



October 17, 2021

“Like Christ or Like Cain”

Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

NEWS

Wednesday Nights at Alêtheia 6:30

🔔 Christmas Party, December 10, 6:00 🕯️

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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I JOHN 3:11-16 ~

The attributes of God discussed in this Epistle are 1) holiness, 2) righteousness, 3) purity, 4) sinlessness, 5) life, 6) light 7) Truth, 8) forgiveness, 9) fellowship, and 10) Love.

Each and every one of those things in this Letter can be boiled down to _____.
(Ephesians 5:1&2).

This is nothing new. This is the Message that never changed... “Love one another.” That means you _____ love the people in this _____ right now and if you don’t, you are living like...

John was showing that sin, or selfish unlove, has no place in the _____ realm at all.

This is an encouragement to see the gravity of sin and how _____ it is for the Christian.

“Love one another; not as Cain.” It’s an extreme example for a reason. It is the _____ of how we are supposed to do things. “Slew,” is σφάζω (sfä-dzō)...

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

Cain is of "The evil one." This is identical to the final part of the Lord's Prayer.

It all starts with not putting a _____ to resentment when it first attacks.
(Genesis 4:1-13).

What was the difference in offerings?

It's bad enough to be rejected or punished when life is unfair... It's horrible when you recognize that you did it to yourself. Most people _____ someone else for their failure.

It has two effects. 1) It makes the object a scapegoat upon whom you can pour out your _____. 2) It prevents you from working to ____ your issue that is the real cause.

God's full acceptance was possible, and it wasn't tied to a _____ with anyone else.

The implication was that Cain could master Sin. Cain chose to continue in his self-pitying descent into resentment - into _____. He then complained about his _____.

Verse 13 reminds us that if we are going to be like Abel, the Cain's of the world will...
(I Peter 4:12-14).

John is once again drawing the world into _____ distinct camps... Choose.

Love the church, or hate the church, those are your only _____ from God. Choose.

Don't be like Cain. That's half of the message. The other half is, be like Christ who voluntarily gave up His earthly for us. Be like Him.

Are you willing to die for the people here?

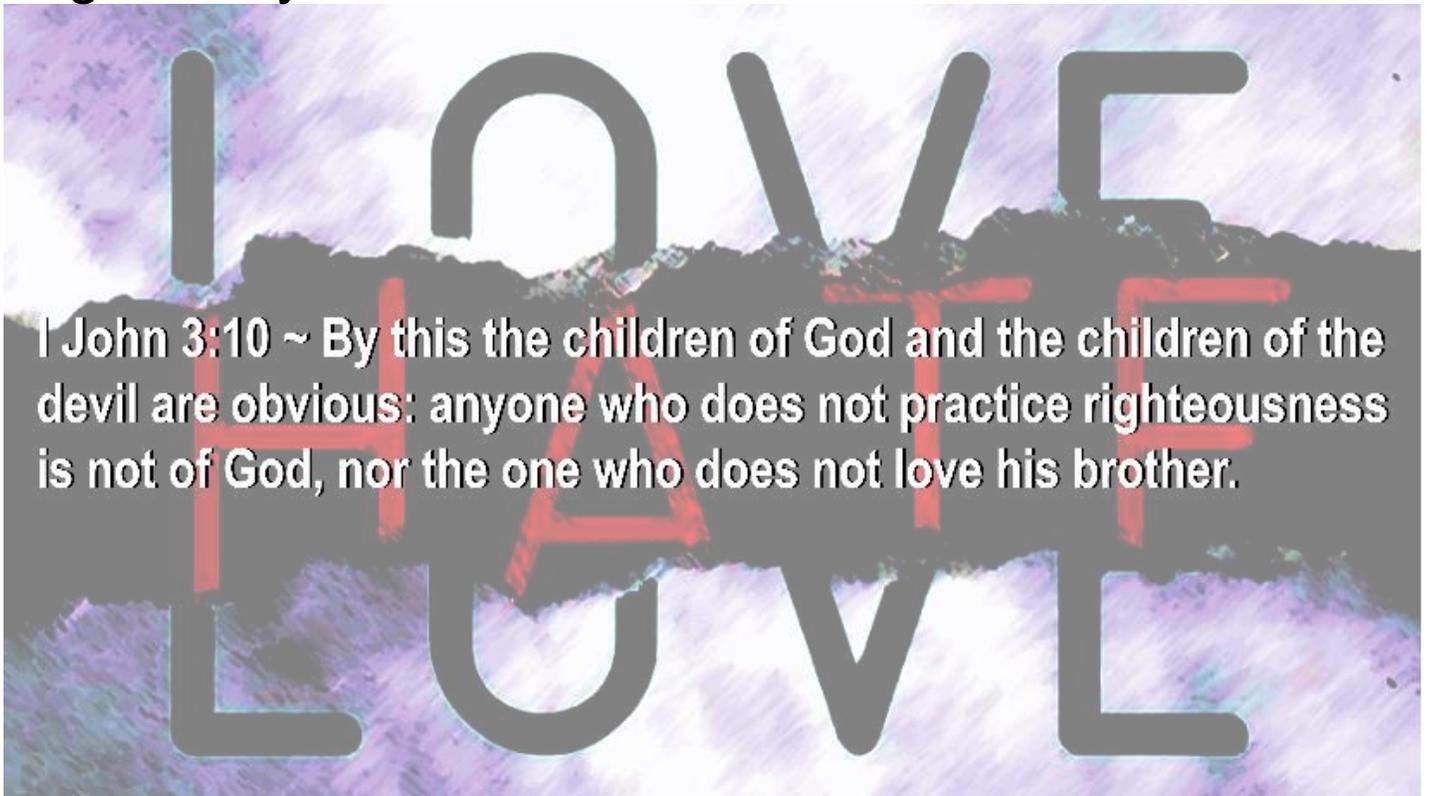
Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

