

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 7- The Test of Love

59. The Law of Love Part 7

WAOY Friday/Monday 07/27-30/07; WOSM Thursday 12/22/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to continue to examine what John taught about "The Law of Love". So, let's open our Bibles to **1 John 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 we are continuing to examine all that John meant when he wrote these three verses, and we are centering on two concepts- loving and hating the brethren.

As we have discovered- "hating" in the sense that John used when he wrote these verses does not mean that you have angry or detestable feelings about someone- but rather this word simply means that you love them less; that you have reached a place with this person where you no longer are willing to do what is necessary to love them.

Now some have said- *"Well I just can't love that person and I'll just leave and attend another Church and serve God there and just not have to be confronted with this person all the time."*

But that statement shows an incredible lack of understanding about what serving God really means. Serving God is not about location; serving God is about the condition of your heart. And if that is true- which it is- then it doesn't matter where you go- you can fly to the

moon- but if you are at odds with your brother- you are in sin and you must get that problem solved before you can go on and worship God.

You see, the Bible teaches that being at odds with a brother in Christ is one of the most frightening places that anyone can ever be in. It is impossible to love God and not love your brothers and the Bible teaches that God will not receive your gift, nor will He receive your worship until and unless you are reunited with that brother or sister. Let's turn to **Matthew 5:23&24**, and read what Jesus said about this issue:

23 "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

Before God will receive any gift from you- your relationship with the brethren must be correct and holy. There is no such thing as just moving past this issue. Either you become reconciled, or you are in sin.

As we have discussed already- it is impossible but that offenses will come any time that you have more than two people uniting together over anything. Sparks fly when opinions and ideas are in play.

And if you are in the Kiwana's or the Elks Club- you can just leave and settle the issue by removing yourself from the group. But the Church of Jesus is not something that you are free to join and free to leave when and how you and I choose.

The Church of Jesus Christ, beloved, is an institution; an entity; a living and breathing organism; a creation of Almighty God which is both visible and invisible; it is both local and worldwide; and it is both earthly and heavenly.

The Head of the Church is not the pope or the pastor or the cardinals or the deacons or the elders. The Head of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ- He alone sits on the throne of the Church and the Church exists only to do His pleasure and to bring honor and glory to Him and to Him alone.

Only truly born again and Spirit regenerated people have the legitimate right to belong to the Church of Jesus Christ. Now I realize that unfortunately, that is simply not true today- but biblically speaking lost people are in no way a member of the true Church of

Jesus Christ. Lost people may well be a member of your Church and lost people may be a member of my Church- but not one single lost person is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ.

The word, “church” comes from the Greek word, “ekkleesia” (e)kklhsi/a), which means: a collection of called out and chosen believers who leave their own private homes and gather together in a public place for the express purpose of worshipping Jesus Christ and of being edified in the Christian Faith.

So, because that is what the word “Church” means- then we know that several things are true.

First of all- we know that no one is part of the true Church who is not called out and chosen. So only saved people are part of the *ekkleesia* or Church of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, we also know that all of those people who stay home and refuse to come to the public place are in hostile rebellion to the Word of God and are not part of the true Church. These people who refuse to align themselves with a local body should repent immediately and turn from their own self- righteousness and of trying to serve God in their own way and humbly submit themselves to the authority of Scripture.

Thirdly, the *ekkleesia*; the Church must worship Jesus Christ as Head and Owner and Lord and Sovereign and Master and Lord over the Church. All songs; all sermons; all teaching; all instruction; all doctrine must bring honor and glory and praise and adoration to Jesus Christ alone.

No man; no group; no position, no special anointing; is to be given to any man for any reason in the Church. We may love and respect and give recognition to a man when recognition is due- but that man is not a mediator between us and God; that man is not an advocate; he is not a type of Christ; he is not a vicar; he is not standing in God’s position- there is one man and one mediator between God and Man- not Mary- but the Man Christ Jesus.

The partial and temporary Levitical priesthood with all of its trappings has been completely and totally abrogated by the full and eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ and as such all believers are priests unto God and all may approach the throne of God through Jesus Christ.

The redeemed gather together in a public place out of humble obedience and we worship Jesus Christ because he deserves our worship; he is entitled to our worship and because worshipping Jesus Christ gives glory to God the Father.

