

Kailua Christian Church (UCC)
Sunday, July 17, 2022
10:00 a.m. – Morning Worship
Special Guest Speaker, Pastor Frankie McCurley

Morning Message
“Our Command to Love One Another”
1 John 3:11-4:11

Scripture: Love One Another

¹¹ This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹² 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. ¹³ Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. ¹⁹ This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence ²⁰ whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ 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.

Test the Spirits

4 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² **This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,** ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

⁴ You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

God’s Love and Ours

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Introduction:

Contrasts and comparisons are highly effective methods of teaching. They are prevalent in John’s writings. In the world there are two forces raging for the hearts, minds, and souls of mankind. On one side we have the children of God and on the other side we have the children of the devil, or the evil one (1 John 3:10). The author of this letter is the Apostle John who is also attributed to writing the gospel penned under his name as well as the other smaller letters (2 John & 3 John) and the book of Revelation. This same John is the apostle Jesus referred to as one of the “sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17). John uses the term love forty-five times in this short epistle.

Proposition 1

God's children are recognized by *how we love*.

3 ¹¹ This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

The apostle Paul and Peter also emphasize this main characteristic of the child of God.

“For you were called to be free, brothers; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love” (Galatians 5:13).

“Above all, maintain an intense love for each other, since love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

Our chosen section of Scripture is bookended by this common statement “love one another” (3:11 and 4:11) and a common thread of love runs through these verses. The Greek terms used for love are rooted in the term *agape* or the greatest and highest form of love and it marks those of us who are God's children through Christ. Love is the central character and very nature of God.

¹² 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. ¹³ Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

Here John starts off the second section of his first letter by contrasting the actions of the first murderer, Cain in verse 12, with the actions of Christ in verse 16. When John uses the term “murdered” here, the Greek σφάζω broken down into the English means to, “slaughter, either animals or persons; in contexts referring to persons, the implication is of violence and mercilessness—“to slaughter, to kill.”¹

Remember the world first hated Jesus and since we are His children and belong to Him John tells us not to be surprised but the world will hate us as well (John 15:18). In this present age of social media, everyone is searching for that next like, thumbs up, or heart. As children of God, we have passed from death to life and this transition is made most apparent by how “we love our brothers.” Sometimes the rush of social media and the internet as a barrage of information arms the enemy with a modern tool meant to distract us from taking the actions our Father wishes us to take.

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

Richards in his commentary writes, “Love is a choice that binds us to a distinctive course of action.”²

¹⁹ This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence ²⁰ whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, [Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains](#) (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 235.

² Lawrence O. Richards, [The Teacher's Commentary](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 1055.

As the church prays the victory is promised as we stand on the authority of Jesus and we are confident that we know that God, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, hears us and always keeps His promises.

²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ 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.

Proposition 2

John wrote his first letter to *combat false teachers*.

4 ¹ Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. ⁴ You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

Proposition 3

To reassure the believers that there is *no condemnation under Christ*.

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

Notice how John uses this term of endearment, Dear friends.

⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

The Greek word *monogenēs* used here is the same term used by John in his gospel, where the King James Version describes Jesus as the only begotten Son. Akin further describes this connection in his commentary, "...as an expression of the Son's unique relationship to the Father occurs in John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18, and 1 John 4:9."³

¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that **he loved us** and sent his Son as an **atoning sacrifice** for our sins.

Why was Christ's sacrifice made? Was it because we loved God, so He sent His Son, to die for us? No what does John say? "...but that He (God) loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10 NIV). In John's idea of "atoning sacrifice" he means

¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Here we have the concluding bookend of our section of study.

³ Daniel L. Akin, [1, 2, 3 John](#), vol. 38, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 24.