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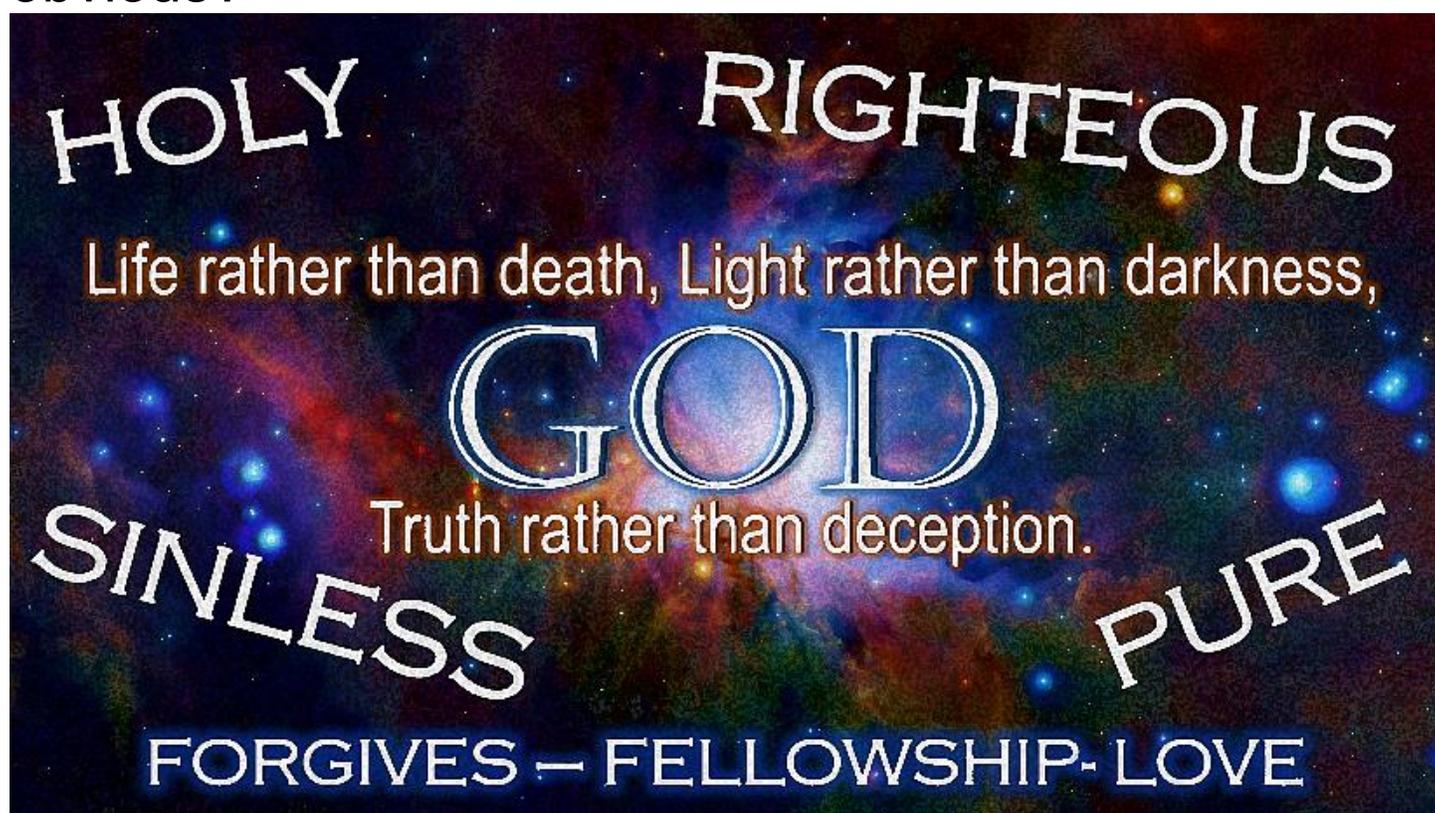
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I John 3:11-16, 11For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; 12not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. 13Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. 14We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. 15Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

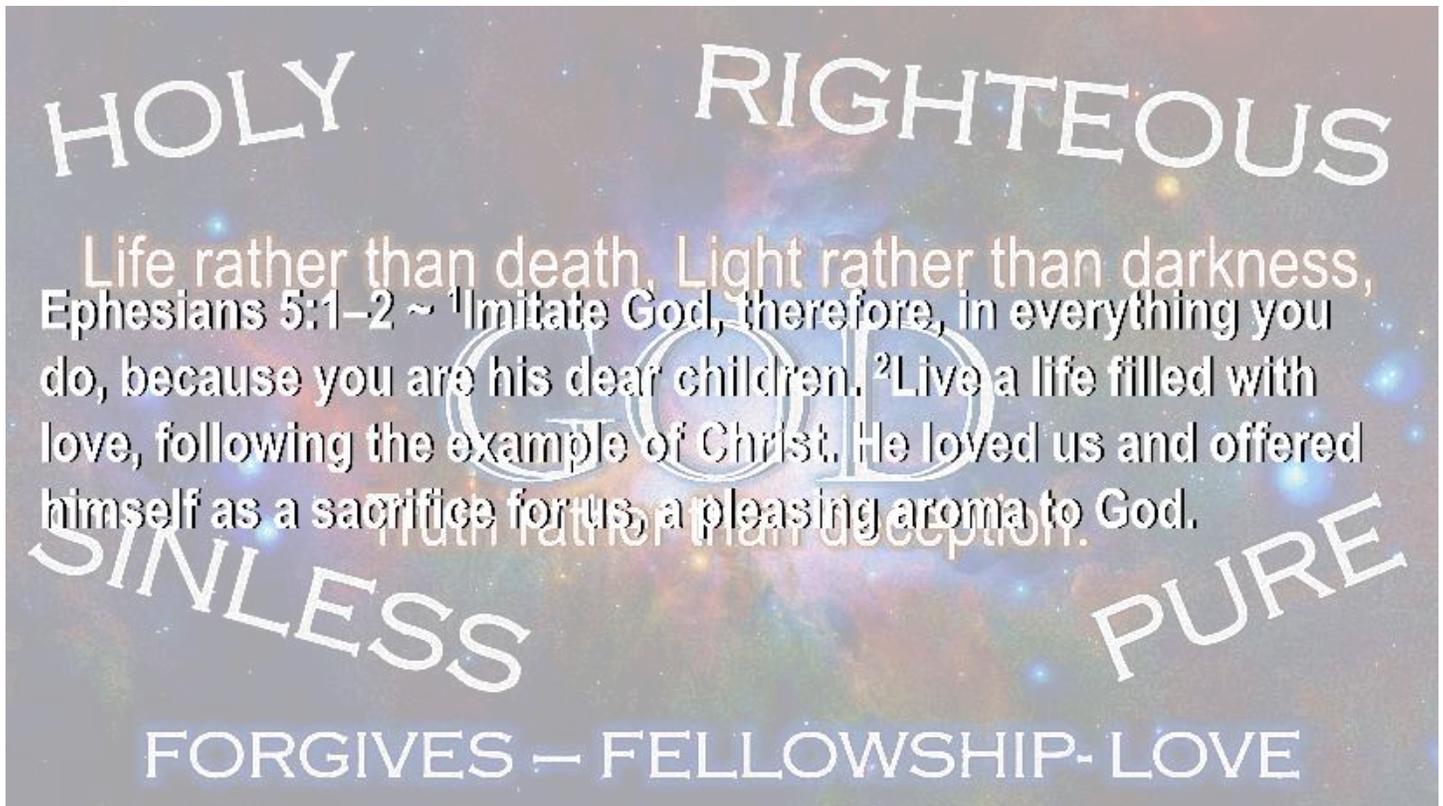


I mentioned last week that verse 10 was a pivot that both summarized the passage before it and introduced the passage following it, which is the passage we just read. As a reminder, verse 10 said, that the differences between “The children of God and the children of the devil are obvious.” What makes the difference so obvious?



