

10/22/23- 'TRUTH AND DECEPTION' (#6)

PASTOR LEE

Love
Each
Other!

1 JOHN 3:11 – - For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

- Simple message today: **LOVE EACH OTHER!** But as easy as it is to love some people, there are other people who are unkind mean, back-stabbing, etc..... now *that* might be a challenge! We all have our personal stories but God said....love everyone.
- John.....Jesus' best friend is writing a story....about Him.....about his life with Him...His teachings....his 'hands-on' experiences' as Jesus displayed His love to *everyone*.

Abel &
Cain

1 John 3:12 – - 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.

Love Vs.
(Lurking) Sin

- See Genesis 3 and 4 for the whole story of Adam/Eve/ Satan/Cain/Abel. The essence of the story...quite possibly re-addressed by Jesus directly to John...is that Abel wanted to follow God...Cain did not. God found favor in Abel's offering but not of Cain's. God warns Cain of sin's potentiality ("sin is crouching at the door")...Cain ignore's God's tense counsel and out of jealousy, bitterness and anger, kills Abel.
- John is telling us....things that should go well, don't always....like where was Cain's brotherly love? The variable is love/righteousness vs. sin/evil.
- Likewise, **SIN IS CROUCHING AT OUR DOOR**, seeking to devour us when we say 'NO' to God! We know those moments....God gives us the truth....do we abide....or go down sin's pathway. Cain chose the latter.....and gave us mankind's first murder. Do we, likewise, use whatever life-based excuse (job, money, social pressure, etc)...in a given instance...to go down an unrighteous path?

LOVE
✓
Faith
✓
Obedience
✓
Reward

- In contrast to his brother, Abel reflected love...had faith....see Hebrews 11 which addresses faith: V. 4: 'By faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous. God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks'.
- So what is faith?....its taking God at His word...obeying Him.....like Abel did. Turned out badly for him in this world but God said there's some reward bigger than our current existence....**ETERNAL LIFE**. Faith may or may not be rewarded here....but someday.
- The message that was there from the very beginning (**LOVE EACH OTHER**)...see the results when we don't.

LOVE:
Intrinsic
To
Faith!

John 13:35 (Jesus addressing disciples just before His crucifixion)
By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

- Jesus commands love and unityyet we are so divided in this world....in our homes...in extended family, office, Country, the entire world (marked by violence and potentially expanding wars). We need to obey Him....not easy... but he makes it clear that **LOVE IS INTRINSIC TO BEING A FOLLOWER OF JESUS. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN UNLOVING CHRISTIAN.** Even when that person in question is hard to love.

① BELIEVE IN
JESUS

1 John 3:23— -And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as He has commanded us.

② LOVE ONE
ANOTHER

So, 2 commands: 1. Believe in Jesus, and 2. Love one another. Totally correlates to **Mathew 22: 37-39-** -where Jesus is asked by Pharisees to boil down the 613 commandments held by the Hebrews: Love God...Love neighbor as yourself.

Imitate
Christ's
LOVE!

1 John 3:16 By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

- Epitomized example of love:.....Jesus gave up His Glorified Self in heaven and His life for you...that's how much he loves you! How much are we willing to be like Jesus....to love people who sin against us...even to the extent that Jesus did? He came down from heaven sinless...yet gave up His life for us who steep in sin. And He's saying, we should love correspondingly and be willing to lay down *our* lives.

LOVE
Requires
Action!

1 John 3:17-18— -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.

- So God's commands to love need to translate into **ACTION**...not just words! If we truly love...it impacts both what we do and what we don't do. We do not neglect....watch...stand still....**WE ACT** out of love. Out of same love I respect and treat others kindly (eg. avoiding temptations that might harm others....lying, sexual affronts, cheating stealing, etc.) As a bottom line, making yourself subservient...a lessor priority...than others.....serving them...not being served. The world doesn't say to do that **BUT JESUS DOES**...and, in doing so, you are loving others! Jesus gives Good Samaritan story as example. Do **WE**.... In our privileged but focused, busy lives...see, stop, and help/serve.....or keep on driving/walking/whatever.

No
Caveats!

- We naturally receive this message well...we all see the value and want to be (even?) more loving than we are. But beyond the notion and the words, do we really accept the challenge to obey and imitate Christ's love? Pastor Lee's examples of challenge: how love someone with an 'alternative (sinful) life-style choice?....how love a dismissive/disdainful spouse?....how love someone whose abused you...etc.,etc. (aka: instances when we should "love...but"....then comes the caveat).

LOVE IS
Foundational
To
Faith--
God is Source

- A related question....if God loves, why do people go to hell? Pastor Lee refers back to 1 John 3:11....love one another....foundational. That's who Jesus says we are....we love. All of our "love...but" instances are challenges to be examined/ broken through.....eg....how do we love a person whose pained us...or, whose identity does not align with our values....or, how do we love a person in pain when our own pain has exhausted us emotionally-physically. Pastor encourages us to discuss in Small Group or whatever forum.

STAY OUT-
WARD Focused

- Concept: are we "inward focused" (When our pain and self centeredness is just destructively rules our hearts....causing pain and sin ((eg Cain))...or "outward focused" (I am a follower of Jesus and am not defined by my pain or 'self'...rather, I will find someone(s) to love)??? The challenge is to remain "outward focused" even absent any positive reinforcement by the recipient(s) of our love/caring. If that positive response is required, it is **NOT** the agape (unconditional) love that Jesus requires (and did for us). IE '....God so loved the world....' *.the whole world...NO CARVEOUTS IN JESUS' LOVE.*

Touch
People !!

- Resist those who would divide us (politically, ideologically, etc)..... be on the side of love/ on the side of Jesus....no caveats. Remember, love is not 'feelings'love is not 'tolerance' ...love is not affirmation (of sin). God convicts us of where/who/when to reach out and touch people...caring and with love. Pray for ourselves and each other to reconcile all the complexities of our lives and bring us back to God's foundation....**LOVE.**
- Gal 5:13.....'through love, serve... Extend that love and service wherever you go! Be a Christ-first person in all respects/circumstances through your love.