

1John 3:11-24 – Loving to be Hated

1. Loving to be Hated

Can you think of an instance in your life where you love to be hated?

Most of the time, we loved to be loved, and we hate to be hated.

But sometimes, we love to be hated.

The first thought that sprang to my mind was the rugby league team that I support.

Yes, I'm a Manly Sea Eagles supporter, and of course, an unwritten rule of Sydney tribal culture

Is that we hate the rich, the wealthy, the tall poppies. Many hate the Manly Sea Eagles.

And so, as Manly supporter, I love being hated.

I know that we're better, we're superior, we've been in the finals for the past 7 years.

So hate me all you want, cause I love it. Of course, now we're hopeless and the Dragons...

So, even though we might generally, love to be loved, and hate to be hated,

Sometimes we might love to be hated.

And so today, as we come to the next instalment in John's first letter,

in 1John 3:11 – John says "love one another"

And in 1John 3:13 – John says "the world hates you" –

So, how can this be? How can John write that 'the world hates you'?

Especially considering, that John espouses a self-sacrificial love,

And we'd expect that self-sacrificial love should, at the very least, result in gratitude

So how does love lead to hate? How does self-sacrificial love lead to animosity from the world?

2. The Hatred of Cain vs. The Righteousness of Abel (vv. 11-15)

John sets out the history of love and hate, starting with Cain and Abel << vv. 11-15>>.

The first murder in the Bible provides the backdrop. The story of Cain and Abel from Genesis 4.

=> Do not be surprised the world hates you (v. 13)

Therefore, we shouldn't be astonished that the world hates us. v. 13

But John says, 'Do not be surprised when the world hates you'.

For many Christians this expresses itself in being disowned by their family,
For many Christians this expresses itself in being persecuted by their government
For many Christians this manifests itself in physical violence and death
– like those Egyptian Christians beheaded by the Islamic state
For many Christians throughout the world there is no surprise, no astonishment
at the hate they receive for bearing Christ's name
But for us, we can easily be surprised by the reality, our bubble gets burst very quickly,
a look of scorn, a word of disbelief – “You really think that?”
“You believe all that stuff?”, the silence that can follow, “Yes I follow Jesus”
We feel like antiquated flatlanders, who still think the earth is flat..
And we fall to pieces.

We want the world to love us.

We want the world to acknowledge the good we do.

We want the world to give us the recognition but John says,

“Do not be astonished that the world hates you”.

3. The Knowledge of Love: He laid down his life for us (vv. 16-18)

Well, John moves on to a more fundamental question behind the love of the Christian
And a more fundamental question behind the hate of the world.

And the question is this. How do we know what love is? << vv. 16-18 >>

7 words give us the knowledge of love. 7 words express the very heart of love.

7 words tells us of the love that God has for us.

Those 7 words – “He laid down his life for us”.

And it is out of this self-sacrificial love, that we are driven to love the family of Christ.

=> Love in deed and truth

But notice that this love is not just a vain, wishy washy sentiment. This love is not just a dream.

This love is demonstrated in our actions – we love in deeds and truth. v. 18.

Once you comprehend the love that God has for us, then you are compelled in your bowels.

Therefore love is tightly bound to deed and truth.

4. The Knowledge of the Truth: We are of the truth (vv. 19-22)

John moves on from the knowledge of love to another closely related matter.

The knowledge of truth, and more particular, our connection, our relationship to the truth

<< read vv. 19-22 >>

John's logic is this.

- 1) In this truth (about love), we know that we belong to the truth
- 2) Whenever our hearts condemn us, we can be reassured in his presence because
- 3) God is greater than our hearts, AND God knows all things, including our hearts.

And actually, that logically is recursive (it goes round and around)

That is, we have a deeper understanding of our belonging to the truth

Because the deeper our conviction of our own fallen-ness in our heart of hearts,
Results in a deeper understanding that God is greater than what is in our own hearts,
And the deeper we know that God is greater than our own hearts,
Therefore all the more deeply we are convicted that we belong to the truth.

=> **God is greater than our heart**

Or to put it another way – God knows exactly who we are, in our heart of hearts,

And he chose to love us, even knowing exactly who we are.

And God chose to be great, when he sent his Son to save us.

We have the liberating knowledge that God is greater than our own hearts!

**5. This is his commandment: Believe in his Son
& Love One Another (vv. 23-24)**

So, John summarizes his argument in vv. 23-24. << vv. 23-24>>

Here is John's summary of the Christian life - i) Believe in his Son ii) Love one another.

And if we keep this commandment of believing in Jesus and loving one another,
Then we remain in Jesus, and Jesus remains in us
And Jesus remains in us, by the Spirit that he gives us.

6. Hating to be hated vs. Loving that results in hatred

Well, to finish.

Two words describe the biggest challenge facing the church today.

Love and Hate.

We need to love, we need to be compelled by the knowledge of the love of Christ.

We need to love, because we belong to the truth, we know the truth, we believe and we love.

And we need to love in such a way that not only do we care for each other's needs,

But even more, our love is so patently obvious that the world will hate us for it.

And we shouldn't be surprised when the world hates us.

Let's pray.