

Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

Sermon Series in 1 John

Love Empowers Believers to Practice Righteousness

1 John 3:10-24

July 2nd, 2017 A.D. ~ Pastor Matthew Diehl

We continue our series in 1 John 3:10. Through John, the Lord is determined to ‘drive home’ the point that the children of God are empowered by His love working in them to practice righteousness, thereby loving their neighbor, leading to a peaceful life. This contrasts with children of the Devil who are not of God. These who are not of God have no love for their neighbor and follow in the hateful pattern after Cain who murdered his brother Abel.

¹⁰ By this

the **children** of **God**

and the **children** of the devil

are obvious:

anyone who does not **practice** **righteousness**

is not of **God**,

nor the one who does not **love** his brother.

¹¹ For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning,

that we should love one another;

John illustrates who the children of the Devil are and what they do. We look at American society and see that the ones who are the children of the Devil do evil things. These are the lawless people. Lawless people practice lawlessness.

Last week, we noted that America houses about 2.3 million people behind bars. We also noted that this extremely high number of incarcerations (highest in the world) cannot be achieved without others being involved. It is obvious that in some churches failed leadership is to blame because of their surrender to ungodly social and cultural lifestyles. These church leaders have gutted the biblical moral code from their teachings. Which in turn impacts congregations. It was noted as well that the government plantation has new slave masters, those being congressmen over the affected districts, local politicians and welfare workers. This system is set-up to garner the vote of the targeted population. They buy their vote with welfare. This welfare vote buying then keeps them on the government plantation. These welfare masters are the ones who enlist the masses to their destructive schemes to control their lives and destroy their families. Keep them leaderless and you can control them. Take away God's plan for family and you can control them. The end result is that the fathers are replaced by the government.

Welfare kicks-out fathers from the home. We all know the fatal words of government welfare officers, “Hello, I am from the government, and I am here to help you.” I think Ronald Reagan said these words. Wolves in sheep’s clothing. Welfare encourages single-parent families, thus removing the fathers from the home. The government tells people if they are a single parent they get money. It is a criminology fact that children that grow-up without a father in the home have a much higher incarceration rate and high school dropout rates. Young girls in these systems have the highest unwed teen pregnancy rate leading to the next generation of government slaves. These new slave masters are always looking to teach others to follow them. These people are constantly seeking converts. They are likened to the leaders in Jesus’ day who also controlled the people with bad teaching. Jesus has words for them in Matthew 23. **"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. (Matt. 23:15)**

Whoa! Wait a minute. Is this Jesus, God in the flesh, talking like this? Scathing words, piercing to the heart. Remember, God hates a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil (Proverbs 6: 18).

These do not practice righteousness. It is easy to sit here in church and call-out the wrongs in society. However, we look to our example in Jesus. Jesus not only spoke in church (synagogues), but He also spoke in public places. He spoke at the headquarters of the establishment in Jerusalem, the temple. Jesus told the Jewish leaders that 'He was the light of the world and not of this world' at the Temple in Jerusalem (John 8:12). In addition, Jesus told them that their father is the Devil which makes them children of the Devil.

John 8:30-47

³⁰ As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

³¹ So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine;

³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

³³ They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free '?"

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

³⁵ "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.

³⁶ "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

³⁷ "I know that you are Abraham's descendants;
yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

³⁸ "I speak the things which I have seen with *My* Father;
therefore, you also do the things which you heard from *your* father."

³⁹ They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father."
Jesus said to them,

"If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.

⁴⁰ "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me,
a man who has told you the truth,
which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do.

⁴¹ "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him,
"We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."

⁴² Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me,
for I proceeded forth and have come from God,
for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

⁴³ "Why do you not understand what I am saying?
It is because you cannot hear My word.

⁴⁴ "**You are of your father the devil**, and you want to do the desires
of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not

stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

⁴⁵ "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

⁴⁶ "Which one of you convicts Me of sin?

If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

⁴⁷ "He who is of God hears the words of God;

for this reason, you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God."

Paul in Romans 16:17-18

¹⁷ Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

¹⁸ For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:3-4

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

Paul writes to the Saints in Colossians 2:8

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

God writing through John points to Cain

Cain is an obvious choice and universally known to this day, at least in the Western world. We glean from Cain's example that his **murderous act was a symptom of his practiced deeds**. When we go back to the account of Cain murdering his brother, we see that Abel brought his "firstling" of his flock to the Lord. The Genesis account chronicles that Cain, being the first born, brought an offering first. However, the text tells us that Cain "brought an offering." Conversely, when the younger Abel brought of the "firstling of his flock and of their fat portions", he honored the Lord. Therefore, the text tells us that God had no regard for Cain's offering. This English word "regard" is translated from the Hebrew word "shaah" meaning that the Lord would not "gaze" or "look upon" Cain's offering. We can paint a visual picture when Cain brought an offering. Cain's offering was not from the first part of his harvest as Abel brought a "firstling" of his flock. When Cain got around to bringing an offering, it was not his first action after harvest. Again, a visual picture of Cain laying his offering before God: God, knowing that Cain begrudgingly presented the offering, would not even look at Cain's offering, because He viewed Cain's contempt for the offering. Cain did not honor God with the first fruits of the harvest as Abel did with the firstling of his flock.

