

My Thoughts For Sunday, April 27th, 2014

Love vs. Hatred

For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

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.

Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.

1 John 3:11-13 (NIV2011)

I'm sure we are all aware of the meaning and acts of hatred; but what about this controversial word "*love*?" This little four lettered word has become so overly used in today's society that it appears to mean just about anything one wants it to mean. Even the dictionary has a multitude of definitions for the word love, examples: (1) a feeling of strong affection for another person; (2) strong feelings in a romantic or sexual relationship for another; (3) a strong affection out of kinship or personal ties (the love of a child); (4) warm attachments, devotion or admiration for something (the love of the sea or mountains, the desert, etc; or even today, the love of a favorite sports team or person.) We could go on through many more uses of this word today, but I want to devote this time to the "*love*" as God speaks about it in His Holy Word.

While we are still in this Easter season, we are all still basking in the great love that we have had lavished on us in the sacrifice of our Lord, as He gave up His very life on the cross to pay the price we could not pay for the forgiveness of our many sins; the sins of the entire world for all time.(John 3:16-17)

Looking back at the text above John states..." *we should remember the message we received from the beginning, that we should love one another.*" We cannot look at this love in the light of the dictionary definitions above, only as a feeling of attraction of affection for our brothers and sisters, but as Jesus showed His love for us. He was willing to give up everything for our forgiveness, life here in this world and in eternity. He gave up His very life for us out of pure love, undeserved love, for us sinners. We must remove all hatred and animosity that we might have for our neighbors or anyone that might treat us badly. We cannot follow the example of Cain when he killed his brother because his own gifts to God were unsatisfactory and his brother's gift was accepted. As John went on to say..."*Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters if the world hates you.*" We must never feel we are immune to the hatred of this world that crucified Jesus. They hated Him long before they hated us. We should feel blessed to be hated because of our belief in and love for Him.

We need to look further into this Word of God that John wrote under inspiration. Let's look at 1 John 3:17-18 where he lays out some of the ground rules for this love we need to be willing to show, even in the face of adversity. He states..."*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?*" Then he finishes with this command. "*Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*" That old human axiom still applies..."action speaks louder than words."

I pray you are seeing the enormity of this love that John is speaking about. It is far more than affection, attraction, kinship or devotion; this love is as displayed by Jesus Himself when He gave up His very life for us. This is also shown throughout the entire Bible by all the inspired writers of Scripture, that sacrificial love; that willingness to give up everything for one's brothers and sisters, neighbors, strangers and anyone in need.

Here are a few more passages we need to read, explaining this great action, this commitment and determination to give up what we have to those in need and suffering from the penalties of sin right along with us. (John 15:13); (Philippians 2:17); (1 Thessalonians 2:8); (Deuteronomy 15:7-8); (James 2:15-16)

May we all continue to glory in the great love our God has shown us as we go on in our daily encounters, sharing His love with our brothers and sisters and to all those hurting souls looking for something to hang on to, something much better than what this world has to offer. This love was given to us at no charge and we need to pass it on to others in the same manner.

Note: *All Scriptures taken from the HCSB (Holman Christian Standard Bible) unless otherwise stated.*