

## Brotherly Love

3:11-18

### Cain And Abel

**3:11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;**

- “aggeli’a”- “message, announcement, directive”
- 1. They had heard “the message” “from the beginning,” that is from the time they heard God’s word proclaimed and became Christians. It was not a new message.
- 2. “The message” was “that we should love one another.”
- 3. “Love” was an essential part of the gospel message, and an essential part of the life of the Christian.
- 4. Without love the Christian is nothing spiritually. (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

**3:12 not as Cain, {who} was of the evil one [the devil], and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.**

- “of the evil one” is literally “of the evil.”
  - “One” is in italics, but seems to be the proper translation to capture the idea. He did the work of the devil when he killed his brother.
  - John says “his deeds were evil.” This seems to be a description of his character. This may suggest that the character of Cain was bad before the sacrifices discussed here and in Genesis 4.
1. The narrative of Cain and Abel is found in Genesis the fourth chapter.

GEN 4:1 Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord."

GEN 4:2 And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

GEN 4:3 So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground.

GEN 4:4 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;

GEN 4:5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

GEN 4:6 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

GEN 4:7 "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."

GEN 4:8 And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

2. The Bible states that Abel offered his sacrifice “by faith.” (Heb. 11:4).
  - a. The Bible sets forth that faith comes from hearing God’s word. (Rom. 10:17).

- b. This means that God told Cain and Abel the kind of sacrifice He wanted. He wanted an animal [blood] sacrifice. Cain's offering (being bloodless) was not acceptable.
  - c. Abel offered what God commanded (a blood sacrifice), and Cain did not.
    - 1) The fact "Cain was a tiller of the ground" did not keep him from offering what God commanded.
    - 2) Cain could have offered an animal sacrifice.
    - 3) There is no evidence that the sacrifice God wanted was unavailable to Cain. Cain did not use that as an excuse, but became angry with his brother and killed him.
  - d. God is not a respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34, 35). See 2 Pet. 3:9.
    - 1) Cain's sacrifice was rejected because it was not what God commanded.
    - 2) Cain offered what pleased himself rather than what was pleasing to God.
    - 3) God had no favoritism for Abel.
    - 4) He wanted to bless both men.
3. The word "slew" has the idea of a violent death.
- a. It comes from the Greek "spha'zo" which is pronounced sfad'-zo.
  - b. A primary verb; to butcher (especially an animal for food or in sacrifice) or (generally) to slaughter, or (specifically) to maim (violently):
  - c. KJV– kill, slay, wound.
4. The language strongly suggests that Cain violently killed his brother.
5. Jealously or hate leads to awful deeds. (Matt. 27:18). See Jas. 4:2.

### **“Do Not Marvel”**

**3:13 Do not marvel, brethren [brothers], if the world hates you.**

- The Greek "mise'o" means "hate." It is used to mean far more than just dislike.
1. The world (most of it) hated Jesus.
    - a. It hated Him even though He was sinless and spent His life doing good. (1 Jn. 3:5; Acts 10:38).
    - b. It hated Him because He was light (Jn. 1:4, 5, 9; 8:12), and He did not proclaim what it wanted to hear or believe. He fail short of their preconceived ideas about the Messiah.
  2. We should "not marvel" [be amazed, shocked, surprised] if the world hates us. (Jn. 15:18, 19).
    - a. As Christians we strive to please God and to do good, but we are far from sinless. We make mistakes and commit sins that hurt others and saddens God.

b. Some may hate us without cause other than we are seeking to please Jesus, but others could hate us with cause.

c. It will hate us if we seek to do God's will.

**3:14 We know [are persuaded] that we have passed out of [spiritual] death into life, because we love the brethren [brothers]. He who does not love abides in [spiritual] death.**

- Gr. “metabai’no” [me ta bi’ no] means “I go (or pass) over, out of.”
  1. Love is not how we become children of God.
    - a. We become children of God through the new birth. (Jn. 3:1-5).
    - b. See Titus 3:5; Gal. 3:26, 27.
  2. Love is evidence we have passed out of spiritual death (a state of condemnation) into the new life. See Eph. 2:1
  3. A failure to love is conclusive evidence, proof that one continues in a state of spiritual separation from God.
  4. Love is not the only test of passing from “death into life.”
    - a. The one who “has passed out of death into life” hears the words of Jesus and believes the Father who sent Jesus.

John 5:24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

b. Either failing to hear Jesus or to love is positive proof that one remains in death.