The child of God wants to be like God and so they detest in themselves that which is unlike God. The attributes of God discussed in this Epistle are 1) holiness, 2) righteousness, 3) purity, and 4) sinlessness. In addition, we have 5) life, light and Truth. Along with 6) forgiveness, fellowship, and Love.

Each and every one of those things in this Letter can be boiled down to Agapê. That God-Love that is actually Love for the other, rather than a cloaked love of self. That love that is by very definition a self-sacrificing blessing to the other. 1) It is unlike the love of the world and is therefore holy. 2) It is a love that treats all people justly and is therefore righteous. 3) It is a love that is without hidden agenda and is therefore pure. 4) It is a love that trusts God and improves relationship and is therefore sinless. 5) It is a love from God that bestows life rather than death, light rather than darkness, Truth rather than deception. 6) It forgives and it enables genuine fellowship, and it is Love. My friends, “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: Anyone who does not practice this kind of love, the love that is readily seen and manifested as a love for one’s brothers and sisters in Christ... Is not of God.”



The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 5:1&2 NLT, “Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.” What does that look like? He continues to explain... “Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us.” In that Bible Book, what is the purpose of “Living a life of love”? Church unity. In a very real way, I could easily argue that every Book of the New Testament is about church unity. It’s a big deal. “Love one another,” was Jesus’ command and then He went straight out and died to prove His love for the church.



We opened up today with John explaining all of that from another angle. He reminds us once again that this is nothing new. This is the Message that they heard and believed and accepted and embraced... The Message Jesus physically was, the Message He Himself commanded, the Message that never changed... “Love one another.”

11For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”

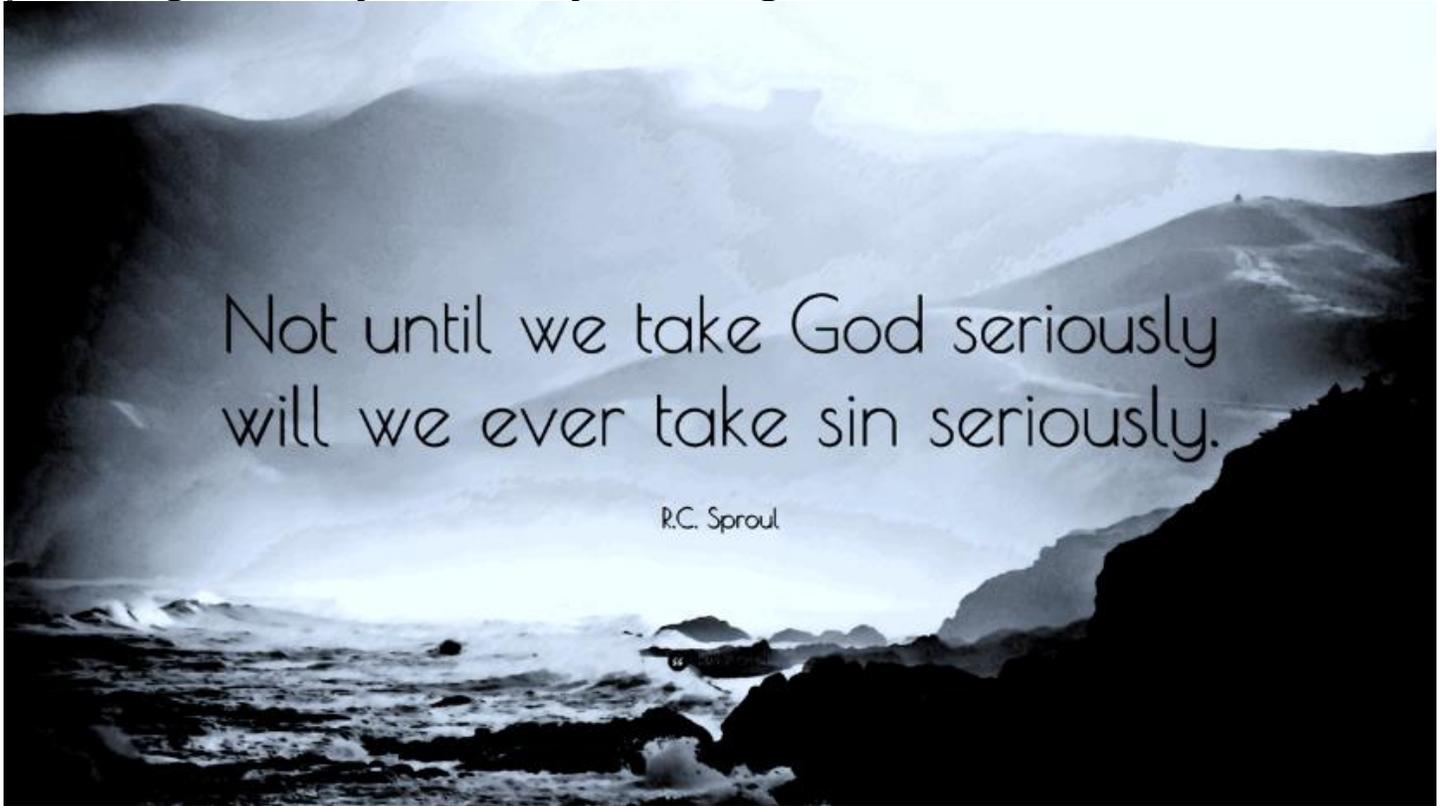
**I LOVE ONE
ANOTHER**

Matthew 1:26

I've mentioned this Greek word often translated as "Should," many times before. John said here, "We should love one another." "Should," is a bad translation for how we typically think about it today. Please understand, this word means that this is your duty. Should a Marine do his duty? Well, yeah, that's a given and if he doesn't do his duty, he's not much of a Marine.

Just to make sure we get it, you must love the people in this church right now and if you don't, you are living like the spiritually dead, unsaved person, lives. You are acting as though you don't know Christ Jesus at all.

This is an important concept because this is what our passage today is really driving at.



