

INTRODUCTION

We love the brethren. We, the children of God, love all the other children of God. We love the brethren with the same love we have for God who has saved us, the same love with which He has loved us and always will love us. We love them because we have the same Father in heaven, the same Lord Jesus Christ in whom we are saved and beloved of the Father, the same Holy Spirit whom He has sent to give us the new birth, and who abides in us always. We love the brethren.

Yet, as little children, we are susceptible to being deceived as to who those brethren are. There are indeed many true children of God. But there also are deceivers, who present themselves as our brethren, as children of God, yet actually are the children of the devil. They have no true love for the brethren. They may have a carnal enjoyment of the wholesome fellowship we have, and that may seem like love for the brethren. They may *say* they love the brethren. They may even themselves be deceived into thinking they love the brethren. But the devil is behind this, and he has been a murderer from the beginning. So although such false brethren may try to pass off the counterfeit love the devil prints for them, the currency in which they trade is actually hatred.

So we need this warning: **Little children, let no one deceive you. The message you have heard from the beginning is that we should love one another; therefore He who does not love his brother is not of God.**

TEXT

1 John 3:7-15

BODY

Little children, let no one deceive you. The message you have heard from the beginning is that we should love one another; therefore He who does not love his brother is not of God.

- I. The Message We Have Heard from the Beginning Is that We Should Love One Another (11)
- A. What is meant by “from the beginning”?
1. some of John’s use of that term is to establish that our Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who already was when all creation had its beginning
 - a) 1 John 1:1 That which was **from the beginning**, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life--
 - b) 1 John 2:13 I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is **from the beginning**. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father.
 2. some of John’s use of that term is to note that the devil has been sinning since the beginning of creation
 - a) 1 John 3:8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned **from the beginning**. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.
 3. some of John’s use of that term is to inform or remind us that what he is saying is no newly-invented doctrine, but doctrine that has been an essential part of the gospel of Jesus Christ since it was first preached, and indeed has its origins all the way back to man’s creation in the Garden of Eden
 - a) 1 John 2:7 Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had **from the beginning**. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.
 - b) 1 John 2:24 Therefore let that abide in you which you heard **from the beginning**. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.
 - c) 2 John 1:5-6 And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had **from the beginning**: that we love one another. (6) This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard **from the beginning**, you should walk in it.
 4. so here, whether John is referring to the beginning of our race in Adam and Eve, or the beginning of the preaching of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ, the concept is that “love one another” is nothing new or innovative for John to be saying to the church; it has been essential to God’s children since the beginning
 5. APPLICATION: if there is doctrine that was not part of the church from its beginning, then it can’t rightly claim to be a necessary or superior part of the church now
 6. APPLICATION: on the other hand, if there is doctrine that was part of the church from its beginning, then it can make such a claim, and
 - a) it should not be thought strange, even if it hasn’t been heard much lately
 - b) nothing new should be thought of as cancelling or replacing it

- c) therefore to say that “love one another” is a known essential feature of our faith is not unwarranted

B. What is it to love one another? to walk by His commandments

1. you know we tend to substitute sentiment or feelings for actual love
2. be reminded of the relationship between love and the keeping of the Lord’s commandments
 - a) Matthew 22:35-40 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, (36) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" (37) Jesus said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like it: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' (40) On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."
 - b) Romans 13:8-10 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. (9) For the commandments, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," "YOU SHALL NOT MURDER," "YOU SHALL NOT STEAL," "YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS," "YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." (10) Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.
3. see how John, in his letters, specifies what he means by loving one another in terms of keeping the Lord’s commandments
 - a) 1 John 5:2-3 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. (3) For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.
 - b) 2 John 1:5-6 And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. (6) This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.
4. so, to love one another means to treat one another as God has commanded

