

Refuge City Church — June 11, 2023
“Love-Hate Relationships” (1 John 3:10-18)

Introduction

- **Last Week:** As children of God, we ought to practice righteousness.
 - That if we remember who we are and *whose* we are, loving Him and loving others is just ‘simply’ what we do.
 - However, we understand that sin is creeping at the door, and we can just as easily step out of fellowship with God because of our sin.
- **Today: 1 John 3:10**, “By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.”
 - The deeper our intimate fellowship with God, the greater our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - Does this exclude those outside the body of Christ?

“The hate of Cain” [verses 11-12]

“For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother’s righteous.”

- The story of Cain & Abel [Genesis 4:3-7]

“In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.”
- Many immediately assume Cain was an unbeliever because he became angry, jealous, and eventually murdered his brother... not necessarily true.
 - Dangerous: those who assume to know the condition of anyone’s salvation.
- *Last Week:* at the root of our nature lies rebellion.
 - Every believer is one notch, click, wink away from committing acts of evil.
- Here, the Lord provided Cain a welcome mat to simply step back into fellowship.
 - Notice: God did not call out Cain’s anger as sin.
 - **Genesis 4:7**, “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, *sin is crouching at the door.*”
 - He warned him that the *action* he would take in response to that anger could lead to sin.
 - **Ephesians 4:26-27**, “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.”
- Cain’s anger, resentment, and jealousy turned into murder.
 - **Genesis 4:7**, “[sin] Its desire is contrary to you...”

- Why? Because we are children of God, made in His perfect image, where sin does not exist.
 - Therefore, we ‘must rule over it’, or it will rule over our capability to do what is right.

“The love of Jesus” [Verses 13-18]

“Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”

- Do not be surprised when the world hates you. Jesus promised this.
 - **John 15:18-19**, “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”
 - Why would the world hate those of us that are trying to show them the love of Christ?
 - If we are abiding in Christ, we are cloaked in His righteousness.
 - The world will be offended by what it doesn’t understand.
 - When the darkness of sin is exposed for what it is, the mortal’s choice is to direct that hatred at the one who is emitting the light of Christ.
 - **1 Peter 4:14-16**, “If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.”
- Two of the biggest issues pertaining to the love-hate conversation today are Abortion and the LGBT community.
 - 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision.
 - In that time, over 60 million babies have been aborted.
 - We praise God that decision has been overturned at the federal level, but it has not been eradicated.
 - The love-hate conversation takes place when you stand for life, and claim the humanity of the unborn.
 - The pro-choice side of the argument will lash out in hatred at anyone who does not affirm their right to kill the unborn. [recent experience]
 - Another difficult discussion is with the LGBTQ community
 - If we stand on the truth of God’s word and bring that sin to light, we will be branded as haters and bigots; “If you don’t agree and affirm who I am, you hate me.”

- We are to speak the truth in love, because our love for God, we ought to love others, even when they revile and hate us in return.
 - Remember the words of Jesus when we point our fingers at others...
 - **Matthew 5:44-45**, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven...”
 - **John 8:8, 10-11**, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”... “Jesus stood up and said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.’”
 - Immediately following this account, Jesus expresses that He is the light of the world and says, “You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.” [John 8:15]
- This is why we as a church connect ourselves to the very person of Jesus Christ [1 John 2:6; how did Jesus walk? Love, Service & Sacrifice]
- Teacher-Student conversation
 - “I hate this class!” “I hate school!”... “So leave. No one is stopping you.”
 - What’s keeping you from giving action to your hateful thoughts? [consequences]
- Thought vs. Action
 - **Proverbs 23:7 NASB**, “For as he thinks within himself, so he is...”
 - Are your thoughts just as important as your actions? According to Jesus, yes!
 - **Matthew 5:21-22**, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment...”
 - Love for our brothers and sisters in Christ is the condition of our claim that we are followers of Jesus.
- How do you know someone loves you? [by their actions; verses 16-18]

“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”

 - Words are nice, but often times, our actions speak louder than words.
 - **James 2:15-17**, “If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”
 - **QUOTE:** “Our love for God is manifested by obedience, but our love for other Christians is manifested by sacrifice.” [John G. Mitchell]
 - **QUOTE:** “The evidence of genuine love is not verbal professions but vital performances: concrete acts rather than empty words.” [Thomas Constable]
 - How am I supposed to know who to feed & clothe, and who not to feed and provide for???
 - As we seek to abide in the presence of God, He will speak to you. He will nudge you.
 - It’s up to you in that moment to know whether or not you’re going to respond in obedience or not.

- Is God going to nudge you to provide for every single individual? Is He going to tell you to provide for an individual beyond the monetary means you have?
- He will always nudge you to love others because that is the very essence of who He is.

Conclusion

- **QUOTE:** “The Christian who hates his brother acts utterly out of touch with God, exemplifies the murderous spirit of Cain, and is ‘abiding’ in the sphere of death. By contrast, the loving Christian takes Christ’s own self-sacrificing love as the model by which he himself should love in actual deeds and in accord with the truth.” [Zane Hodges]
 - God the Father is love.
 - God the Son exemplified that love in the flesh.
 - God the Holy Spirit dwells within us to sanctify us in that love.
- **1 John 4:11**, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”