### **Seriousness Of Hate**

**3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.**

- “everyone” indicates there no exceptions. Literally “all the ones hating the brother of him”
  1. The one “who hates his brother is a murderer,” that is, has a murderous disposition.
    - a. He delights in hurting the one he hates or seeing them hurt. He will speak evil of him. He will not be grieved over his suffering. He will not help the one he hates.
    - b. He might even kill the person if given the opportunity.
    - c. Many murders are crimes of hate.
  2. The one hating his brother does not have “eternal life abiding in him.”
    - a. The one who hates will not enjoy “eternal life “ if he continues in that hate.
    - b. He must rid his life of all hate and malice. (1 Pet. 2:1).

- c. He must not let “the sun go down on his anger.” (Eph. 4:26, 27).
- d. He must have a loving, forgiving spirit. (Matt. 6:14, 15; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).

**Notes:**

1. The one hating his brother is potentially a literal murderer.
2. Hate among Christians seldom leads to literal murder, but it can lead to many awful deeds.
3. It may cause them “to bite and devour another.” (Gal. 5:15).
4. Cousins to “hate” are “lust” and “envy”

JAM 4:2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. It is not likely that Christians were committing literal murder, but “lust” and “envy” were leading to disgusting actions.

**Note:** As bad as hate is, most would rather be hated than murdered. Being hated can lead to persecution and suffering and all kinds of difficulties.

**3:16 We know [have known] love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought [are obligated] to lay down our lives for the brethren [brothers].**

- “We know” is the Greek perfect tense, and is literally “we have known love by this”
- “psuche” [psoo khay]- “soul, life.” It is used here to mean “life.”
- **It was used this way in Matthew 2:20.**

MAT 2:20 "Arise and take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's **life** are dead." “Life” is from “psuche” denoting the “life” of Jesus - not His immortal “soul.” Herod wanted to kill Jesus.

1. Jesus loved us with the supreme love. (Jn. 15:13; 10:11, 17, 18a).
2. The words “we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” indicate we are to love one another more than life.
  - a. The second greatest commandment taught we are to love our neighbor as self. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39).
  - b. Jesus taught we are to love our brethren more than self. (Jn.13:34, 35).
  - c. This is a description of a sacrificial, serving love.
  - d. It does not means we are required to die for one another, but we should love one another that much.
  - e. This love is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

1CO 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,  
 1CO 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

1CO 13:6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;  
1CO 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

3. The second John 3:16 stresses the great love we are to have for one another.

### **Love Must Be Demonstrated**

**3:17 But whoever has the world's goods [material possessions], and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?**

- “bi’os” [bee’ os]- “life, conduct, property, possessions.”
1. Love demands we share what we have with others. See Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27; Acts 20:35; Eph. 4:28; Matt. 25:31-46.
  2. The question “how does the love of God abide in him?” anticipates a negative answer.
  3. God’s love does not dwell in the one who is unloving and unmerciful to his brother.

**Note:** The Greek for “close his heart against him” is literally “bowels.” The bowels were thought of as the seat of compassion. Greek literally has “shuts the bowels [entrails, inward parts] of him from him.”

**3:18 Little children, let us not love with word [only] or with tongue [only], but in deed [in action] and truth [reality, not pretense].**

1. This appears to be an ellipsis - a word is understood, but omitted.
  - a. There are other examples of the ellipsis in the New Testament.
  - b. Here are two. (Jn. 6:27; 1 Tim. 5:23).

JOH 6:27 "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal." Jesus is not forbidding work, but the idea is that they were not to exclusively spend their time working for perishable bread. Christians are expected to work. (Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:10). Christians are expected to provide for family. (1 Thess. 5:8). They are expected to work and help others. (Eph. 4:28; Gal. 6:10).

1TI 5:23 No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. Lit. “no longer drink water.” But the meaning is “no longer drink water *only* or *exclusively*. It idea is that this teetotaler was encouraged to drink “a little wine” for the sake of his stomach. A human cannot live without water. The “wine” was used as medicine - not for pleasure.

2. The verse is best understood, “Little children, let us not love with word (only) or with tongue (only), but in deed and truth.”
  - a. Yes, we are to “love another with word or with tongue,” but we are not to love with words only.
  - b. We should use words to encourage, praise, build-up etc. others
3. James vividly brought this out that faith and love are demonstrated by actions in his epistle. (Jas. 2:14-17).

### **The Christian’s Confidence**

**3:19 We shall know by this [a sharing love] that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him,**

1. We can “know” “that we are of the truth.”

a. To be “of the truth” is another way of saying they were “walking in the light” and had come to know God and His Son.

b. This has the same idea as 1 John 2:3,4,5.

1JO 2:3 And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

1JO 2:4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

1JO 2:5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

c. It also resembles 1 John 2:9-11 and 1 John. 2:20-24.