Genesis. 4:1-9

¹ Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with *the help of the LORD.*"

² Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

³ So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground.

⁴ And Abel, on his part also brought of the **firstlings** of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had **regard** for Abel and for his offering;

⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had **no regard**. So Cain became very angry and his countenance (**face**) fell.

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain,
"Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

⁷ "If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up?
And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door;
and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

⁸ And Cain told Abel his brother.
And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain,
"Where is Abel your brother?"
And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

and unto Cain and unto his present **He hath not looked**;

and it is very displeasing to Cain, and his countenance is fallen.

Continuing in 1 John 3, Cain is the primary EXAMPLE:

¹² not 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 brothers were **righteous**.

So, Cain (**highlighted by his murderous act of killing his brother Abel**) was already evil in his heart as indicated by his delaying of an offering to God before murdering his brother. Cain did not practice righteousness and therefore could not love his brother Abel. Thus, he was of the Devil and **evil**. This account delivers the message that if you are not with God then you are against Him by default. This word “**evil**” needs to be understood. **Evil** is the opposite of good. The only way man can be good, as defined by God, is to have His Spirit living inside of us. It will no longer be “us” people see, but the “Lord in us.” This is the goal Christ has for Believers. We are on our way from the point of salvation.

Evil; Greek Strong's # 4190 πονηρός *poneros*

Meaning: toilsome, bad **Origin:** from πονέω *poneo* (*to toil*)

Usage: bad(5), crimes(1), envious(1), envy*(1), evil(50), evil one(5), evil things(1), malignant(1), more evil(1), more wicked(1), vicious(1), wicked(6), wicked man(1), wicked things(1), worthless(1).

Notes: Gen 4:8; Matthew 5:37; 1 John 2:13f; Psalms 38:20; Proverbs 29:10; John 8:40,41

Most people fail to see the simplicity of the difference between good and evil. If your actions and statements are not of God for good then they are evil. It is just that simple. A play on words that some may think is elementary but makes the point. Evil opposes God who has designed us to live. To live is the opposite of evil. Evil spelt backwards in English is “live”. Evil is the opposite of “life”. God, as Jesus, proclaimed that He came to give Eternal LIFE (John 10:28) not eternal evil.

Evil is often thought as an extreme wrong. Evil is often thought of as actions that are not redeemable. Two points here. First - This is what Satan wants us to think, that we are not redeemable. While we are alive on this earth, we can be redeemed from all evil acts and thoughts. The Cross of Jesus is that powerful and has total victory over the law of sin and death. Under faith in the Cross of Jesus, we are not condemned (Romans 8:1-2). Second – Evil is just not extreme wrongs; evil is any bad acts or thoughts that are not aligned with God. In the eyes of God, if you are not in His fold then you are not with Him. Jesus makes this point through John in Revelation.

Revelation 3:14-16 ¹⁴ "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: ¹⁵ 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.
¹⁶ 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

Hitler, by all accounts, was an evil man. Hitler's evil was severe, but it did not originate in him. Hitler's evil was sourced and empowered by the Devil. True, Hitler was one of the causes of WW II. However, Hitler could not have accomplished his hell on earth by himself. He had accomplices. To name two: Italian Fascist Mussolini (executed April 28, 1945) and Japan's Tojo (executed for war crimes Dec. 23, 1948). Yes, these men and their followers were and still are the epitome of evil.

Are there degrees of evil? Evil is evil, but the Bible outlines God's hate for certain evils.

Proverbs 6:12-23

¹² A worthless person, a wicked man, Is the one who walks with a perverse mouth,

¹³ Who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, Who points with his fingers;

¹⁴ Who *with* perversity in his heart continually devises evil,

Who spreads strife.

¹⁵ Therefore his calamity will come suddenly;
Instantly he will be broken and there will be no healing.

¹⁶ There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are
an abomination to Him:

¹⁷ Haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood,

¹⁸ A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that run rapidly to evil,

¹⁹ A false witness *who* utters lies,
And one who spreads strife among brothers.

²⁰ My son, observe the commandment of your father
And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;

²¹ Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck.