I said last week that the passage we were examining is usually taken as either a polemic against being a non-Christian, or a polemic against being a backslidden Christian. A polemic is a strong attack arguing against something. Instead of either of those options, I pointed out that John's rhetorical language wasn't a polemic at all, but a pastoral concern for his precious "Little children," in the Faith. What John was doing was showing that sin, or we could say selfish unlove, has no place in the Christian realm at all. The point being that we should despise our failure to love like God and

do whatever we can to get it right... The proof that we're doing it better is the level of unity in the local church.

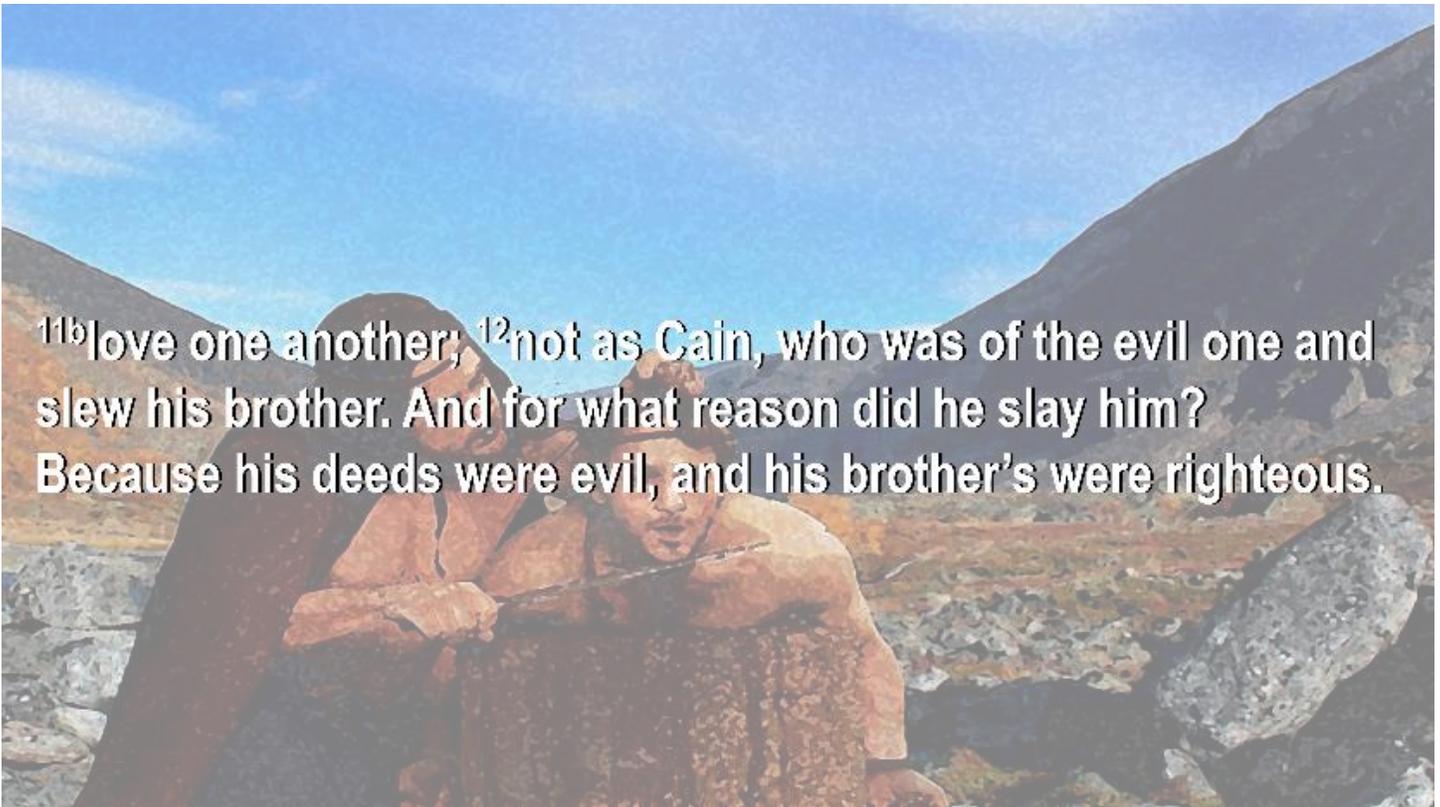
Show me a church with tremendous unity and I'll show you either a full-blown cult with a narcissistic leader and brain-washed followers, or a group of people trusting Jesus enough to actually obey His command in real life because they take Him seriously enough to take sin seriously.

Anyway, I bring that up again to show that this passage today is similar. John is not talking about unsaved people here. I could prove it in a whole host of ways, but perhaps the simplest is that he wrote, just as Jesus first said, "Love one another." The other is not "Another," unless you're both in the same category. In other words, you cannot love the "Brethren" unless those Christian people are your "Brethren."

He's also not talking about backslidden Christians here. Again, I could prove it in many ways, but just recognize that the Bible deals harshly with that - this is an encouragement to see the gravity of sin and how inappropriate it is for the Christian. This is about using

ancient Greco-Roman argumentation to reduce the options to only two in a dualistic approach that demonstrates there is only one way to go - one right way to proceed - one correct path forward. In this case, the Reader's Digest Abridged version is "Love the people in your church family." Do that and fight as hard as you can to avoid not doing it, because that is who you truly are in Christ - a person of love.

