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Who Did You Say Your Father Is?

1 John 3:10-18

INTRO: You are either a child of God or a child of the Devil. You either know Christ as your personal Savior, or you don't. Verse ten plainly tells us that the children of God and the children of the Devil are revealed by their actions (note also verse seven). Matthew 7:20 says: "Wherefore by their faith ye shall know them." We are not to judge others, but we can be fruit inspectors. The child of God will manifest the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-25.

I. VSS10-12, THE EVIDENCE OF THE CHILD OF GOD AND THE CHILD OF THE DEVIL.

- A. Vs 10, The word "manifest" means "visible, plainly to be seen." The deeds of the child of God and the deeds of the child of the Devil are readily identified.
1. There are two big families in the world today; the family of God (Jn 1:12) and the family of the Devil (Jn 8:44).
 2. "The children of God are manifest....."
 - a) The children of God, as a habit, live right and do right because they are new creations in Christ (II Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10; Eze 36:26).
 - b) The children of the God are manifest because "the grace of God that bringeth salvation" teaches us to deny ungodliness (Titus 2:11-12).
 3. "The children of the Devil" are manifest in that they live unrighteously and do not have the love of God in their heart.
 - a) "Everyone who is not habitually doing righteousness is not of God" (Wuest 151).
 - (1) "Not of God" means they are not born again; they do not have their spiritual origin in Christ.
 - (2) The absence of right conduct is a sign of unrighteousness.
 - b) The child of the Devil does not love those in the local Christian community, church. The failure to love a member of the family of God is evidence that there is nothing inside to unite him to the Christian family. The elder brother in the story of the prodigal son is a case in point (Lk 15:25-30).
- B. Vs 11, The word "message" is used to sum up a very important truth. In 1:5, it is a summary of Christian theology: "God is light...." In 3:11, it sums up Christian ethics: love for the brethren.
1. The apostle had been preaching this message of love all along. It is a message they received from Jesus: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another" (Jn 13:35).
 2. We are to love our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - a) We are to truly be concerned about them.
 - b) This love is love with action; it does something.
- C. Vs 12, John takes us back to Genesis, back to the book of beginnings, back to the first two brothers. One acted righteously; the other did not.
1. Cain was of the Devil, and he killed his brother. The Greek word for "slew" is *sphazo* meaning, "to slay, slaughter, butcher by cutting the throat." Cain cut his brother's throat.
 2. "Wherefore slew he him." Cain slew Abel "because his own works were evil, and his brothers righteous."
 - a) Cain's works were evil because they were based on human ability, human merit, good works and self effort. Cain formed the world's first false religion, a religion based upon the fruit of man's hands.

- b) Abel was righteous because he looked ahead to Calvary, ahead to the blood of Jesus. Abel based his salvation on shed blood, upon an atoning sacrifice.
- 3. Cain's heart was filled with envy and hatred when God did not accept his sacrifice.

II. VSS 13-15, WHAT IS REVEALED BY THE PRACTICE OF LOVE AND THE PRACTICE OF HATRED

- A. Vs 13, "Marvel not," don't be surprised by the fact that the world hates you. "Such hatred is the natural response of the sinful world toward righteousness"(Hiebert 154).
 - 1. Jesus said in John 15:18: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."
 - a) The world does not care that God sent His only begotten Son into the world. They do not care that He "went about doing good," healing the sick, feeding the hungry, forgiving and fellow shipping with sinners like Mary Magdalene and Zacheaus. The world hated Jesus because of the message He preached.
 - b) We should not marvel that the world hates us when we stand up for right and preach the Gospel.
 - 2. Remember what the Bible says: "Yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim 3:12).
- B. Vs 14, Here we have the contrast between the world, spiritually dead, lost in sin and the born again believer.
 - 1. Believers "have passed from death unto life," with the evidence being love for the brethren.
 - a) "Have passed" is the Greek word *metabaino* meaning, "to pass over from one place to another, to migrate."
 - b) "The fellowship of the church is an extraordinary affair, bringing together rich and poor, master and servant, men and women, old and young, gifted and retarded, strong and weak, Jews and Gentiles. All one in Christ, they blend hearts and voices in the worship of Him who loves each and every one with an everlasting love" (Phillips 108).
 - 2. Those who love not the brethren have not "passed from death unto life."
- C. Vs 15, You don't have to fire a bullet to become a murderer (Mt 5:22).
 - 1. The result of hating is murder, first in the heart and sometimes literally.
 - 2. There are those in and out of the church who mean to do harm to the work of God (II Tim 4:14; 3 Jn 9-11).

III. VSS 16-18,

- A. Vs 16, The love of Christ is known because of what He did: "because he laid down his life for us....."
 - 1. We are known by what we do. As Christians, we are to do righteousness as He has given us example (2:6; 3:7).
 - 2. The Lord Jesus revealed "his love by His voluntary and purposeful self-sacrifice" (Hiebert 159).
 - 3. We are to live our lives and give our lives in the service of others.
- B. Vs 17, Here is love in action.
 - 1. We must do more than see the need. We must meet the need (James 2:15-16).
 - 2. In mission work at home and abroad, we are able to help those in need and prove our love.

- C. Vs 18, Warm words should be accompanied by warm deeds(James 1:22, "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only"). Talk is not enough; talk must be accompanied by deeds proving our faith (James 2:26).

CONCLUSION: There is a difference between the children of God and the children of the Devil. The children of God have passed from death unto life (Jn 5:24). The children of the Devil are still dead in trespasses and sin.