2. The Christian can be confident, be assured he is of God.

• “assure” is from the Greek “pei’tho” [pay’ tho] It means “to persuade, be confident of.”

a. This confidence comes from the fact he is a child of God “walking in the light.” (1 Jn. 1:7).

b. This confidence comes from the fact he is constantly confessing his sins and letting the blood of Jesus cleanse him of all his sins. (1 Jn. 1:9).

3. John is addressing some Christians who were experiencing feelings of guilt and condemnation.

**3:20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.**

• “in whatever” comes from the Greek “ho’ti ean” that can be rendered “that if” and the word “for” comes from the Greek “ho’ti” meaning “that or because.” Rendering “ho’ti” both times ‘that’ makes good sense.

• “that (ho’ti) if our heart condemns us, that (ho’ti) God is greater than our hearts and knows all things.”

• “kata gin o’sko” - “I condemn, convict.”

1. The heart of the conscientious Christian sometimes is very condemning.

a. He is aware of the high standard of God, and he is aware of the great needs of the world and the church.

b. He feels inadequate regardless of what he does. He has feelings of guilt for the hungry he could not feed, for the discouraged he could not see, for the lost he could not teach, for the sick and bereaved he could not visit..

c. He feels he has not done enough, and he wonders if he is really a Christian.

2. John assures his readers that God “is greater than our heart, and knows all things.”

a. The fact that God knows more and is more tolerant than our own hearts should comfort us. It is His judgment

that counts.

- b. These words are not written to the indifferent Christian who could care less about God and others, but to the Christian who is earnestly seeking to walk in the light.

**3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn [convict] us, we have confidence [boldness] before God;**

1. Not every Christian may experience feelings of condemnation. Having such feelings is not a prerequisite of being a faithful Christian, but some faithful Christians have them
2. Even those who do not have the feelings of condemnation can “have confidence before God” if they are depending on God’s grace, walking in the light, and confessing their sins to God.

**3:22 and whatever we ask [believing in prayer] we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and [habitually] do the things that are pleasing in His sight.**

- Gr. “arestos” [ar e stos’] - “pleasing”
  - “in His sight” is literally “before Him.” (eno’pion autou’)
1. God answers the prayers of His children. (Matt. 7:7-11; Jas. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:14, 15).
  2. John gives two reasons for God granting our petitions.
    - a. It is “because we keep His Commandments.” (1 Jn. 3:22). See Prov. 15:29; 28:9.

PRO 15:29 The Lord is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.	PRO 28:9 He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.
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- b. The second reason is closely related to the first. God delights in those who are obedient to Him. (Matt.7:21; Heb. 5:9). “The things that are pleasing in His sight” means obeying Him.

**3:23 And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name [the Person and authority] of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.**

1. It is God’s commandment “that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ.” See John 6:29.

JOH 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."
2. It is God’s commandment that we “love one another, just as He commanded us.”
3. God’s commandments are not exhausted in this verse unless one understands “name” to include the authority of Christ.
  - a. To “believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ” is to believe Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of God” and to keep His commandments.
  - b. No one truly believes “in the name of His Son Jesus Christ” without obeying Him. (Matt. 28:18-20; 7:21; Lk. 6:46; Heb. 5:9).

4. We are to obey Jesus and His commandments. (Lk. 6:46; Jn. 14:15; 15:14).

3:24 **And the one who keeps His commandments abides [remains] in Him [Jesus], and He [Jesus] in him. And we [Christians] know by this that He [Jesus] abides in us, by the [Holy] Spirit whom He [Jesus] has given us.**

- “commandments” here is plural.
  - See 1 John 2:3-5; 5:3.
1. “The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him [Jesus]”
    - a. 1 John 2:5, 6, 14, 24; 3:6.
    - b. John 14:23, 24.

JOH 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.

JOH 14:24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

2. The Christian has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38; 5:32; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:9; 1 Jn. 3:24).
3. The Holy Spirit is a sign of our sonship and “a pledge of our inheritance.” (Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13, 14).

GAL 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"	EPH 1:13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, <b>you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,</b> EPH 1:14 who is given as a <b>pledge of our inheritance,</b> with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.
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4. The Holy Spirit is an incentive to holiness. (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).
5. The passage also indicates Jesus abides in the Christian.
  - a. “and he [Jesus] in him.”
  - b. “By this that He [Jesus] abides in us.”
  - c. Christ dwells in the Christian. (Jn. 14:20, 23; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; 1 Jn. 3:24).
  - d. We are never told exactly how Jesus abides in us, but it is affirmed that He does.
    - 1) The how is not as important as the fact that He does.
    - 2) One can go to heaven without knowing how, but one cannot go to heaven without Jesus abiding or dwelling in him.



- e. The presence of the Holy Spirit shows Jesus abides in us, but Jesus abiding in us is not affirmed to be by representation.
- f. The presence of the Holy Spirit is proof Jesus abides in the Christian.

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