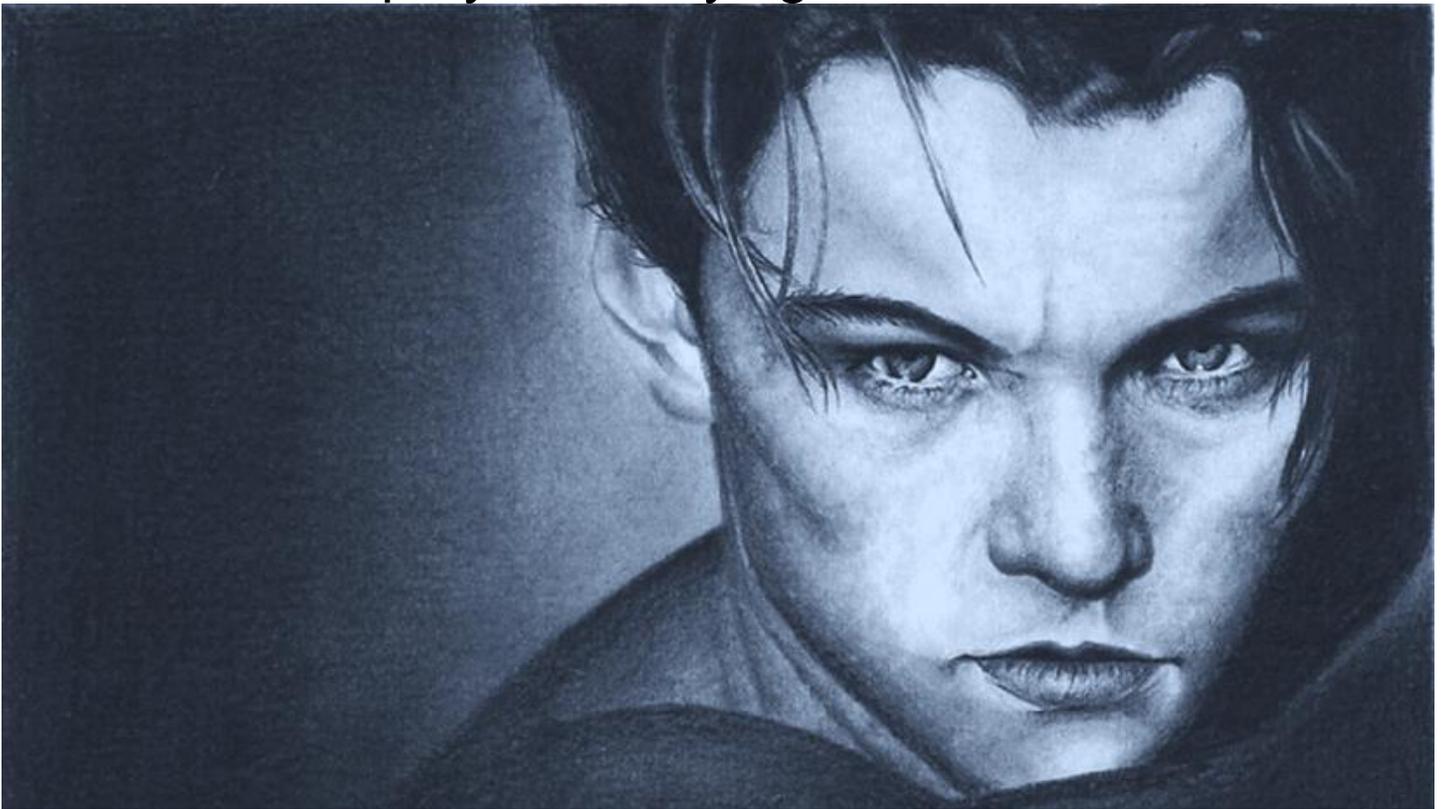




^{11b}love one another; ¹²not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

Okay, now to John's example. "Love one another; not as Cain." It's an extreme example for a reason, John wants to paint this as polar opposite of how we are supposed to do things. Cain was of the evil one and he slew, no, the actual word is slaughtered... σφάζω (sfä-dzō). Cain, of the evil one, slaughtered his own brother. To slaughter is to butcher an animal for consumption, or for ceremonial sacrifice. There is a sense here that what Cain did was essentially to say to God, "You don't like my offering - you prefer Abel's offering -well, here, what do you think about this offering?" as he slaughtered his brother and poured out his blood on the ground.

John's point is if you fail to love others as Jesus commanded, you are in the same boat with Cain. That's extreme and that's exactly what the Holy Spirit wants you to see. You are acting like Cain when you ruin relationship by not obeying the command to love.



Cain slaughtered his brother, not out of jealousy - that's a mistake. Cain wasn't jealous, Cain was resentful. There is an important distinction. Resentment comes from believing that you've been treated unfairly. Jealousy is when someone has something that you wish you had, it's not good, it's a sin to be sure, but resentment is worse, because it is when you feel that

ultimately, ultimately, God is unfair to you personally.
“God doesn’t love me - God is against me.”

I intended to move on, but I think it’s worth our time to really understand Cain so that we can better understand John’s comparison. Indulge me for just a bit.



Let’s go back to the idea that Cain is “Of the evil one.” First, I must point out that this is identical to the final part of the Lord’s Prayer. Jesus taught us to close our daily prayer with “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” You know some translations have “Deliver us from the Evil One.” The construction is

not one or the other, not evil in general, or evil personified, but evil in total - it is all that opposes God - it is the opposite of Love, Love, which is good. so, the opposite of whatever is good, noble, and decent. The way to think of it is "Father deliver us from all evil, that which is physical, as well as spiritual, that which is general, as well as personified, that which is external as well as that which is internal. Deliver us from all that tries to separate us."

Well, it's the same thing here. The clear message is that Cain was evil and that's why he slaughtered his brother. Please follow the flow of this... The brutal, possibly spiteful first human sacrifice, was because Cain was a son of Satan. He was that son because his deeds were evil. His deeds were evil because he gave in to evil. Cain allowed himself to become more and more influenced by evil until it had a firm grip on him and manifested in his attitude and then in his actions all the way up to and including the most heinous act imaginable. It is a devolving spiral into an ever-deepening pit of despair, rejection and misery that lashes out in ever increasing resentment and hatred.

It all starts with not putting a stop to resentment when it first attacks. Let's take a moment and look at the story. As we do, let's notice some things.



Notice first that anytime Jesus, or the Apostles, or the other Bible Authors, mention an Old Testament story they treat it as a true historical fact. Many modern liberal Christians believe that stories like the Creation story as categorically counter to any notion of macro-evolution, or the Story of the Fall with Adam, Eve and the Serpent of Old, or the story of the Great fish and Jonah, or the Parting of the Red Sea story, are metaphor, are allegory, are myth and legend.

Well, they disagree with Jesus, Paul, John, and the rest, I promise you that. Look, it's very simple, the Bible is either entirely reliable Truth with which to order our thinking and our lives, or it is not.

Someone might object and say that I've created a false dichotomy with an excluded middle. In other words that I've reduced the choice down to only those two when there are other options such as taking part of the Bible as true.

No! There are only the two options I gave because if any bit of the Bible is untrue, it is completely impossible to determine which bit. It can only be human subjective opinions that would determine that, and if we're going there, then the entirety of what you hold as Christianity is only your human subjective choices - You, the individual, determine for yourself what is Truth just like your many times great grandmother Eve. If the stories of the Old Testament were good enough for Jesus...



