

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 7- The Test of Love

58. The Law of Love Part 6

WAOY Thursday 07/26/07; WOSM Wednesday 12/21/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to examine what John taught about "The Law of Love". So, let's open our Bibles to **1John 2:9-11** and read those verses again together:

9 The one who says he is in the Light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Now I ended the last broadcast by showing just what John meant by the word hate. When John talked about hate here in 1John- the Apostle used the Greek word- *miseoo* (**mise/w**), which can mean that you detest; or have a great dislike or distaste for someone. But this particular word has an even deeper meaning.

You see to hate someone in a Biblical sense does not require that you do something violent to someone or even that you have a strong emotion against them. No, this word is a very unique word and John meant to use this particular word when he wrote 1John.

So, to *miseoo* someone means to love them less; to withhold your love from them; or to simply not care about them. So while the English word, "hate" can even mean violence in some cases – the word that John used here does not mean that we do violence toward our brothers but that we simply love them less than the Bible commands us to; that we

simply cease from caring about them; or that we view them not to be worth the effort that it takes to love them.

So, John is saying here that loving our brethren will require effort in some cases either due to their being unlovable or due to our being unwilling to love them and loving them will require patience and long suffering and it will require that we forgive them at times and overlook the way they do or say things.

In other words, John is saying here that loving the brethren will cost us something - but John is also saying that that whatever effort that loving our brethren requires of us- it is worth it- because loving the brethren brings great glory to God.

And here in verses 9 -11, John is also saying that if we ever get to the place where we no longer view these particular people as worth the effort- when we simply stop caring about them; or we choose to simply love them less than the Bible requires of us- - we are “hating” them in the Biblical sense of the word and John says if we do that- we are walking in darkness.

Now can you see how serious our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ really is to God? And if God views this as a very important issue- don't we need to look at this as being very important also?

If we really understood how vital loving our brethren is to God- we could eliminate almost all of the problems in the Church- because you see loving our brothers is not optional- we must do this or we walk in darkness.

Now keep in mind that loving our brethren doesn't have anything to do with them being lovable. Some people are simply not easy to love. Their mannerisms: their way they conduct themselves; their speech; the way they handle their affairs simply make it hard to love them. But that doesn't matter one whit to God. We are commanded to love all of the brethren regardless of how difficult it might be- so this is where the rubber meets the road in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Many people leave Churches today over conflicts and because they get their feelings hurt. In fact, I would say that these are the two main reasons why people leave churches. But if we are to love our brothers and sisters in Christ and if we are to forgive our brothers seventy times seven in one day and if we are to be merciful and tenderhearted and longsuffering toward each other then why do people leave over these two issues? Is that not sin? If I am commanded to forgive and I choose

to leave the Church rather than forgive my brother is that not sin on my part? Where do I get the right to disobey the Scripture simply because I am offended at someone else? I don't have that right do I? No, I gave up that right when Jesus bought and paid for me.

“Well now wait a minute, Brother Blair- are you saying that offended people do not have the right to leave a Church because someone in that Church has offended them but that they are to forgive that person and be reconciled to that person rather than leave? Is that what you are saying?”

No, I'm telling you that that is what God the Holy Spirit commanded you to do in sacred Scripture- not me. And I am telling you that 90% of everybody who leaves Churches do so for the wrong reasons and they are sinning when they leave.

Hear me real closely on this beloved- As good as it is or as bad as it is- the Church of Jesus Christ is the only agency on the face of the earth that God Almighty ordained for Christians. Every single soul on earth who is saved is commanded by Scripture to be a part of local Church- and not just to show up once a week for a couple of hours- but to be engaged; to help; to work; to labor; to volunteer; to assist; to struggle to cause that Church to become a glory to God and to faithful to Scripture.

If that Church is out of line – then work hard to bring it into line; if that Church is weak; then labor alongside of your brothers and sisters and help make that Church strong; if that Church is off base then get it on base; and if that Church is right – if the leaders of that Church are all biblically qualified; if the pastor is preaching and teaching the whole Counsel of God; if that Church is praying without ceasing; if that Church is doing everything in its power to be in line with Scripture- then thank God for that Church and labor unendingly to keep it faithful.

And as you do that- you will get offended. And you know why that is true? Because the Church is made up of people; lots of people; who are in various stages of their spiritual development. And people offend people. Even the closet of friends periodically offend one another. And that is because they are human and are not divine. So, if you have been in Church for any length of time at all- you will be both the one who has been offended and you will also be the one who did the offending.

