

Thursday, May 2, 2024 • Read 1John 3:10–15

Questions from the Scripture text: Which two categories of men have been distinguished from one another (v10)? How is this distinction revealed? What two things are always the case for someone who is a child of the devil? What have the apostle's readers heard (v11)? Since when? That we should do what? Who did not love (v12)? Of whom was Cain? What did Cain do? Why? What does the apostle say not to do in v13? What does he call his readers? At what shouldn't they marvel? What do he and his readers know (v14)? Because they do what? But what is the condition of the one that does not love his brother? What is a man who hates his brother (v15)? What does no murderer have abiding in him?

How can we distinguish the children of God from the children of the devil? 1John 3:10–15 prepares us for the second serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **one clear way to distinguish the children of God from the children of the devil is whether they love the brethren.**

Children of God and children of the devil. All of humanity can be divided into two categories: children of God and children of the devil (v10a), which are the same categories as the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (cf. Gen 3:15). In the previous passage, we heard about the seed of God being in the one born of God (v9) and works of righteousness coming from those who are righteous with Christ's righteousness (v7).

Children of God identified by the origin of their love. If someone does not work righteousness, then he is not of God (v10b). There is no such thing as a believer in Jesus Christ who has not been created newly in Christ Jesus to walk in good works (cf. Eph 2:10). And central to this righteousness that he works, and these good works that he walks in, is love for his brother. The "new commandment" that was initiated by the crucifixion is that brethren must live self-sacrificially for one another by Christ's own love for one another (v11, cf. 2:6–11; Jn 13:34, 15:12). Truly God has worked love in those whom He redeemed ever since Adam. But there is a "beginning" of Christ-imitating love, coming in conscious union with Him, at the founding of Christ's church.

Children of the devil identified by the origin of their hatred. But hatred also has a beginning in the human race. Adam and his wife both believed, so the first seed of the serpent that the Bible tells us about is Cain. Cain offered sacrifices that were not of faith (cf. Gen 4:4–5, Heb 11:4, Rom 14:23), and when his evil works from his evil nature were not received by God, his evil nature overflowed into the hatred and murder of his brother (v12, cf. Gen 4:8).

Don't be surprised by hate. There are two great applications to realizing where hatred and love come from. The first application is not to marvel at being hated by the world (v13). The only way that anyone could genuinely love us is by union with Christ. Even unbelievers who (by common grace) have a natural affection for us do not love us with the same sort of love, the genuine love, that is in Christ and in Christians. So do not expect love from the world, and do not be surprised at hate from the world.

But rejoice at the opportunity, and the gift of the ability, to love. The second application is to love your brother not only for his sake, *but as an enjoyment of the reality of having passed from death to life* (v14). What a privilege it is to be a child of God rather than a child of the devil! What a privilege it is, therefore, to love the brethren with Christ-derived divine love! Embrace the opportunities to love your brethren, and to foster that love in your heart. Enjoy and lay hold of the life of Christ in you!

And be very alarmed if you have and tolerate hate in your heart. And of course there is a great warning here. If we do not love the brethren, we have not passed from death to life. Such a person not only has some death remaining in him, but he himself abides/remains in death (v14c). So watch against hatred in your heart, for it is of the same nature as murder (v15a, cf. Mt 5:21–26). And one who is consumed with hate, whose identity is still that of a murderer, is still a child of the devil; no eternal life dwells in him (v15b). Dear reader, watch against hate in your heart! Identify it as your mortal enemy, the remnants of a devilish being that you no longer are. Do not tolerate it. Kill it!

When have you killed hate in your own heart? Whom are you tempted to hate? How can you see them, instead, as an opportunity to enjoy God's giving to you to love them? By what means do you look to Him for the grace to do so? What are the evidences of your love for believers? How has the world hated you? What difference does it make for you not to be surprised at this?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us, for we have not loved our brother like You have loved us. Our love has fallen short in its greatness, because we do not sacrifice ourselves for one another. And our love has fallen short in its origin, because we are often seeking to love each other by virtue of our effort, rather than in dependence upon Your grace. Indeed, we are horrified to admit that we have often known hostility in our hearts for other believers—the very hostility that has its origin in the devil himself and that is the mark of the children of the devil. But You have given us to have life abide in us by Jesus Christ. Grant that His love would abide in us, and that we would put to death all hatred that remains within us, we ask through Him, even Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP118A "Because He's Good, O Thank the LORD" or TPH461 "Blessed Are the Sons of God"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

First, John 3 verses 10 through 15, these are God's words. In this, the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest. Whoever does not practice righteousness. Is Lord of God. Nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning.