Ivory panel carved in 1084 in Salerno, Italy. Housed in the Louvre

Anyway, John refers us to the Old Testament story that he obviously believed was fact. Genesis 4:2b-7 MSG, “Abel was a herdsman and Cain a farmer. Time passed. Cain brought an offering to God from the produce of his farm. Abel also brought an offering, but from the firstborn animals of his herd, choice cuts of meat. God liked Abel and his offering, 5but Cain and his offering didn’t get his approval. Cain lost his temper and went into a sulk. 6God spoke to Cain: “Why this tantrum? Why the sulking? 7If you do well, won’t you be accepted? And if you don’t do well, sin is lying in wait for you, ready to pounce; it’s out to get you, you’ve got to master it.”

What was the difference in offerings? Most people conclude that there was something God liked about the slaughter of an animal and the blood poured out to God versus the produce Cain offered. God made it clear that the real problem was Cain's attitude. His temper-tantrum and his sulk were the result of resentment at not being treated fairly by God. The fact that Cain initially reacted that way confirms his bad attitude.

See that? If you trust someone and have a good attitude, your initial reaction will be "What did I do wrong," not "I've been mistreated." Cain had already been allowing evil to possess him and he didn't need to go find the Devil to start down that path. We all have evil within us as unsaved fallen people and we can all find those old evil patterns of thinking even when we're reborn as a child of God. Give in to evil and it will not be long before you are spiraling into evil.

The same Satan and the same total number of demons around today, were around then, and they only had a small handful of people to torment, but God protected those people to allow for them what He allows for all throughout time... What they can handle with His help.

God plainly told Cain a few things. First that, by implication, being resentful was not going to help, in fact, it was going to have the opposite effect. Temper-tantrums against God and sulking because you realize that you have no one else to blame but yourself are counter-productive.

God also implied what I just said... It's bad enough to be rejected or punished when life, or God, is unfair... It's horrible when you recognize that you did it to yourself. From there, most people, giving in to evil, find someone else to blame for their failure.

Blaming someone else has two instant effects. 1) First, it makes the object, the someone else you chose, a scapegoat upon whom you can pour out your resentment. 2) Second, it prevents you from actually working to fix your issue that caused the problem in the first place.

Cain chose to blame his brother as an apple-polisher - you can think of less appropriate synonyms. I'm sure that in Cain's mind, if Abel wasn't around hogging all of God's attention, then God would bless him.

God plainly told Cain that if he did well, he would be accepted. That means that Cain wasn't doing well, but that he could do well if he tried. Notice, not only that God's full acceptance of Cain was a real possibility, it was not tied to a comparative competition with anyone other than with Cain himself.

God did not say if you do as well as your brother then I will accept you equally. God said, "Do well," period and I will equally accept you. How do we know that's true? Because we not only know that God is righteous, we know what being righteous means. God is just and he will treat everyone with complete fairness every time. To be resentful as I mentioned earlier is always ultimately a resentment towards God, but God cannot possibly treat anyone unfairly, which is proof that when we're resentful, it's because we're courting the Devil just like Uncle Cain.

God explicitly told Cain that he was off the rails and that he was going to accelerate into oblivion if he didn't get a hold of himself. "Sin is lying in wait for you, ready to pounce; it's out to get you, you've got to master it." Of course, the implication is that he could master it, but

it wasn't going to happen if he stayed in his sulk. In roughly 6,000 years, nothing has changed my friends. Please see that sin is crouching at your door always there always ready to pounce. "It's out to get you... You've got to master it."

What is sin? Selfishly doing things your way for your benefit instead of God's way for His benefit and it will always ruin relationship... Well, that's the sin waiting to devour you and how do we combat it? Trusting that God will not give us more than we can handle in Him. That's two things. Don't despair and don't fight alone. Seek God, pray fervently, be humbly grateful always, confess, repent, accept forgiveness and move forward.

Cain continued in his self-pity decent into full on evil and what he did next is within us all if we give in. Starting in verse 8 "Cain came at Abel his brother and killed him. 9 God said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "How should I know? Am I his babysitter?" God said, "What have you done! The voice of your brother's blood is calling to me from the ground." Dropping to verse 13, "Cain said to God, "My punishment is too much. I can't take it!"

Again not “Killed,” “Slaughtered” the Blood crying out is another indication of the depraved action of what I believe to be a first human sacrifice and one done as a blasphemous mockery of the proper sacrifice Abel himself had made.

We talk about pure evil in people, and we think about sadistic serial killers like Jack the Ripper, Jeffrey Dahmer, John Wayne Gacy, and Ted Bundy, but please understand there are millions of people who have committed similar atrocities. All it takes is a little resentment set free. Please guard your heart.

Then Cain realized that he’s really messed up, but when punished, true to form, he doesn’t think it’s appropriate... It’s not fair.

That’s the man John wants us to think about here. He’s not wanting us to see the comparison as one decrying jealousy, but as two different lifestyles based upon two different attitudes. Cain chose to be selfish, while Abel chose to be humbly grateful to God and serve Him with sincerity that found its expression in his deeds.

John is telling us this morning that there are only those two paths - and since you've already chosen the path of Abel - continuously choose to stay on that path and have nothing to do with the other path.



**“THE WORLD HATED
ME FIRST” ~ JESUS**

Verse 13 reminds us that if we are going to be like Abel, the Cain's of the world will likewise resent us.

“THE WORLD HATED ME FIRST” ~ JESUS

¹³Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.”

The world understands, at some level of consciousness, that God is rejecting their offering. Every unsaved person on the planet gets that to one degree or another. Some can articulate it, most only know that there is a nagging feeling that something is off. No one accepts full responsibility for that disquiet of disconnectedness. Instead of recognizing that they must change they become resentful. They feel that life, the world, ultimately the Creator, is unfair to them.

