

Sermon: We Know What Love Is

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[0 : 00] All right, if you've got your Bible, 1 John chapter 3, 1 John chapter 3, continuing through the book of 1 John, is like literally as we just sang, is all your hope in Jesus?

Like I'm banking everything on him, like nothing else, not anything in America, not anything in my life, not riches, nothing.

Like I'm all in on Jesus. He's the only hope there is. And so I hope that you are deeply encouraged to be able to sing that tonight and to mean it, that everything, everything is cast upon Christ.

Well, we've been going through 1 John, talking through a series about the things that we know, the things that we have confidence of because of our faith in Jesus Christ. And we come to 1 John chapter 3, picking up right where we left off last week.

We're in verse 11 of 1 John 3. And now that you're comfortable, if you're able, some of you didn't even sit down. Now you got it. You're good. 1 John chapter 3, if you're able to stand, please do so.

[1 : 21] This is just our way at Faith Family of recognizing the authority of the Word of God. John is writing here, we believe, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

These are the words of God being breathed out on the page as John writes this. 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.

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.

[2 : 21] 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 truth.

This is God's word. Will you pray with me and for me as we ask God to talk to us tonight? God, that's why we're here. We want to hear from you. And all I want to do is to be faithful to the text and just declare what you have already spoken.

And so, Spirit of Truth, come and guide us into truth. This is a message that we need to hear. And I pray that it would find root, find grip in our hearts tonight.

[3 : 23] We pray in Jesus' name. And God's people said? Amen. Amen. You can be seated. On August 11th, 1628, one of the mightiest warships ever built set sail from Stockholm Harbor.

At the time, the Vasa warship was one of the most high-tech warships that had ever existed. 68 meters long, it carried an unprecedented 64 cannons.

It was one of the earliest warships to have two full gun decks. It was one of the most spectacular warships ever made.

But it didn't last long at sea. In fact, just 20 minutes into its maiden voyage, while everyone was still watching from the shore, the boat sank, killing all 30 passengers on board.

People were not only saddened at the loss of life, they were stunned to watch this impressive, massive warship sink. And what was so shocking was why it sank.

[4 : 41] It wasn't as though it got out there and found itself in the midst of battle and got shot and sunk. It's as soon as it got outside of the harbor and got into just a little bit of wind, it tipped over.

As soon as the ship set out and caught wind, the ship leaned over to the side and it started to take on water. And before long, it sunk to the bottom of the sea.

It's considered one of the most colossal failures in naval history. How? How? How could a ship so great sink so fast?

An archaeologist by the name of Fred Hawker, he studied the ship once it was brought to a museum. And what he discovered is that the ship was lopsided. Part of the reason that it tipped over in the wind is because it wasn't sturdy.

And why was it not sturdy? Well, what he discovered is that there were two different crews that worked on the ship. And one worked on one side and the other worked on the other side.

[5 : 54] And what he found out is that the two different crews were using two different rulers. One crew was using a Swedish ruler or measuring by Swedish feet, which is based on 12 inches.

The other crew was using a ruler measured by Amsterdam feet, which was based on 11 inches. Hawker says this, he says, quote, This created a serious problem, you think?

He goes on to say, for if someone asked for something to be four inches thick, his measurement was not going to be the same as the other guys.

In other words, Faith Family, this mighty, impressive worship sunk because they were using the wrong measurement. Have you ever used the wrong measurement before?

Anybody? Like, you know, you were measuring for the construction project, and when it got finished, things were just a little bit off. Or you thought you measured the ingredients perfectly, but the bread pudding just didn't quite turn out right.

[7 : 08] That's heresy, all right? Or you thought you had the right measurements for your clothes, but it didn't quite fit. And you realize that in that moment, the reason things didn't turn out the way they should have is because you were using the wrong measurement.

Here's the big idea that I want to put before us this evening. It's this. Notice it on the screen. Could it be that the reason many of our relationships do not function as they should is we're using the wrong measurement?

Could it be that the reason why some of our relationships sink and do not function as they are intended to is because we're using the wrong measurement?

Now, give me a few moments to explain what I mean. Before I come back to that, let me remind you of the context. I do this every week because context is king. We need to understand what's going on in the context of why John's writing what he's writing.

He's writing to a group of believers that have been influenced by false teachers. What's the name of the group of false teachers? You ought to know it by now. What is it? The Gnostics. Gnosticism was the false teaching of John's day.

[8 : 31] As a result of the false teaching, some have doubted the faith. Some have disobeyed the faith. Some are drifting in their faith. And John has addressed them, has he not?

He said things like this. You can't say that you know the light and walk in darkness. You can't have God as your father and show no family resemblance.

Do you see? He's addressing the people that are disobeying and drifting, all the while reminding them, listen, no one is without sin. Amen. And we are still loved children of God.