Someone once said that the Church would be a great place if it weren't for all those pesky people. But we must remember, beloved, that Jesus didn't die for buildings; and Jesus didn't die for programs and Jesus didn't die for money- Jesus died for people- Jesus was beaten and was horribly tortured and hung on a Cross and bled and died for people because people are the most important commodity on earth and so God places people- imperfect people- together in Church and commands them to love each other.

The Church is made up of strong and vibrant servants of Jesus Christ; but the Church is also made up of weak individuals who still suck milk and who can't eat meat yet. The Church is made up of people who know they are wrong, and the Church is made up of people who somehow believe that they have no faults of their own. The Church is made up of people who are on top of everything, and the Church is made up of people who have everything on top of them. The Church is made up of young and old; male and female; wise and foolish; experienced and inexperienced; rich and poor; educated and uneducated; tall and short and fat and skinny and white and black and red and brown and yellow and everything in between people.

Some people in the Church are in a place where all faith has been given to them and others have just lost a child and their faith has been shattered. Some are strong and some are weak- but we are commanded- we are not asked- we are *commanded* to love them all.

Sometimes saved people just don't act the way they are supposed to do- did you know that? So sometimes people don't treat you the way they should have- that is true. But it is also true that you haven't always treated people correctly either. And that doesn't excuse it- but it does explain it. And because that is true- it is impossible that offenses will come.

It is inevitable that we are going to rub each other the wrong way at times- that is to be expected. But because we are saved; because we have the new nature within us; because we are not like the lost world- we don't take our ball and go home and pout when we get hurt- we reach out- we work with that brother and sister- and we forgive each other, and we labor not to offend each other, and we work it out.

Listen- every single saint of God on earth has gotten offended in Church at some point and time in their lives. If I had an organization where we were talking about tax law- sooner or later someone would get

offended at something that I said or because of my tone of voice or because I had a certain look on my face or because I parked in their parking space. How much more do we think people are going to get offended when we talk about sin and eternal matters?

Now most people when they think about Jesus Christ think about Him in loving terms. Jesus was and is Gods' Love personified. But in **John 6**- we see Jesus instructing his disciples and the Bible says that t many of those who said that they loved Jesus and who wanted to serve Him walked away from Jesus that day and said-

John 6:60b

...This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?

Jesus said something that offended someone? You mean to tell me that the precious Lamb of God who fed and healed and touched the multitudes and Who came to die for the sins of the whole world- you mean some people got offended at Him? How could *anyone* be offended at Jesus? What did Jesus ever do to anyone except good? Why would *anyone* get angry at Jesus? And yet it is true today as it was then that Jesus Christ- God Almighty made flesh has offended more people than anyone and everyone on earth combined. How could this be?

Because the Truth is inherently offensive to everyone who is lost. And Truth has *always* been offensive. Truth has *always* made people angry. Truth has *always* caused people to get violent and persecute the truth teller. But did that ever stop Jesus from speaking the Truth? No, it did not and simply because many people are offended at Truth today should never stop us from speaking the Truth either.

We have to understand, dear friends, that simply because someone gets offended at what is said does not automatically make what is said to be wrong. Sometimes people get mad because their sin has been exposed; some people get angry because their dark secret was uncovered; others get angry because what was supposed to hidden is suddenly revealed and they don't want to be right with God and they do not want the truth- so they get angry at truth and say they left because they were offended.

But in reality- they left because to stay means they will have to repent and change, and they don't want to change- they do not have any desire to submit their ways to God; they have no desire to serve God on

God's terms- so they have to leave. The Bible says that they love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. This is why these people left Jesus and this is why they will leave you and why they will leave your Church.

But the Bible also says that in Christ there is no darkness at all – so to be in Christ demands that we walk in light even as He is the Light. You see, anybody can go to Church- anybody can visit periodically- even the lost can sit on the pew- but to *stay* in Church- to *continue* on in Church- to serve the Lord over a lifetime- *requires* that we all be willing to be molded and shaped and formed into the very image and likeness of Jesus Christ.

To go to Church at Christmas and Easter or to pay money to go to a so-called “Christian concert” doesn't demand anything from anybody- but to attend Church faithfully like the Bible requires demands that we all be kind and gentle and longsuffering and that we love one another with a pure heart fervently.

You see, to *continue* with Jesus requires that you die to yourself; that you crucify your flesh; that you give up the right to be offended; and that you surrender your will and ambition and dreams and future and mind and heart and soul and life to the Lord Jesus Christ- to love Him and obey Him and Follow Him and serve Him and this is the power; this is the anointing; this is the victory that in spite of everything and anything that the devil throws at us- we remain faithful and loyal and dependable and reliable to Jesus and to each other and by this love will all men know that we are the disciples of Jesus Christ.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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