²² When you walk about, they will guide you;
When you sleep, they will watch over you;
And when you awake, they will talk to you.

²³ For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light;

And reproofs for discipline are the way of life.

In addition to this passage in Proverbs, we read Romans 1:18 and following where people are turned over to their own desires because of the evil they practice in their life. They worship the creation instead of the Creator. The first part of the Ten Commandments commands us to not to worship other gods, idols or images, not to take the Lord's name in vain and to keep the Sabbath. These commandments are to keep our attention and focus on God and not ourselves or Satan. Moses was gone for 40 days, and the people became impatient and looked to Aaron to make them a new god, a golden calf. During the time of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments, the people had already violated several of them. They were impatient with God and his servant Moses. If we are focused on God in worship then we will live life as He has planned. We will not make idols and worship them. When we focus on ourselves, like Cain did, then we open ourselves to sin and deadly sin.

When we live the life in which God has called us, the world will automatically hate us. Death does not like the light. Believers have left behind Death. "We have passed out of death into life" (1 John 3:14). Proof of this passage is the love we have for each other. Jesus

ties murder and hate together in the Sermon on the Mount when He clarifies murder. He qualifies murder and hate as the same.

¹³ Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you.

¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life,
because we love the brethren.

He who does not love abides in death.

¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer;

(Matthew 5:21,22)

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

Instead of taking the life of a person, Jesus laid down His life for all. Jesus set the example for the Assembly. In fact, in Ephesians 5: 25-26, Jesus gives the illustration of laying down His life to protect the Assembly to a husband laying down his life to protect his wife. Jesus defines love as sacrificial and having no cost. John gives the simple illustration of sacrificial love in telling his readers that a person who has much and does not help his neighbor in need is not a person abiding in God.

¹⁶ We know love by this,

that **He** laid down **His** life for us;

and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

¹⁷ But whoever has the world's goods,

and beholds his brother in need

and closes his heart against him,

how does the **love** of **God** abide in him?

Paul ties giving to spreading the righteousness of God to the church in Corinth (2 Corinthians 9:9).

HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER."

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

⁶ Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

⁷ Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Love is known and defined through sacrifice and giving, not just thinking or praying in those terms, but in actually doing them.

Therefore, living sacrificially and giving to our neighbor in their time of need is the practice of righteousness. God sees and knows our hearts.

¹⁸ Little children,

let us not love with word or with tongue,
but in deed and truth.

¹⁹ We shall know by this that we are of the truth,

and shall assure our heart before **Him**,

²⁰ in whatever our heart condemns us;

for **God** is greater than our heart,

and knows all things.

²¹ Beloved,

if our heart does not condemn us, [guilty conscience]

we have confidence before **God**;

²² and whatever we ask we receive from **Him**,

(1 John 5:14 “according to His will”)

because we keep **His commandments**

and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

It is unfortunate that people who practice sin can pray, but God does not hear them to answer their prayers. When sin controls a person's life and they pray to God, Scripture tells us here and in other passages that God can turn a deaf ear and have no response. When the Hebrew people rebelled against God in the time of Isaiah, they were told that God did not hear them.

Isaiah 59:1-4 1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not so short That it cannot save; Neither is His ear so dull That it cannot hear.

² But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, so that He does not hear.

³ For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken falsehood, Your tongue mutters wickedness.

⁴ No one sues righteously and no one pleads honestly. They trust in confusion, and speak lies; They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

The cure for God hearing prayer is belief. Believe in the name of Jesus Christ, God incarnate; Belief is so strong and overwhelming that it avails us to housing the love of God. Once again, we go to John 3:16.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

There is a reason that this is the most popular verse in history.

Love is tied to belief, producing eternal life.

²³ And this is **His commandment**,

that we believe in the name of **His Son Jesus Christ**,

and **love** one another,

just as **He commanded** us.

²⁴ And the one who keeps **His commandments**

abides in **Him**, and **He** in him.

And we **know** by this that **He** abides in us,

by the **Spirit** whom **He** has given us.

Verse 24 brings clarity for how we Believers keep God's commandments. We are empowered by God's indwelling Holy Spirit, whom He gave us, after we surrendered to Him. We surrendered (heart cut) to God's Holy Spirit enabling us to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:27-38). The commandment is that we Believers, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, love one another. Remember that Jesus is God in the flesh, and the designation "Son" is consistent with "you have seen Me, you have seen the Father" (John 14:9); And "I and the Father are One" (John 10:30; 17:21, 22).

Believers are equipped by the spiritual power of God to keep His commandments, practice righteousness, and love each other.

Praise be to God, our Father in Heaven, our Redeemer.

AMEN.