



“Dear Children, Love One Another!”

1 John 3:11-18

Sunday | February 25th, 2018 | Pastor Patrick Bowler

CONSULT THE SCRIPTURES

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

1 John 3:11-18

John 15:12-21

John 13:31-35

(See also 1 Jn. 3:1; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Pet. 4:12-13; Col. 1:13-14; Js. 2:15)

CONSULT THE SCHOLARS

[John Piper]

“So what would it be like for any of us to be like Cain? It would mean that anytime some weakness or bad habit in our lives is exposed by contrast to someone else’s goodness, instead of dealing with the weakness or the bad habit, we keep away from those whose lives make us feel defective. We don’t kill them. We avoid them. Or worse, we find ways to criticize them so as to neutralize the part of their lives that was making us feel convicted. We feel like the best way to nullify someone’s good point is to draw attention to his bad point. And so we protect ourselves from whatever good he might be for us.

But John’s point is: Love doesn’t act like that. Love is glad when our brothers and sisters are making progress in good habits or good attitudes or good behavior. Love rejoices in this growth. And if it happens to be faster than our own growth, then love is humble and rejoices with those who rejoice.

So the lesson for us is: Everywhere you see some growth, some virtue, some spiritual discipline, some good habit, or good attitude, rejoice in it. Give thanks for it. Compliment it. Don’t resent it. Don’t be like Cain. Respond the opposite from Cain. Be inspired by other people’s goodness.

Love is humble. Love delights in other people’s good. Love doesn’t protect its own flaws. Love takes steps to change them. What a beautiful fellowship where everyone is rejoicing in each other’s strengths, not resenting them! This is what the love of God looks like when the new birth gives it life in the people of God.”¹

DISCUSS

1. Read Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43. How does this parable of Jesus relate to our study in 1 John? How does Jesus’ parable make you feel?
2. Since we have been out of our study for a few weeks now, as a group, acquaint yourself with the theme and context of 1 John (See 1 Jn. 1:1-4; 2:4-5; 2:26; 5:19; etc.).
3. Pastor Patrick said that the Father’s love (3:1), working in and through His Son (3:16), is a prototypical love. What is a prototype and what does the aforementioned mean for us?
4. Cain serves as a prototype as well. What is Cain an example of and why are we to not be like him (3:12)?
5. John uses Cain’s story in a couple ways; one, as a negative example for the church of what the children of God ought not be like. And two, to encourage the church that they shouldn’t be surprised if the world hates them. In our lives, where are we like Cain and how should we respond? And secondly, if we are not to be surprised when the world hates us, how should we respond?
6. Read John 15:12-21 and discuss. Again, the life of Christ is prototypical. What examples from Jesus’ life and ministry serve as a model for how we are to love our brothers?
7. Read John 13:31-35 and discuss. How does our love for our brothers set us apart? How can it both serve our brothers and sisters in the church and those in the world?
8. What immediate applications can be made in light of this text?

¹John Piper, *Finally Free* (p. 158-159), as cited by Kevin DeYoung: <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2009/08/22/and-why-did-cain-murder-abel-because/>