The ekkleesia does not have license to teach or preach or believe anything that the dog drags in through the front door- but the true Church must teach and preach and believe that Doctrine which came directly from the Apostles, and which is recorded for us in the inspired writings found in all 66 Books of the Holy Bible.

The leadership of the ekkleesia- those Elders and Deacons and Pastors and Teachers who lead and teach and counsel and preach and proclaim and edify the rest of the Body are to meet the very stringent requirements listed in **1 Timothy** and **Titus**.

And if they do not measure up to those Biblical standards- they cannot lead- no matter how gifted or how popular they are. Remember beloved, this is not our little club where we can make up the rules as we go along- we are talking about the Church of the First Born; the Pillar and Ground of the Truth- so we must be careful that we “do Church” Gods’ way or we are not pleasing God.

Each true member of the ekkleesia must graciously submit themselves to the authority of the Elders- who are obligated to teach them Christian Doctrine. There is no such thing since Jesus rose from the dead of anyone operating without being accountable to someone else.

Every human on earth including the pastor is accountable to someone else on earth as well as being accountable to God. God doesn’t use lone rangers anymore- God uses His Church. God does not honor people who have self- appointed themselves as God’s Spokesman and as people who don’t answer to anyone else. That is simply unscriptural and is not a sign of spiritual credibility, beloved- it is a sign of open and hostile rebellion to the Word of God.

The Elders are required by God to shepherd the flock of God and the people are required by God to graciously submit the authority of the Elders. Renegades, Rebels, and Spiritual mercenaries chafe at this Biblical accountability- but servants of Jesus Christ simply submit to it because it is what Gods’ Word teaches.

And lastly, because all of this is true- that means that there is a unique and special relationship with all of those who are in the true Church. We didn’t just join the Church because we wanted to- but we were adopted into this family by a Sovereign miracle of God.

Therefore-we cannot dare be at odds with another brother. We cannot dare sit in Church with un-forgiveness in our hearts and expect

God to receive our worship. We cannot dare think that God listens to any prayer that we pray as we walk in opposition to another soul whom Jesus has saved.

It may take our hide- but we must be in right relationship with our brethren if we ever hope to be in right relationship with God. Here is how John said it further into His Epistle in **1John 4:20&21:**

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

So, John is tying our love for those whom God has saved with our love for God Himself and so I hope you can begin to see just how important this is.

Now there is another aspect of this love for our brothers that I must get into here because it is really overlooked today.

John and Paul and Peter and James and all of the other writers of inspired Scripture taught that loving your brother also requires that you help to guard his soul.

If you see your brother going off base; if you see him begin to adopt strange doctrine into his life; if you see him begin to lay out of Church- we have an obligation to go to that brother in grace and humility and speak with him. We need to find out what's wrong; we need to offer to help him; we need to show him in scripture where he is off base; and we need to even rebuke him if necessary.

You see, we are joined together by something much more important than human love and our own benefit. Jesus died to save that soul and if we allow him to become deceived or we allow him to go astray- we are proving that we do not love him.

This is especially true when it comes to sin. When a brother falls into sin; when he wants to leave his wife; when he wants to shack up with a new honey; when he gets involved with pornography; when he begins to talk strange- we have a solemn duty ; an obligation; a responsibility as his covenant brothers and sisters to go to him and confront him with his sin.

“Well, now wait a minute Brother Blair, you’re going too far here. This is not my business. He hears the Word just like I do and if he chooses to sin- well, that’s his choice and that’s between him and God. My job is just to love him and pray for him and let him know that I’m there for him.”

Now what I just said to you is probably the most common reaction to what I am teaching here. But what I just read to you, brothers and sisters is a lie- and in spite of the fact that it may sound very noble it is not noble at all and it is not Scriptural, and it is not true.

The Truth is that every single member of the ekkleesia is responsible for every other member of the ekkleesia and it is all of our business when our brother or sister falls into sin- the fact that all of us have been supernaturally adopted into the Household of God together makes us eternal family which can never be broken.

So, when a brother falls into sin- our responsibility to that brother goes way beyond simply “being there for him”. We are going to have to get our hands dirty in order to rescue that brother from the error of his ways.

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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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.