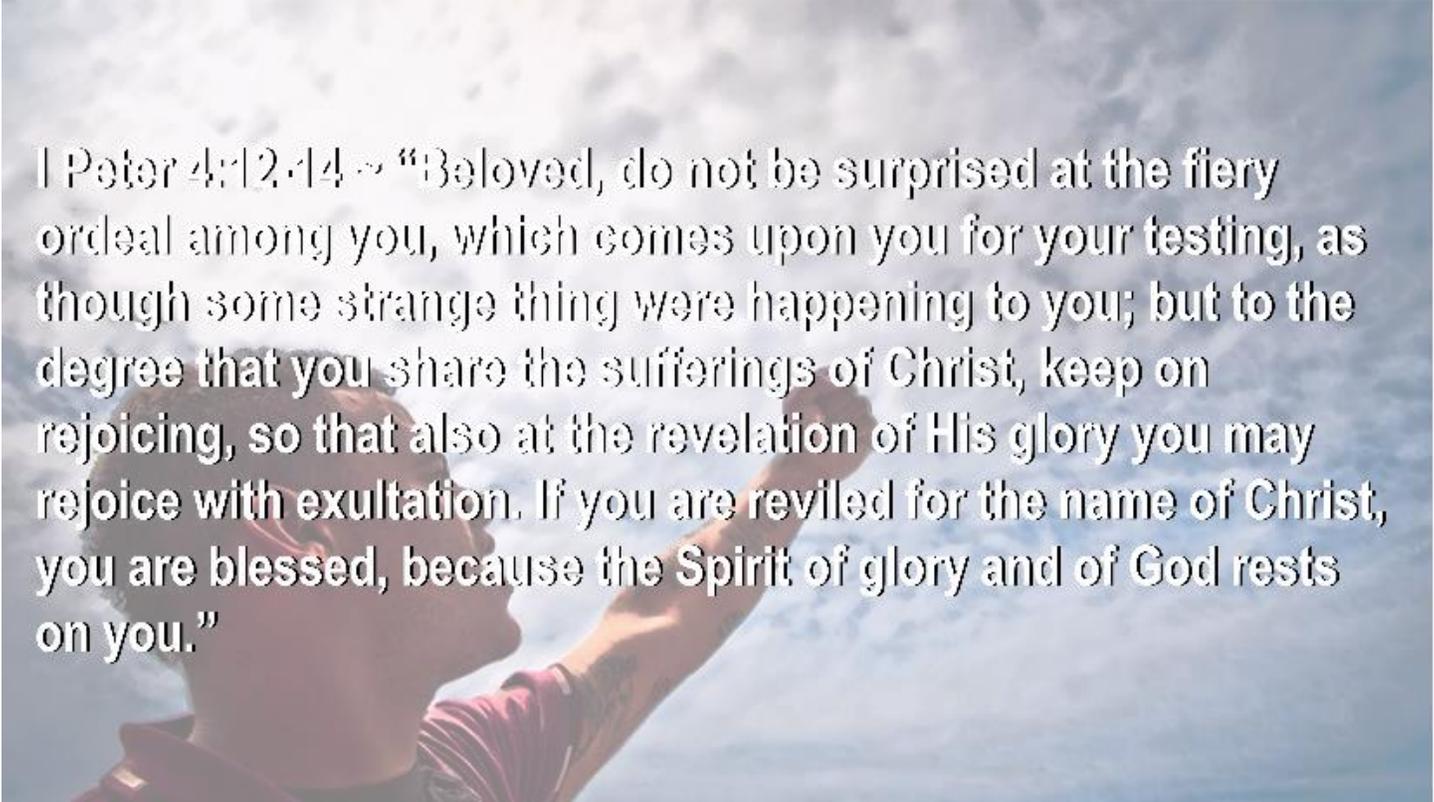


They think that the universe is out to get them; that “God is just a mean kid with a magnifying glass. And I’m the ant” (Bruce Almighty). Perhaps, “I am a bright and colorful pinata and God is a 13-year-old boy whose parents have just announced their divorce.”

Resentment must find a target and God is a poor target because shaking your fist at the sky is only satisfying for so long.

The target, the object, the someone else, ends up being those whom God accepts. It cannot be that they desire God more and do right - it must be that God simply loves them more. Standby to be hated, vilified,

and even slaughtered. As Peter incredulously asks Christians “Why are you surprised by the world’s reaction?”



1 Peter 4:12-14 ~ “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”

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“If you are reviled for the name of Christ,” not reviled because you’re an opinionated jerk, but because you stand firm for Christ, you know that “The Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.” That takes us to our verse 14 where we see the other side of that coin.

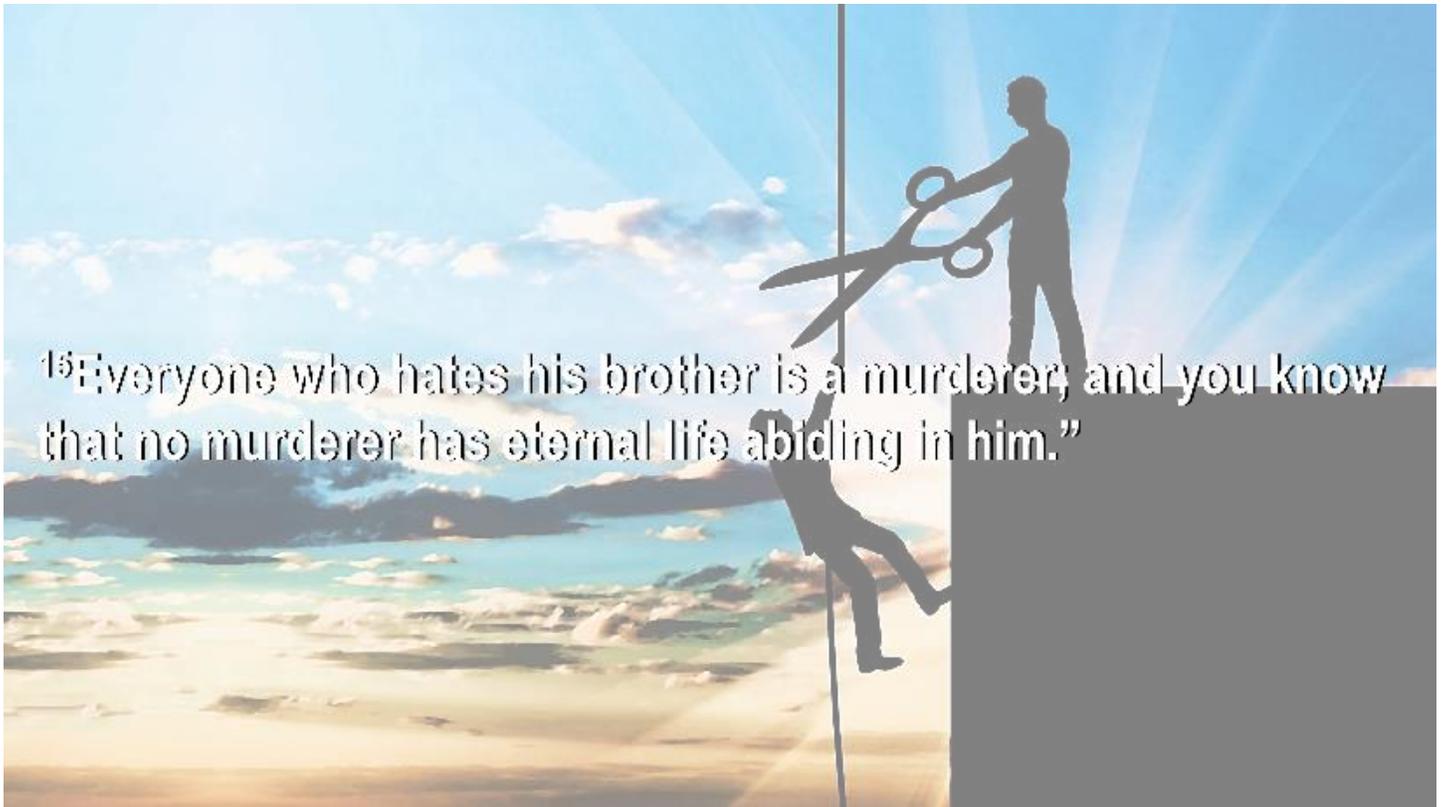


¹⁴We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.”

