

Love One Another

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[0 : 00] speak to, in particular, seven verses, from verse 11 down to the verse marked 18. But the three aspects I want to highlight tonight start with the word, dear children. Dear children.

And you can see them, as it were, glaring out at you, out of the passage that we've read. And I think what, for me personally, John is bringing is an aspect of teaching, but also within it is a warning. There's a warning there to listen to what he tells us. But the teaching is encouragement. And I think that's how we need to look at John's letter. It's a one of encouragement to stay focused on what Christ has done. And that indeed is how he starts. He says, dear children, continue in him. Continue in him. That, I believe, is what we should do. And if you'll excuse the pun, we've come from a very high point over these last few weeks, this last month indeed, even from meeting together some five, six weeks ago, we've now come to a point where, in essence, we could dip a little bit. We could indeed, if you'll excuse the pun, take our foot off the accelerator. And that's what I want you to fix in your minds tonight. Not to take your foot off the accelerator. If you don't drive, you might need to ask somebody what the accelerator is. But for me, it is, it's the driving force of God's work within us. And that is what we heard right at the end, by the

Spirit he gave us. The Spirit drives us to see the need, the need for prayer, the need for mission, and the need to speak the gospel message to those around us. And John brings us three understandings of why he speaks to us as children of God. Firstly, it's so that we'll continue in him. Secondly, if we look down to the verse Mark 7, it's, dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. And that is so easy to allow in our lives. To let somebody lead us astray. Just a one word of doubt. One word of division. That's all it takes. The third aspect where he speaks to us as children of God is in verse 18. Dear children, let us love. Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth. And they are very key that we continue to do what has been set before us. That our actions would flow from what God has encouraged us to do over these last few weeks. See, the first instance where

John brings to us, it's to remind us of how great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And we read that there in verse 1 of chapter 3. That is how he starts the chapter. That God has lavished his love on us as a Father, so that we can be called children of God. And I hear many a thing, but one thing I hear is that those two denominations have come together for one purpose. That's an amazing truth.

Because it's as children of God that we have come together. It's as children of God have we seen the purpose of God in our community. The need to reach out to those around us. And thankfully we had the faith mission and the great leadership of Donnie McLeod in bringing that to us. And we thank him for that. And that's why I believe we wanted to come together as congregations to give thanks to God for all the work that he has done and he will do and continue to do for ages to come. And that is what I hope we will pray. That we will come to understand that we are all children of God. The second aspect of John's message is, Dear children, he who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning of time. If we read in between the lines, there's an understanding of drawing us to hope in him, to purifying ourselves, and to bringing us to a place where we recognize that if we stop loving each other, if we stop going down the route that we've been shown, that we will indeed be sinful. And it is sinful. When you think about it, God gave us Jesus Christ, each and every one of us. And he puts us in a community so that we can show that love for one another.

[5 : 55] Anything else is, as he brings to light, as John brings to light, is murderous. I wonder whether you've ever thought of yourself as a murderer. I wonder whether you've ever stopped to think and understand, if I am not doing what God asks me to do, if I am not loving those around me who are my brothers and sisters in Christ, I'm actually murdering them through my actions.

Because that is what John is bringing to us. He's saying that we should love one another. Do not be like Cain. Do you remember the story of Cain and Abel? And that is what he's trying to bring. Cain, he brought the fruit of the land. He brought veg and things like that to God. But God had asked for more. He'd asked for the firstborn of Abel and Cain. But as it was, Cain didn't bring that. But Abel did. He brought the fat of the firstborn lamb to God. And God was pleased with him.

[7 : 22] See, what God wants from us is the first of everything. He wants us to bring that to him.

Just as Cain brought that atoning sacrifice to him. A lamb which was blood. Now there was something in Cain that decided not to do that.

He decided, no, I'm going to bring what I think is sufficient. And he brought the fruit of the land. He brought vegetables. And he brought a crop. And he laid it before him and God wasn't pleased with it. And we can see by that, that what Cain then decided to do, was because God blessed Abel, he killed him.

He murdered him. He was so jealous and so angry and so proud and so self-seeking that he decided to do away with his own brother.

[8 : 32] And John is bringing the same aspect to us. That if we do not bring what God wants for each and every one of us, we're as good as murdering our brothers and sisters.

When you think, and looking through the verses there, we can see how he brings to us the understanding that we should, as it were, live as brothers and sisters who seek righteousness, who seek the ways of Christ.

Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you, it says. Why? When we're trying to do good, when we're trying to do righteous. Well, just like Cain and Abel, the world looks on and they don't want unity.

They don't want love for one another. What they want is to just give God all they think is necessary. Which is not what God wants. God wants us to set our lives aside so that we will love one another truly.