That we should love one another. Not as Kane who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother? And why did he murder him? Because his Works were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not Marvel my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from Death to life because we love the Brethren.

He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer. Has eternal life, abiding in him. Amen, that sentence this reading of God's inspired and denerrant word. We take verse 10 again, which we had at the end of last week's passage because it connected to Verse 8.

And the one who sins who does not work any righteousness, being of the devil, and we know that because The Lord, Jesus was manifested. He appeared to destroy the works of the devil. But now we take verse 10 because there is a comparison that runs through these six verses between the children of God and the children of the devil.

He says the in this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifested appears, which one is The child of God in which one is the child of the devil? Whoever does not practice, or whoever does not work more literally, Righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

So, when You are United to the Lord, Jesus by faith. And in dwelt by the Holy Spirit, the spirit of adoption. And you know, God as your heavenly father and you can say, behold, what manner? The Lord has shown to me that I should be called a child of God.

And that is what I am. One of the ways that you can see that. And one of the first things happens is that you start, loving God, and loving neighbor and loving brother. Working righteousness. And a big part of this working righteousness, is in loving your brother. You love him, whom God loves in, this electing saving adopting way.

And those upon whom God has set special affection from all eternity, become the objects of your own special affection. And suddenly you find that Christians are your people and you love them. Dearly not because they are. so perfectly righteous and good, and pleasant. They still sin against you and so forth.

But for the love of God for them, for the union of Christ in them and to them for the spirit, whom you love and and who dwells within them, you have Triune reason. To love Believers. And so this is, of course, the great display that someone is united to Christ.

Because in Union with Christ, he comes then to be conformed more and more to Christ the Life of Christ. In us the character of Christ in us produces great love for the Triune God and therefore great love for those who have come into the Blessed relationship with the dryune, God that comes.

By salvation through Union with Jesus Christ. And that is then displayed by their working righteousness and loving their brother. If someone says, I am a child of God. But does not. Work any righteousness at all. He's not loving towards God, he doesn't want to, please God. Someone says I am a child of God need, but does not love Christians.

Love the Brethren, just for the sake of there, being Christians for their being Brethren. They must be Liars. In this, the children of God, and the children of devil, the devil are manifest Whoever does not practice righteousness, is not of God. Nor is he, who does not love his brother.

So if you cannot honestly, say not that you work righteousness perfectly or love your brother perfectly, but if you don't have that in you at all and that is not coming from you, then you cry out to God, lord by your spirit, give me faith in your son.

The Lord Jesus, that I may be United to Heaven and dwell by your spirit and know myself as your child, even as your spirit applies to me the character of Christ. That I will begin working, the things that he works, and I will begin loving like he laughs And so, the difference between The children of God and the children of the devil, and this is why he brings up Cain.

Kane is the first of the line of what is called by God in Genesis 3 15, the seed of the serpent In Genesis 3 15, he uses a language to see to the woman. And the seed of the serpent and that's the same thing as the children of God.

Who are the seed of the woman, those who belong to the seed, capital S of the woman that seed with the capital S is the Lord Jesus Christ. And thus seed, plural of the woman, then The Offspring, the many offspring of the Woman by faith, which got her her new name, Eve, when her husband believed in the promised seed, the promised Christ and suddenly Mrs.

Dirt or Mrs. Adam was no longer a good enough name for his wife. Because of what the Lord had prophesied about her. He renamed her Eve mother because she was the mother of all the living. So, Adam, and now Eve were seed of the woman. The woman was seated.

The woman and Adam was seed of the woman, even though she had been taken from her rib. Praise God, from his rib, praise God. And So the first one who belonged to the seed of the serpent was Kane. He was the first one. Who was not brought to Faith who hated and who murdered like the devil.

whose child than he was the language here for seed of the woman is and seated the serpent as children of God and children of the devil. So the children of God are identified by the origin of their love. Because we all sinned in Adam, we all fell in at him.

We can act work righteousness from the heart. We cannot work. Any genuine righteousness at all. from our original nature. Because we sinned in Adam and we died. In Adam. And in ourselves, every intention of the thoughts of our hearts are only evil and that continually And so, if we love, it is because we are united to Christ.