Amen. And we have an advocate in Christ Jesus. So he has addressed their sin while reminding them of their Savior. But that's not the only group he's addressed.

Specifically in this passage, John is now turning and addressing that kind of arrogant group of Christians that loves to kind of look down their nose at everybody else.

[9 : 33] Do you know those kind? They're kind of like the Ephesus church in the book of Revelation. You know, they have all their theology correct, but they lack love.

And they tend to criticize and judge and look down on those who are struggling. How could you believe that? Why is your faith not as strong as mine?

How could you believe in what the Gnostics are teaching, do you see? And what they have forgotten is this. Love is patient. Love is kind. It's not arrogant or rude.

And faith and hope are great, but the greatest of these is love. So John turns his attention now to this group to remind them of the importance of love.

And what he does in this passage is he uncovers two ways of measuring your relationships. Two ways of measuring your relationship.

[10 : 34] Here's the first verse 11. 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. Here's the standard measurement for relationship.

This is how everybody measures relationships. I love you based on what you do. That is the standard measurement. That is how we measure love when it comes to our relationships.

If you're nice to me, guess what? I'll be nice to you. If you love me, and why wouldn't you, right?

Then I'll love you back. But if you hate me, I'll hate you.

If you do good, I'll do good in return. It's entirely measured. I hope we get this. It's entirely measured on the action of someone else or our corresponding approval of their action.

[11 : 45] We measure love in our relationships based on the action of the other person and our corresponding approval of that action.

And of course, what is at the core of that motivation? Let's be honest. Selfishness. What did I gain?

Do I agree with what they did? Are the benefits in this relationship equal?

Do I like what you did to me? This is the standard of how we measure love. And listen, faith family, if we perceive that the measurements in this relationship are off, we murder them.

So that's pretty strong. Well, that's what the text says. Did you notice what story John turns to? Cain and Abel. You remember that from Sunday school, right?

Genesis chapter 4. Now, why? Why Cain and Abel? Because I could pick like a hundred stories out of the Bible to teach this point. Why would John go all the way back to Cain and Abel?

[12 : 50] It's likely because they are the first human beings after the fall. They're showing us the product of Adam and Eve. They're showing us, if you remember from last week, and we'll come back to this several times tonight, it's showing us the values or how love is measured in that family.

The family that came from Adam. And so, Cain and Abel show us this very thing. And you remember the story, right? Cain and Abel was supposed to bring a sacrifice to God. Abel brought a sacrifice that was pleasing to God.

And Cain brought a sacrifice that was not. Now, why was his sacrifice accepted? And his brothers not? Well, Hebrews 11 tells us that Abel's was of faith.

Cain's was not. No, no, no. Listen, are you tracking with me? The point of John here, the reason why John is bringing this story up is to not have a conversation about faithful offerings.

That's not his point. His point here is that Cain realized his brother did something better. And because of the action of his brother and his corresponding approval of that action killed him because he became angry with what he did.

[14 : 15] In other words, Cain's love for Abel, listen, was based on what Abel did and his disapproval of it. I don't like what you did and I don't like the fact that you made me look bad and I don't like the fact that yours was accepted and mine was not.

Faith family, are you beginning to see what's underneath the layers here? A self-centeredness. I measure my love for you, brother, based on what you do and if what you do pleases me, then I love you and if what you do displeases me, I rage.

And in this particular case, he literally murdered his brother. Faith family, listen to me tonight. What family does that come from?

What family does that come from? Look back at verse 12. We should not be like Cain who was of the evil one and murdered his brother.

The point here is clear. Cain's murdering of his brother is identification with the evil one who has been murdering from the beginning. In other words, he's showing you the way you respond in that family.

[15 : 35] Are you following me? tonight. Just look at how Cain approached his brother. That's how relationships get measured in that family and it usually ends up in murder.

Now, the danger of using this example is here's what some of you are already thinking or maybe saying to yourself, this doesn't apply to me. I've never murdered anyone.

Okay? Show of hands. Anybody, maybe we shouldn't ask that question. Okay? We may not want to know. Right? My guess is not a lot of people here have ever literally murdered someone.

And so you think, ooh, I'm off the hook. But of course you're not because John's not talking here at all about physical murder. Yes, Cain physically murdered his brother Abel, but that's not John's point.

Look at verse 15. Everyone who hates, I bet some of you've done that, his brother is a murderer.

[16 : 34] And you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. That is someone who practices that kind of pattern which shows that they're of a different family. Now, John is not talking about physical murder and nor is most of the New Testament.

Hang with me, faith family. I believe this is so critically important for us to understand. Listen to how the New Testament addresses the issue of murder. Matthew 5, verse 21.

You have heard that it is said to those of old, you shall not murder and whoever murders will be liable of judgment. This is Jesus talking, but I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.

He parallels murder with anger. Matthew chapter 5, verse 18. what comes out of the mouth is he