

1 John 3:11-24

## The Real Thing

This is the message you heard from the beginning.. We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.



This is how we know what love is.. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.



And this is his command.. to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us.. We know it by the Spirit he gave us.



This is the message you heard from the beginning..

The good news we heard hasn't changed and it doesn't need to.



We should love one another.

This should be a practical outworking of the Gospel

Love God - and your neighbour

Especially brothers and sisters in the faith

John is quoting Jesus' words - John 13:34

We are called to love others too but it starts at 'home'



Do not be like Cain,  
who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother.

A terrible illustration of when things go wrong.

The first murder – he sold out to the devil (disobedient to God)

Murdered his brother (physically)  
where there should have been love  
and respect.

John applies the warning  
to his listeners – we are included

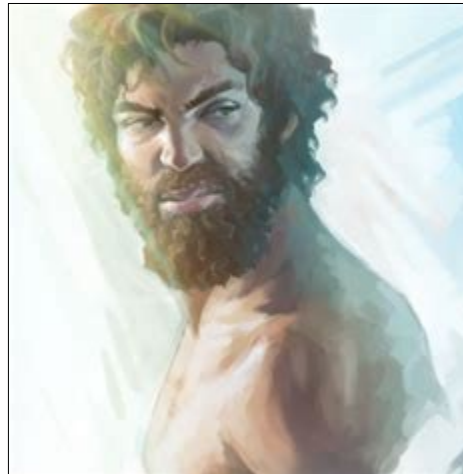


And why did he murder him?

Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.

**The motive** .. jealousy and anger because his evil offering was rejected and Abel's offering was accepted.

Satan's hostility to the things and people of God worked through Cain.



Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.

We see the natural and logical follow-on from Cain's actions  
The world, operating from the devil's mindset continues the  
hatred of the righteous.



*If the world hates you , you know that it hated Me before it hated you'*  
*(John 15:18).*

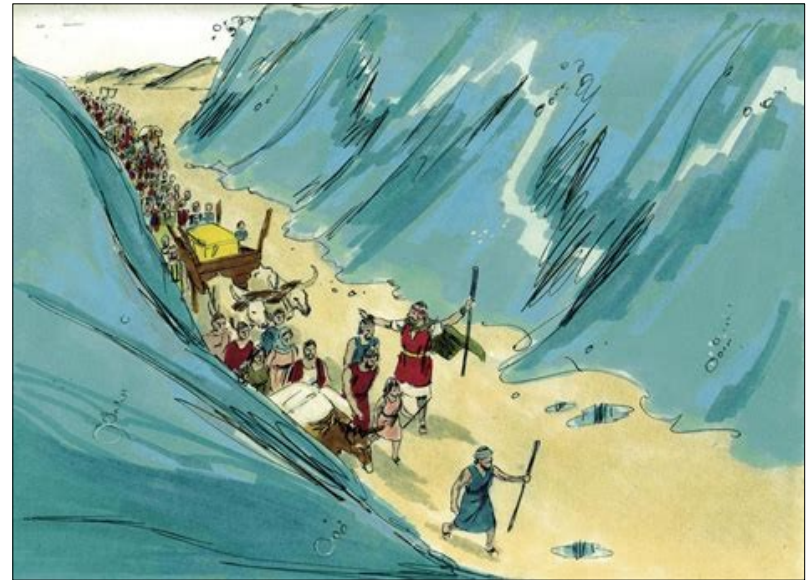


We know that we have passed from death to life,  
because we love our brothers.

We can be sure that we are in the righteous family because we see the evidence of our faith.

We have passed from death  
(our old life – what we used to be)  
to **life**  
– an ongoing relationship with God.

John may be using the image of  
crossing the Red Sea and the River  
Jordan



Anyone who does not love remains in death.

**A clear test** ... no love means no life.

To “remain in death” shows that this person while being physically alive is spiritually dead and that this was our condition once. cf. Ephesians 2:1



Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer,

John is applying Jesus' teaching on the commandment  
'You shall not murder'. Matthew 5:21-22

Hatred's next step is murder



and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

Bad fruit shows there is a 'dead' tree



This is how we know what love is..

There are some strange ideas of love around.  
The word used here in the Greek is 'agape'.



This is how we know what love is..  
Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.

The supreme display of love (agape)  
cf. Romans 5:8 – while we were still sinners ...

Jesus the Messiah voluntarily gave his life.  
It wasn't taken

– he gave himself as an offering for US

- How great must have been our sins.
- How great must have been His love.
- How safe the believer is in the love of Christ.

*C. H. Spurgeon*



And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

The Gospel contains

**OUGHTS**

....

Jesus' sacrifice had an aspect that cannot be copied  
– his substitutionary atonement was once for all.

But what he did also sets the example for us to follow  
– how we give of ourselves for our brothers and sisters.