And he makes this point, he says, And for this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. He's talking especially from the beginning of the church. He's talking especially From John 3. Sorry, John 13. He's talking, especially from John 13, verse 34 and John 15 verse 12.

The night that the Lord Jesus was betrayed when he gives this new commandment that we love one another. This as he has loved us. This thing that he was doing the next day, the Lord Jesus and going to the Cross was not only atoning for all our sin, which we cannot do for one another.

But it was establishing the sort of love that Believers will have for one another, the same love in which Jesus atoned for our sin. Is the love in which we seek every benefit for one another's, Souls and one another's bodies. And so we have this fellowship and one another's Graces and we owe.

One, another faithful conscientious participation in the church and love to each other. And speaking, the truth in love to one another and therefore, listening to our Shepherd teachers, who teach us what the Apostles prophets and evangelists. Wrote for us from the Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may not be blown about even your Seeking to have good Doctrine as out of love for your brother and the same love that the Lord Jesus.

expressed when he went to the Cross. And so children of God are identified by the origin of their love. we don't love one another from ourselves. We love one another from the Life of Christ in us or the seed of God in us, he is the language of verse nine from this chapter and so that was the new commandment that they had had from the beginning.

Back in chapter 2, verses 6 through 11 and he reminds us that and now in chapter 3 verse 11, this is the message you heard from the beginning that we should love one. Another says the great Mark of the disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. As he said they will know you are disciples my disciples by your love for one another.

And this is the great Mark of the children of God that they love one another as the adopted. and one another's Brothers then brothers. and sisters. Now, the children of the devil are identified by the origin of their hatred. Verse 12, not as Cain, who was of the wicked one?

And murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his Works were evil. And his brothers, Righteous. And so Hebrews 11 4. tells us that

Abel's sacrifice was more excellent than Cain's particularly, because it came by faith. It came by a believing response from a regenerate heart to the Lord in accordance with what the Lord had taught, which the Lord had showed that the sacrifice ought to be a substitute was shed blood. And of course he offered the first and best.

The scripture also tells us and so Abel did by faith, Hebrews 11 4. That, which was righteous. And so, his Keynes Brothers Works, were righteous. Now, Cain wanted to be his own God. He wanted the sacrifice that he had invented. the fruit to the ground, which he was producing with his farming.

He wanted the sacrifice that he had invented presented according to his own character, just bringing some whatever it was, not the first and best. He wanted that to be accepted and he was angry and his face fell. When the Lord didn't submit to Cain's standard of righteousness. You can see how this was very much already evil on his behalf, evil from him and Because he was a child of the devil.

He was by Nature, a child of Wrath, he was a son of Disobedience, even as each of us come into the world. Being, but because he was not Elect of God because he was not given New Life by the Holy. Not only did he do these evil works but when he saw the difference between himself and his brother, When he saw that, his brother had this new life, By which he began working righteousness.

Kane hated his brother. And Cain murdered. His brother. And where did all that? All came come from. Well that came from the devil, who is the murderer from the beginning? When the Pharisees hated Jesus and wanted to kill him. He told them that they were of their father, the devil This should warn us against any hatred, that is remaining in our hearts.

That if there is no love at all in our hearts then we don't have a new nature but even those who have a new nature, there may be hate remaining in our hearts, from our former nature. But that hate comes from being. From when we were Children of the devil that hate as its origin in Satan himself in the murder of the murderousness of Satan himself.

And so the children of the devil are identified by the origin of their hatred. What? This means is, you shouldn't be surprised. When people hate you, Because the world is still full of those who are children of the devil. Now God in his Mercy has restrained, to a great extent to the expression of man's sin.

So that rarely is it like the days of Noah and rarely? Is it like the days of Sodom? Or. the days of Israel, latent judges, when it became like Sodom and Noah there, although God at times, gives man over to himself as a display of his judgment against all the unrighteousness and Ungodliness of men.

But, We often I think make the mistake of Looking around and seeing a society in which people by God's mercy and common Grace over against what they deserve and over against the destruction to, which they go gives them. The ability to have some sense of order and some sense of cooperation and respect.

And we see these external things and then when they find out that we hold to Jesus Christ alone, The Creator and the Lord God, the only Savior, the only way of Salvation. The one who demands that we turn from our sin and belong to him alone. lest we be destroyed, they hate that.

