

**Walking in the Light – Part 7**  
**Children of God and Children of the Devil – 1 John 3:10-18**  
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**1 John 3:10-18 NIV** (page 1055)

**This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.**

**For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 15 Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.**

**16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.**

**Intro:**

- We are starting this week’s passage in a similar way to last week’s passage by including a “hinge” verse that connects the two. In verse 10, John sums up his thoughts from the previous paragraph and then launches into his next area of focus, keeping the same theme.
- In this letter to the church, John wants us to understand how we are to know if we have eternal life (I John 5:13). In this section of his letter, he is doing so by contrasting two different families—one family being the children of the devil, and the other family being the children of God. John uses two people to represent each family. The representative of the children of the devil is Cain, while the representative of the children of God is Christ.
- John uses and contrasts their lives and characteristics to illustrate and describe the lives and characteristics of the members of both families. So with John, we are going to contrast Cain with Christ side by side so we can see and understand the differences between the two and these two families in order that we can understand and then examine our lives for our family resemblance and then be able to recognize these family traits in the lives of others.
- “It was the worst of times, it was the best of times.” This is the *the tale of two families*.

***The tale of two families***

- John sets out the initial parameters of each family. The children of the devil do not do what is right, nor do they love others. In contrast, the children of God do what is right, and they love others as we were told from the very beginning: we are to love one another.

- John then uses the example of Cain as a representative head of the family of the devil as a concrete example of what this family is about and of what not to be like. We are introduced to Cain in chapter four of Genesis as the firstborn of Adam and Eve. His life represents what we naturally produce from our fallen nature.
- Now, let's read Cain's story and make some observations and deductions from it.

#### **Gen 4:1-9 NIV**

**Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man." 2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.**

**Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.**

**6 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."**

**8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.**

**9 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"**

- Children of the Devil – Represented by Cain
  - *Displease God* – Cain was trying to be accepted and to please God through his own merit and effort. He was looking to cover up his sin with the good he produced from his life. But this would not do because the payment for sin is death, and in order to be accepted, a payment must be made to fulfill the debt. Cain's parents, Adam and Eve, tried to cover their shame with the leaves of plants. God provided a proper covering or atonement for their sin by covering their sin and shame through the death of another (animal skin). This was the way to approach God and be accepted by Him. This covering pointed to Christ. Cain's offering was rejected, but he was given an opportunity to set things right, which he refused to do out of his own rebellion and pride.
  - *Angry toward God and others* – instead of responding with repentance in humility, Cain became angry toward God and lashed out against Him and against those whom He had accepted.
  - *Evil actions* – this anger expresses itself through evil actions. The goal of these actions was to destroy, dismantle, and disfigure God and those who pleased Him. Jesus equated anger with murder (Matt. 5). God measures actions by weighing the motive of the heart.
  - *Take life from others* – in this case, there was a literal taking of life. But those who are of the line of Cain and children of the devil look to take what they can from whomever and whatever they can. They are looking to take everything they can for their own benefit regardless of how it harms others.

- *Walk in darkness* – there is a continual walk in darkness, looking to cover up sinful behavior by deception, denial, and deceit. Instead of coming to the light and owning and confessing sin, there is a continual coverup.
  - *Overcome by sin* – sin is indeed crouching at our door, and it desires to have us. It will overcome and overtake all those who do not flee from it and fight against it.
  - *Rejected by God* – all those who reject God’s provision of covering their sin by the death of the sinless Christ in their place will have to pay for the penalty of their sin and rebellion by their own life. They will be rejected by Him.
  - *Eternal death* – there will be eternal death, the “second death” for all those who have rejected the one with eternal life. They “remain in death” (I John 3:14) eternally.
  - *We are born into this family* – this is the family we are all born into, “in Adam all die” (1 Cor. 14:22). No one is righteous, and all have fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3,5). We are all born by nature as “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3). There is no eternal life residing in us by our nature (1 John 3:15).
- Children of God – Represented by Christ
    - *Please God* – Christ is the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased (Matt. 3:7, Mark 1:11). Everything He did pleased the Father (2 Peter 1:17, John 5:19-20). Those who are in Christ also please God by having their sins covered by the sacrifice of Christ.
    - *Loving toward God and others* – this is the greatest command. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). God gives us a new heart and mind, and changes us and charges us to love both God and others. Loving one another is both a duty and a test. It is a duty in that we are commanded as Christians to practice love. It is a test in that our practice of love for others demonstrates the reality of our Christian faith.
    - *Righteous actions* – doing right is an outworking of loving others. These are the “good works” that we were created to do (Eph. 2:10). We are to love each other with actions and in truth (I John 3:18).
    - *Give life for others* - the Good Shepherd who sets aside His life for His sheep. “The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life for many” (Mark 10:45). Love is a denial of self for another’s gain. Love does not destroy another person’s life. We are called to lay down our lives for our friends. (John 15:13)
    - *Walk in the light* – we are called to walk in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:7). Jesus always walked in the truth, and we are to follow Him by doing the same. We are to own and confess our sins, repent, be purified, and continue to walk in the light.
    - *Overcome sin* – Jesus overcame sin by never once giving in to any temptation (Heb. 4:15). Children of God continually fight against sin. We have been set free from sin and death (Rom. 8:3) and can overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).
    - *Accepted by God* – all those who are in Christ and serve Him are acceptable to God (Rom. 14:18) because they are in Christ and live to follow Him.
    - *Eternal life* – Whoever believes in Christ will receive eternal life (John 3:16, Rom. 6:23), and He gives eternal life to all those who follow Him (John 10:28).
    - *We are born again into this family* – the only way to become a part of this family is to be “born again” (John 3:3, 7, 1 Peter 1:23). We are born into sin as naturally born people. We are “born again” by a supernatural rebirth by the Spirit of God through Christ once we believe the “living and abiding word of God” (1 Peter 1:24).