John's not giving us a test, but we can know that we are Saved, Spirit-filled Christians by our unnatural love for the church... Again, “Brethren” means brothers and sisters in Christ - fellow Christians and that can only mean the church and love for the church must begin at home. Honestly, if you do not love the people in this room, you actually love no one but yourself. I can prove that. I have in the past and I probably will again in the future, but today we move on to the negative statement of Biblical Truth, which is: “Anyone who does not love other Christians with whom they actually interact with, well, they abide, live, dwell, make their home in... Death.”



Verse 15 doubles down with an all-inclusive
“Everyone.”



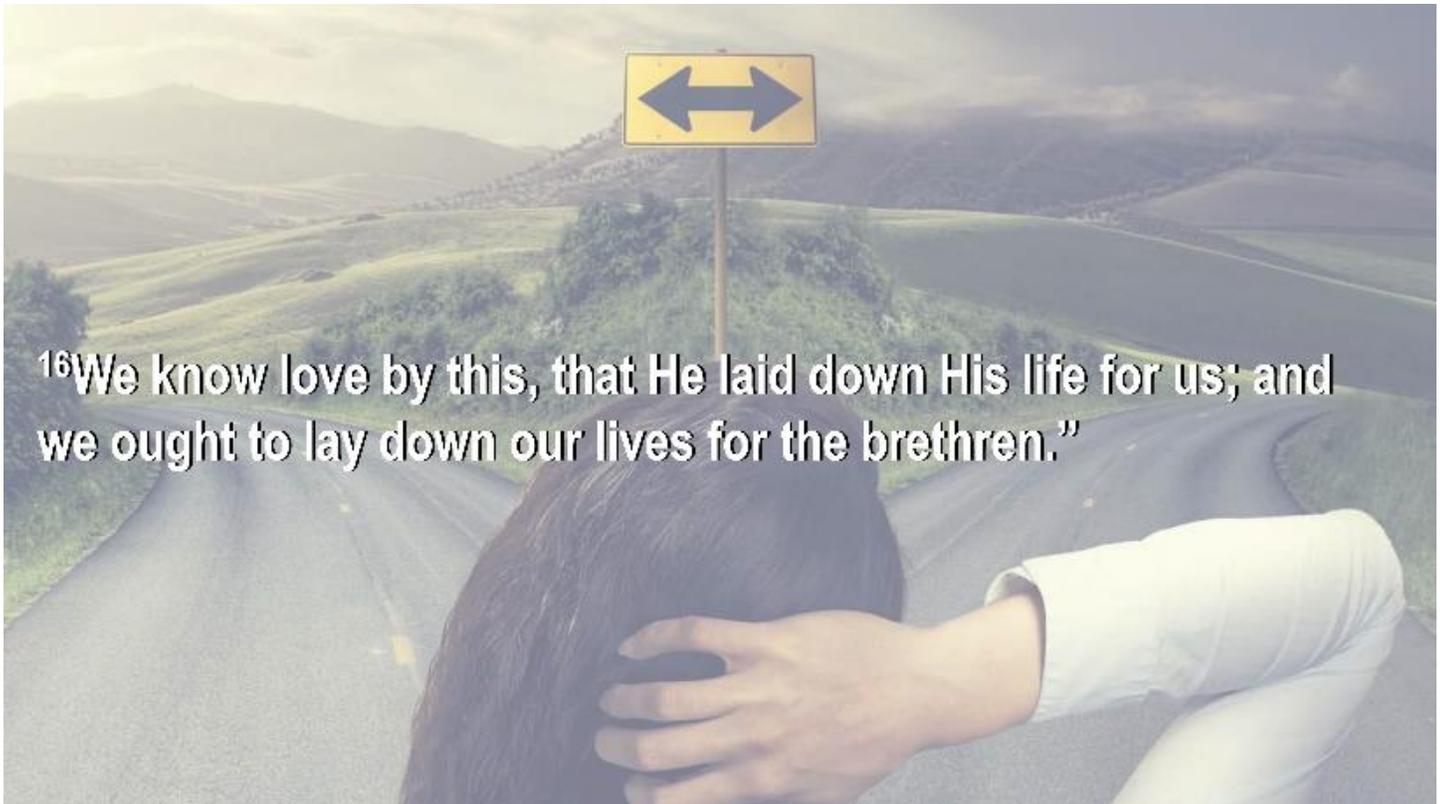
¹⁵“Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”

“Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer.” The common excuse is “Well I may not love the people in the church, but I certainly don’t hate them, and I would never murder them.” Yes, you do. Yes, you would.

John is once again drawing the world into two and only two distinct camps. Choose.



Love the church, or hate the church, those are your options from God. Choose. I'm not telling you what I think - I'm telling you what God's Holy Word declares. Your argument is with the Author. Choose whether you will abide in Truth, in Christ, in Love and so in Life or choose to abide in deception, in your own head, in hate and so in death... Choose.



¹⁶We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

John brings it back around to his opening about Cain. You can be like him, or you can be like Jesus - you cannot be like both so stop doing that.

John never mentioned Abel's name. That was intentional. John emphasized their relationship as brothers. Cain allowed himself to be taken over by evil and the result was a lack of love for his own brother that turned to hate that turned to murder - Don't be like Cain.



That's half of the message. The other half is to be like Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior who voluntarily gave up His earthly life to a brutal and torturous death on a Cross to save us. Be like Him.

Are you willing to die for the people here? Jesus certainly was and He proved it - praise His Holy Name.



Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King's Kids.

Wednesday Nights at Altheia 6:30
Christmas Party, December 10, 8:00

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This is an encouragement to see the gravity of sin and how Inappropriate it is for the Christian.

"Love one another, not as Cain." It's an extreme example for a reason. It is the opposite of how we are supposed to do things. "Slew," is opposite (sit-tee).

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God Bless You!

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It all starts with not pulling a STOP to resentment when it first attacks (Genesis 4:1-13).

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Name _____ Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____