*We often consider ourselves ready to **lay down** our lives in one great, dramatic, heroic gesture; but for most of us, God calls us to lay down our lives piece by piece, little by little in small, but important ways every day.*

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in (*has*) need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

Here is an example of **not** 'laying down our lives'  
He 'locks up his inside'

*I love Humanity – it's just people I can't stand.*

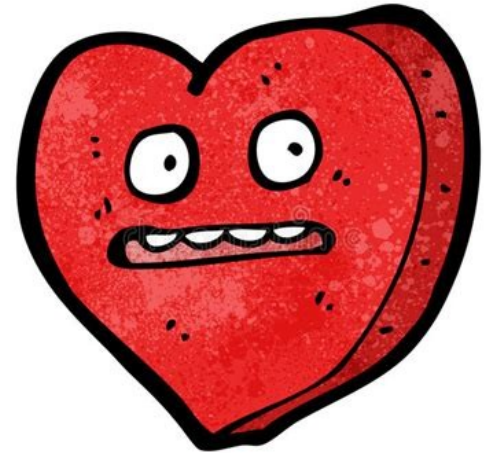
cf. James 2:15 says the same

Sympathy may seem good but action is better  
and shows the reality of your faith. Charity in action

But Wisdom is needed!

cf. lazy brother in Thessalonica (2 Thes. 3:10)

help for the alcoholic/ druggie?





Dear children,  
let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

An affectionate encouragement

Empty words are effectively lies  
– like brother who says ‘I’ll go’

Actions speak louder than words.

Give a gospel tract plus sandwich  
to a starving man.



This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us.



We can know – in spite of doubts/feelings/conscience. Why can we feel condemned?

Done enough?, mistakes we've made?



We can come before the Lord in peace  
**WE HAVE A SAVIOUR!**

For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

Our abilities are fallible and limited but God is unlimited and infallible  
cf. Peter at the sea shore John 21:17



Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us,  
we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask,  
because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

A proper appreciation of our relationship  
– lived out in love prepares the way for prayer  
- with the assurance of his gracious answers

*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in  
you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall  
be done for you. John 15:7*



It is possible for our lives to be directed by his commands (his will revealed)  
and to be able to please him!

And this is his command..  
to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,

The great command that sinners need to obey.

John 6:29 :

*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.*

To believe in the 'name' means more than just knowing his 'label'. It is about trusting in Who he is - God's Son, the human Jesus, the appointed Saviour Messiah.

And this is his command..  
to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,  
and to love one another as he commanded us.

1 command but 2 aspects – related by love  
John is quoting Jesus' command in John 15:12...  
(this is not just a helpful suggestion!)

What you believe  
matters

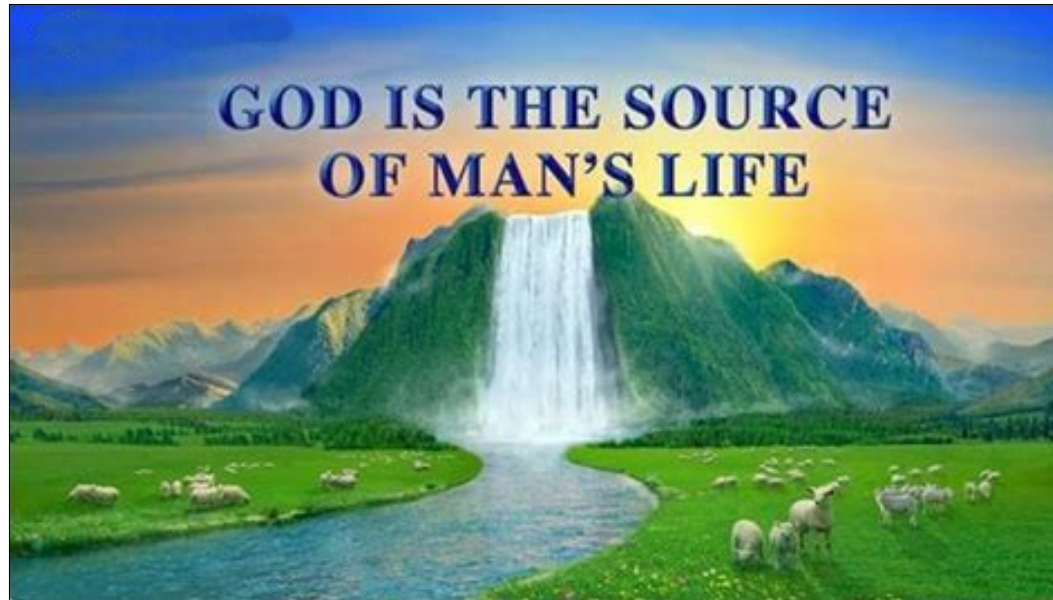


What you do  
matters

Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them.

Source of life comes to dwell within us

This is the reality of what believing in him has done for you  
God dwelling in you!



## How can I have assurance that I am his child?

And this is how we know that he lives in us..

The Father and Jesus have come to dwell in us by faith  
Jesus' prayer in John 17:20-23

*I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.*



## How can I have assurance that I am his child?

And this is how we know that he lives in us..  
We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

The presence of the Holy Spirit tells me it is true.

*Romans 8:15-17*

*For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

**This assurance gives us the joy of the Lord**  
Nehemiah 8:10