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- II. It Is the Way of the Children of the Devil Not to Love, But to Hate and Murder
- A. Since Cain murdered Abel
 1. in the first generation of men born to Adam and Eve, one of our race murdered his brother
 - B. Particularly to hate and murder the children of God
 1. this is why we are not to marvel that the world hates us
 2. if the first child of the devil murdered his brother, who was a child of God, it should not surprise us for that to be going on still
 3. APPLICATION: let it then also not distress us overmuch
 - C. For a certain reason: Cain's works were evil, and his brother's were righteous
 1. evil hates the light being shined on it
 2. poor performance hates to be compared with good performance
 - D. This is how we know that someone who does not love the children of God is a child of the devil
 - E. Hatred is equivalent to murder (15a)
 - F. APPLICATION: In our present church life, dealing with the present church discipline case, and whatever else there is in our dealings with each other, are you truly loving the brethren, by obeying the Lord's commands for how to treat them, or are you saying you love them, while actually not acting in love toward them?
 1. Are you loving the brethren by obeying the fifth commandment: Honor thy father and thy mother?
 - a) Q. 124. Who are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment? A. By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.
 - b) Q. 128. What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors? A. The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.
 2. Are you loving the brethren by obeying the sixth commandment: Thou shalt not kill
 - a) Q. 135. What are the duties required in the sixth commandment? A. The duties required in the sixth commandment are . . . charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil . . .
 - b) Q. 136. What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment? A. The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are . . . sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions . . . oppression, quarreling . . .

3. Are you loving the brethren by obeying the eighth commandment: Thou shalt not steal?
 - a) Q. 141. What are the duties required in the eighth commandment? A. The duties required in the eighth commandment are, truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man; rendering to every one his due; restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof . . .
 - b) Q. 142. What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment? A. The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment...are... fraudulent dealing...injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust...and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves...
4. Are you loving the brethren by obeying the ninth commandment: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor?
 - a) Q. 144. What are the duties required in the ninth commandment? A. The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbors; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging talebearers, flatterers, and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth...
 - b) Q. 145. What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment? A. The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors...especially in public judicature...speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful or equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of the truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, talebearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstruing intentions, words, and actions...thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others...hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession...raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defense; evil suspicion; envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any; endeavoring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy; scornful contempt...breach of lawful promises...

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III. We Who Are the Children of God Know Ourselves to Be So Because We Do Love the Brothers
(14)

- A. Against all temptations to hatred from the world, the flesh, and the devil
- B. We see in this that we have passed from death to life!
 - 1. we are not in a living death, headed for an eternal death in the lake of fire
 - 2. instead, we are walking in newness of life, abundant life, headed for eternal life
- C. APPLICATION:
 - 1. What will be the reaction of the children of God to the examination made in this sermon, as to whether we are acting in love toward the brothers?
 - a) I am alive to such doctrine; my flesh hates it, but in my regenerated heart I love the law of God, and all its examination of me, pruning of me, refining of me,
 - b) Yes, it is my heart to live like that!
 - c) No, I have not been living like that in some ways!
 - d) I repent anew, and ask the Lord to help me live in love toward the brethren
 - e) Then, compliance; a further sanctified walk in love
 - 2. What will be the reaction of the children of God to the examination made in this sermon, as to whether we are acting in love toward the brothers?
 - a) he is dead to such doctrine; his flesh hates the law of God, and there is no regenerated heart to love it; so he resents all the law's examination, pruning, refining
 - b) anger
 - c) self-justification
 - d) thoughts of revenge
 - e) non compliance; no further progress in sanctification

CONCLUSION

By this, then, you can know of yourself, and know of others, who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil.

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Call to Worship: Hebrews 13:15

Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:3-24

Sermon: "We Love the Brethren" 1 John 3:10b-15

Benediction: 1 Peter 4:7-8a

Grace 82 In Christ Alone

Trinity 107 The Lord Our Lord

Grace 112 My Hope Rests Firm

Grace 149 Such Love that Brought the Savior Down

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as our Lord Jesus Christ is righteous. He who goes on sinning is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

The one who is born of God does not continue in sin, does not go on sinning, because God's seed remains in him; the wonderful change made in regeneration is a permanent change. That change made by the new birth being permanent, the child of God indeed *cannot* just go on in a life of sin as if the change had not happened. That being true, this is an area in which the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed for who they are. A child of God cannot but practice righteousness; his life of righteousness, observable as such, and not as a life of sin, shows him to be a child of God. Anyone not practicing righteousness should not be thought of as a child of God; instead, a person saying he is a Christian, but continuing a life of sin, should be thought of as a child of the devil.

Do not be deceived into thinking that someone has been born of God, who does not practice righteousness, but continues a life of sin, because anyone born of God does not continue in sin, and indeed cannot.