

Calvin: “Not to kill means to give my neighbor’s life all the help I can.”

Calvin believes that the law of equity “calls human beings not to an individualism that merely abstains from harming one’s neighbors but to the promotion of community by [providing] for the needy.”

C. Actions and Truth (18)

The life from which we live, whether the life of the coming age, or the life of this world, reveals whose life is flowing in our spiritual veins!

LIVE THE STORY

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Using the analogy of a *paternity test*, what is it that John offers as the test? How does John 8:39 help inform this answer?
- How does John explain what *not practicing righteousness* means?
- What do you think about the fact that, for John, “love one another” is a central part of the message which the apostles proclaimed? How does that compare to the message often proclaimed today?
- Why is hate always life-taking? Is hate always a sin of commission or can it be a sin of omission? Explain.
- Compare and contrast the life of Jesus with the life of Cain, focusing on the ways that John brings out.
- What obligation does Christ’s death lay upon the believer? Do John and Paul agree on this matter?
- What specific example does John give for what laying down our lives for one another looks like?
- Why does loving the world prevent us from living the life of the coming age? How does 3:17 speak to why we cannot love the world?
- Discuss the two Calvin references above (top of this page).

Light, Life, Love – the Gospel we heard from Him

Who’s Your Brother?

Jerry Cisar — October 11, 2020

Text: 1 John 3:10-18

Keyword: Father

Introduction

I. Not Like Cain (3:10-15)

A. A Paternity Test

The life from which we live, whether the life of the coming age, or the life of this world, reveals whose life is flowing in our spiritual veins!

How we, transformed by Holy Spirit, treat our brothers and sisters in Christ is a paternity test.

- i. Ethical behavior is passed down from our spiritual parent (John 8:39-41, 44).
- ii. 3:10b “Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not from God, *even* the one not loving their brother or sister.”

B. Light, Life, Love: the Gospel we heard from Him (11)

- i. God’s light and perfection
- ii. God’s sure promise: the life of the coming age
- iii. God’s command: love one another

Hauerwas: “Christians are required to love one another—even if they are married. That may be a cruel and even heartless demand, but it is nonetheless the way things are if you are a Christian.”

C. The story of Cain reveals what the wrong spiritual DNA, life, looks like (3:12-15)

i. Murderous DNA looks like hate.

ii. John connects Cain with the devil in v12.

Mirslav Volf accurately writes that humans have a “nearly universal propensity to care for ourselves alone, or to care for others only if the benefit to us outweighs the cost. ... It is astounding how easy it is for us... to turn into ‘black holes of self-absorption’: manipulating, cheating, deceiving, and exploiting others - and all with a clear conscience.”

iii. “Anyone who hates a **brother or sister** is a murderer...” (15).

a) If love is life-giving, then hate *or* the absence of love is life-taking, hence murderous.

F.F. Bruce: “God is the life-giver and the fountain of truth; the devil is the life-destroyer and the father of lies.” (Gospel of John, 201)

b) We are either living in the image of God with the life of the coming age and are spreading life by love, or we are living in the image of Cain and spreading death by hate.

II. But Like Jesus (3:16-18)

A. How are we to live with *our* brothers and sisters?

i. **Not like Cain but like Jesus!**

a) “Ought to” equals “indebted to” or “obligated to.”

b) Romans 13:8

c) Bonhoeffer notes on 1 John 3:16: “the cross of Christ is the foundation of service to one another.”

We are not called to show mercy based on how deserving the recipient is, but as an overflow of the great mercy we’ve received from Christ.

ii. We must not be motivated to care for the needy “in order to get the world to like us better.”

B. A Specific Example (17)

i. What does it mean to lay down our lives one for another?

ii. 3 words translated “life” in 1 John:

a) ζωή (zoe): For John this is paired with *the coming age*.

b) ψυχή (psuche): life on earth in its animating aspect. It is what we lay down.

c) βίος (bios): This word meant both life and the resources necessary to sustain life, hence possessions.

iii. 1 John 2:15-17

The reason we can't love the world is that loving the world keeps us from living the life of the coming age.