[9 : 49] And he goes on to explain, just like Christ Jesus did, to love unconditionally. And if we were to look at that love in 1 Corinthians, it would show us that love is patient and kind.

Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not, as it were, irritable or restless.

It does not despise or do wrong, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things.

It believes all things. It hopes all things. And it endures all things. And that is what we have to do for one another. We have to, in kindness, in love, and bear all things together.

Just before we met the last time here, just at the end, should I say, of the last time I met, I was standing at the door with Myrtle and I had a real encouragement from somebody.

[11 : 08] We had a real encouragement. One of my brothers, who I respect, came by and said, you know, that was a wonderful sermon. And it's wonderful to hear both of you preaching in different churches, in our own churches.

But the best sermon of all speaks volumes to those outside the church walls. Us being together, us loving one another, that speaks volumes.

It speaks more than any sermon of what God can do in our midst. And that is what I want to bring you today, to encourage you to hold fast to Christ's way.

To hold fast and not to sin against our brothers and sisters. to hold fast and not be a murderer of the work that God has put in place.

But to cling to that eternal hope. That eternal hope in Him. Because if we are a murderer, it tells us that eternal life is not within us.

[12 : 17] We don't have the things of God on our heart. This is how we know, it says in verse 16, this is how we know what love is.

Jesus Christ laid down His own life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. The example is set.

Jesus has given us that example. That even in the midst of all that He suffered, He was still willing to bear all of our sins.

He sacrificed Himself fully, so that we might know what it is to have love. And that is what I want to encourage you tonight to do.

To listen to the Saviour's voice. Who when He was on the cross said, forgive them Father, they don't know what they do. See, the world doesn't know what to do.

[13:25] It hates us because it hated Christ. It hates us because we want to be together in unity. It hates us because we want to love like God loves.

When we read in verse 17, there is the perfect example of what it is like to love one another.

If anyone has material possession and see his brother in need and has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? When you think about what has happened over the last five, six weeks, there has been an amazing show of love.

We have shown love in a remarkable way. We took strangers into our houses, into our churches. We fed them.

We were hospitable to them. We loved them. We heard their message. And the blessing was all ours.

[14:36] Is that not showing love to one another? Can I encourage you to continue in that same heart-like manner?

For those, as we look around us, that don't have that. And perhaps it's when we have a coffee morning, or we have soup and sandwiches, or we have a barbecue, or we have a fun day.

You see, showing love to those around us is saying, we have plenty. Come in and see. Come in and be fed. Come in and be warmed.

Come in and know the love of God. That is all we've done over the last month or so. And the blessing is all ours.

This evening, we meet though, to give glory to God for that. Thanksgiving for what He has poured out upon us. But comes with it two things.

[15:42] Encouragement and warning. Very often, when you hear the mission workers and those that have seen aspects of God's work before in communities, just after such an event comes a great hatred.

Comes a want of disunity. Comes little snide remarks and arrows from the evil one. The devil is now, as we speak, trying to get together some arrow, some statement, some message to get right into the heart of our churches.

So, whereas I want to solely bring you encouragement, I want to bring a warning. Be on guard. Don't take your foot off the accelerator.

Keep praying. Keep joining together. Keep encouraging one another. Keep speaking about the love of God through Jesus. the final, dear children, says, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth.

The truth that John is speaking of here is the gospel message that is all-encompassing, that is reached out to each and every one of us in our sinful states and has brought his mercy and his grace upon our lives.

[17:27] And we can bear testimony of that in our own families, in our own churches, that the truth of the message, the message of Jesus Christ has spoken into our communities.

dear friends, he says, dear friends, let us walk with God.

Let us allow that confidence which has been given to us by the hearing of his word, by the speaking of his truth and his message to us.

Let us continue in that confidence before God so that those around us can know his love so that God can receive all the glory so that we can know his blessing upon many more lives for the sake of Christ Jesus.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Before we come to a time of prayer, we're going to sing another item of praise in Psalm 42.

[18:52] Psalm 42 verses 1 to 5. Verse 2 on page 262.

Like as the hart for water brooks and thirst doth pant and bray, so pants my lung and soul O God that come to thee I may.

Verses 1 to 5. Let's stand. Amen. I got the heart for water who saved for the past and andil The first quest of I'm near, Unto thy devotions art so

And in both sides appear. My tears are once in me, O tears are I can't say.

Why not to be once in me, Where is thy heart this day?

[21:10] My soul is fallen out in me, When this I think upon, Because I wish, I'm not sure, I hear you for not long.

With that being to pass the sideway, With more so joy and praise, Give me the blood to the care,
The soul of holy days.
O my God, thou hast done my soul, Why it means so disneyed.
Trust, Lord, for I shall embrace Him yet, This kindness is my name.