## Children of the Devil

## Children of God

Cain	Christ
Displease God	Please God
Angry toward God and others	Loving toward God and others
Evil actions	Righteous actions
Take life from others	Give life for others
Walk in darkness	Walk in light
Overcome by sin	Overcome sin
Rejected by God	Accepted by God
Eternal death	Eternal life
We are born into this family	We are born again into this family

### ***Which family do you belong to?***

- Now that we understand all this, we must ask ourselves which family we belong to. Which set of characteristics define you? You are in one family or the other; there is no in-between.
- Children of the devil behave as children of the devil. Children of God behave as children of God. All these things spring from what is in our hearts.
- We are told in our passage not to be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and hated his brother; his actions were evil, and he remains in death.
- We are told in our passage to be like Jesus by laying down our lives for our brothers and sisters—in love—with actions and in truth.
- If you consider yourself a child of God, praise God for His grace and goodness for you. Continue to abide in Christ and follow Him, doing what He asks and commands you to do. Rejoice, for great will be your reward.
- If you evaluate your life and find yourself outside the family of God, let this be your re-birthday. Turn to Christ, confess your sin, receive forgiveness, and commit to following Him. Grow in your understanding and relationship with Christ.

### **Conclusion**

- Understand that the conflict between the two families continues. We must make sure to respond in love. Don't be surprised if the world hates you. "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Gal. 5:6). Love is the indispensable mark of genuine Christianity. Pray for the world around us and continue to demonstrate Christ to others in actions and in truth.

### **Communion**

### **Benediction**

"May the love of Christ, who laid down His life for us, fill your hearts and guide your steps. Go now, empowered to love not just in words, but in actions and truth. As you walk in the light of His grace, may you reflect His love to the world, laying down your lives for others as He did for you. Amen."

## Questions for growth groups

- **Family Contrast:**
  - John contrasts two families in this passage—children of God and children of the devil. What are some defining traits of each family (verses 10-12)? How does this contrast challenge the way we view our lives and actions?
- **Cain and Christ Comparison:**
  - In what ways does Cain serve as a representative of the children of the devil? How does Christ serve as a representative of the children of God? What does this tell us about the different "family traits" we exhibit as believers (verses 12-14)?
- **Love in Action:**
  - Verse 16 says, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us." How does Jesus' example of sacrificial love challenge our understanding of love in everyday life?
  - What practical ways can we "lay down our lives" for others in the context of our family, community, or church?
- **Heart Check:**
  - Verse 15 warns that anyone who hates a brother or sister is like a murderer. Why do you think John uses such strong language here? How does harboring hatred hinder our relationship with God and others?
- **Loving Through Action:**
  - Verse 17 talks about seeing a brother or sister in need and having no pity. In what ways can we sometimes be guilty of "loving with words or speech" but not with actions and truth (verse 18)?
  - How can we actively ensure that our love for others is more than just words? What steps can we take this week to meet the needs of those around us?
- **Family Resemblance:**
  - Which family do you think your life most resembles at this point? What steps can you take to grow in reflecting Christ's love and actions more consistently?
- **Facing the World's Hatred:**
  - Verse 13 says, "Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you." How have you experienced opposition or hatred because of your faith? How can you respond with love, even in the face of hostility?
- **Application:**
  - Pray and ask God to help you identify areas where you need to grow in love. What specific actions can you take this week to love someone who is difficult to love or in need?