And the more, the Lord gives them over to their sin. The more they hate even the appearance of righteousness as more and more, they call evil good and good evil. but we should not be taken by surprise when that happens. Because we know that apart from the spirit making someone alive, Apart from the seed of God being planted in them apart from there being born again and being united to the Lord, Jesus by faith, apart from the Holy Spirit, dwelling in their hearts because they are children.

Of God, apart from those things, they are children of the devil. Genuine conversion is the only way someone comes to be. A child of God, instead of being a child of the devil. And so, we should expect. That they're going to hate us. That the more clarified, their condition is.

And the more clarified, our identity is The more we work real righteousness and the more they work, real evil. The more they will hate and even murder as has often been the case. In the last 2000 years of persecution, in the last hundred years, there has been more murder of Christians in the earth.

Than there was in the first 1900 put together. And so we should be we should not be surprised if the world hates us and if you know this from the Bible then you don't think about this with a grudging heart or an anxious heart or a worried heart. You just know.

That until the Lord brings someone out of being in the first atom, as a child of the devil. and into the last atom, as the first atom himself needed to be brought into the last atom. As a child of God. That you should expect. Them to hate you.

So do not expect the world to love you. then do not do things trying to get the world to love you. This is one of the great mistakes that people make. In what they think is evangelism. They do things not in order to be loving like their father sons of their father in Heaven, loving their enemies.

But they do things to try to get the world to love them. and to feel loved by them. But you have no control over that. If there are children of the devil, They will eventually ultimately hit. We however, must love. So he says, we know that we have passed from Death to life because we love the Brethren.

Did you know that when you love? Dear brothers and sisters in the church and even perhaps especially your brothers and sisters in the church in this house. That you are enjoying the fruit of the evidence of you having passed from Death to life. And so, when you Especially our sinned against or disappointed in other.

And how they are treating you as an opportunity to love them. As Christ has loved you and to enjoy the fruit to sample, having passed from Death to life. And when they are sorrowful and you get to mourn with those who mourn, it is an opportunity to enjoy the fruit of having passed from Death to life, And when

They are needy and you, you have. an opportunity to supply something that they need. It is an opportunity to enjoy the fruit of having passed from Death to life. And when they are doing something. Sinful that you can come with gentleness, a spirit of gentleness and help them and be helpful to them by God's mercy, to both of you.

you're doing so out of a desire to recover. Your brother, you're doing, so out of a recover, a desire to be useful, to the soul of your brother is an opportunity. To sample to enjoy the fruit. Of having passed from Death to life. So we should Rejoice at the opportunity to love and when we find ourselves actually loving, we should Rejoice at that because that did not come from us.

That came from the grace of God. And so we have much opportunity to love one another The flip side of that, though, the other side of the coin, Is that if we find hatred for our brother in our heart that we must kill it, we must identify it as not.

Belonging to who we are in Christ. The person who Indulges tolerates.

The person who,

It's turning itself back on and on.

The person who tolerates hate in his heart. For a brother sister in Christ is showing that his hate is still part of his identity. And if hate is part of your identity, you are a murderer. If hate is part of your identity, if you're okay with it, if it's just a basic component of who you are.

Then you are a murderer and verse 15 says, you do not have eternal life abiding in. And so this is something that if it is ever the case with you. Or ever seems to be the case with you that you should be very alarmed at and immediately seek that the Lord would give you life and repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you ever are living with bitterness and hatred, hostility, towards a brother or sister in the church. We must never. Tolerate such a disposition. Being a part of who we are. Because that is evidence that we are not United Christ not indwelt by the spirit not children of God.

Such a person is a murderer. And is still a child of the devil. And so may the Lord spare you, my dear children and never let you increase in bitterness towards someone or be obsessed. With someone else's enmity towards you, even lest you start indulging hate in a way.

that might even be an indication. That you have not been genuinely converted. May the Lord not permit that but give to you true life in which you mortify Hatred. As belonging to something, that is no longer. your identity. Let's pray. Our gracious God nor heavenly Father, we thank you that you take from among those who by Nature are children of the devil.

Because you have determined. That they shall be the seed of the woman. The Offspring even of Christ. The children of God. And Grant that by your spirit's work in us, it would become evident that. That is what we are. As you give us more and more. To love you and work righteousness.

And even to love our brothers with Christ's own. Love, being worked out in us. We ask in his name, amen.