatred rather than love. These are strong words, but they are truth! Those who genuinely hate are viewed as murderers in God's eyes. To possess real hatred for another is equivalent to killing them. There is absolutely no difference in God's holy standard. *"Love is the only security against hate. And as every one who does not love is potentially a hater, so every hater is potentially a murderer. A murderer is a hater who expresses his hatred in the most emphatic way. A hater who does not murder abstains for various reasons from this extreme way of expressing his hate. But the temper of the two men is the same."* <sup>i</sup>

- We cannot miss the eternal consequence of hatred within the heart. Those who hate, in essence guilty of murder, do not have eternal life abiding in them. They have never been born again in Christ. The hatred possessed through the fallen nature was never replaced with the love of Christ. Love and hate cannot inhabit the same heart. Those who never receive love, which dispels their hatred, will not inherit eternal life. [Gal.5:21 – Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.](#) [Rev.21:8 – But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.](#)

**III. The Inspiration to Love (16-17)** – As we conclude our study, John now brings our attention to the great inspiration we have to love. Consider:

**A. The Divine Example (16a)** – [Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us:](#) If you ever wondered what real love looks like, look no further than Jesus. He came to earth as God in the flesh. He inhabited a body as we do and yet He maintained the very essence of God. The one who created all we see and know, including all humanity, the Lord who inhabited the realms of glory worshipped by the angels, the one who was perfectly holy and righteous gave His life upon the cruel cross for our sin because He loves us! What love Jesus had for humanity!

- That challenges my heart this evening. Often our love is affected by circumstances and emotions. We tend to get angry and hold grudges. We refuse an effort to forget the pain others have caused. We often wear our feelings on our sleeve, just daring someone to brush up against them. That is not the type of love Christ possesses or showed mankind. I am certain we have not endured the suffering and shame He did, and yet He loved enough to lay down His life for us! Oh how we need to follow His divine example and love others unconditionally despite circumstances!

**B. The Daily Expression** (16b) – *and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*. This is a hard statement to receive, but it reveals the divine expectation. As we look to the love of Christ as our example, we ought to be inspired to love as He loved. We ought to be willing to do whatever it takes to love one another. We ought to be willing to make any sacrifice necessary to express our love for others. We must be willing to love as Christ loved.

- Often we wonder why our churches have declined so much in recent years. We wonder why folks don't show up for service when invited. There are many factors involved with the decline, but we need not look any further than the nearest mirror for part of the reason. What kind of love do we express in our day? Do we share the love of Christ with others? Do they see anything in us they would desire? We must be willing to love without limits!

**C. The Decisive Examination** (17) – *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?* Yet again we find a statement that is difficult to embrace, but it reveals great truth. John is asking how we can claim the love of Christ and refuse to help others when it is within our power to do so. How can our hearts be right with the Lord when we see others suffering need and refuse to lend a helping hand? How can we feel good about our relationship with Christ and yet be unconcerned about the desperate spiritual needs of our day? We have the good news of the glorious gospel. We have more resources available to us than any other generation, and yet we are content to attend services with little if any concern for others.

- I pray the Lord will open our eyes; mine included, and allow us to see others as He sees them. May our hearts be filled with compassion for those who stand in such desperate need! Jesus didn't ignore the needs of His day and we must not ignore the needs of ours.

**Conclusion:** It is probably safe to say that we all possess love, but does our love please the Lord? Does our love move us to action? Are we motivated to address the needs of our day? Are we willing to be the hands, feet, and voice of Jesus within a world that needs Him?

One cannot know love apart from Christ. If you have never been saved, you really do not know what love is. He is the great example and giver of love. If you have never experienced His great love in salvation, seek Him as He speaks to you!

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<sup>i</sup> Plummer, A. "The Pulpit Commentary," Vol.22, p.74).