

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

**Purpose of the Series:**

The Christ is Jesus – and in him you may know that you have eternal life.

**Central Truth**

Love that is Christian, is a love for others that is both pleasing and acceptable to God before it is to the world.

**Purpose**

I want to listener to know the love God demonstrated in Jesus and then go out and love others the way God wants us too (in truth, at cost, with effort, obediently) – a love which is different to the world.

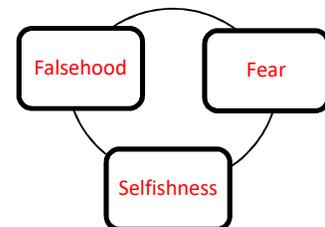
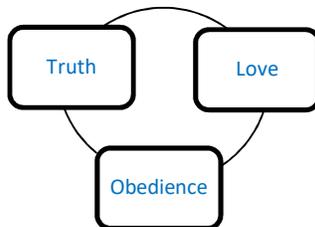
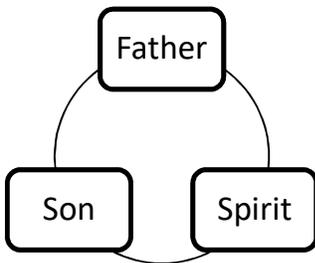
**Bible Reading**

1 John 3:11-24

Although the sermon considers: 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21

**Today's issue:**

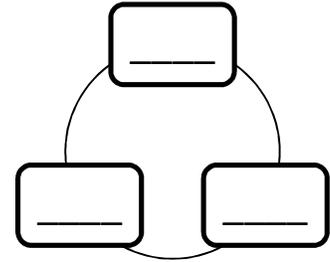
Love is determined by the world, not God.



**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

---

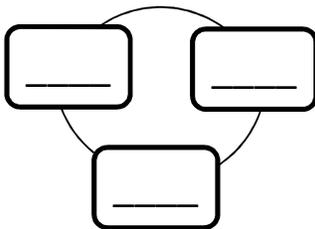
**Outline**



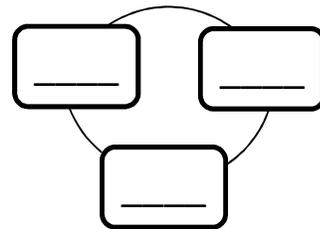
<sup>1 John 3:11</sup> For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should **love** one another.

<sup>1 John 3:16</sup> 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.

<sup>1 John 3:23</sup> And this is his **command**: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.



NOT



What does John ask of you?

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

*CHECK TIME*

**Talk**

**Prayer**

Let's pray

*Lord,*

*We come by the blood of Christ, we come in the Spirit of Truth, we come as children of a loving Father – and we come to hear your Word.*

*Would you please speak to us this morning/afternoon, that we will know how to love, in truth and obedience.*

*In Jesus Name AMEN.*

**Opening**

*Love is a many splendored thing,  
Love lifts us up where we belong,  
All you need is love!*

*Love is just a game.  
I was made for loving you baby,  
You were made for loving me.*

*You'd think that people would've had enough of silly love songs...*

- So goes the lyrics of Baz Luhrmann's Moulin Rouge.
- It is a song about *confused* love and it captures many of the different ideas that exist out there about that wonderful little thing called 'Love'.
  
- This is our third week looking at the letter of 1 John.
- Like a layered wedding cake, 1 John raises several themes and stacks them upon one another so as we move our way from layer to layer we see more of how the whole cake fits together.

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

---

- We have looked at how the themes of **Word and Life** set the platform for how the letter should be read.
- Then we looked at how **Truth and Un-Truth** (or Falsehood) impacted our understanding of that Word of Life.
- Today we look at **Love and Hate**.
- In many ways the two most significant themes in 1 John are **Truth** (which is why I looked at that last time) and **Love** (which is why I look at that today).
  
- If we misunderstand Love (and let's face it, we all have at one time or another), then we find ourselves in all sorts of difficulties – and I think we can say that regardless of whether we are Christians or not!
- In our society, 'Love' is obviously a valued trait – yet for such a short little word, what it means to 'love' seems like a very complicated question.
- Love is such a relational term. Love is such a meaningful experience.
- The reason for that is because God gave us - love.
  
- What I want to show us today is that *Love that is Christian, is a love for others that is both pleasing and acceptable to God before it is to the World.*

PAUSE

- The first thing we need to understand is perfect love.

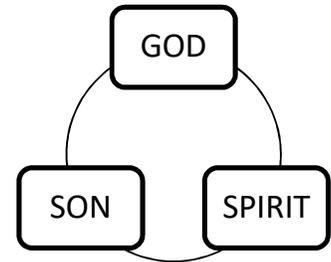
**Perfect Love**

- Turn with me to 1 John 4:7. [READ 1 John 4:7-8 – emphasis 'Love comes from God' and 'God is Love').
- And drop down to the second half of 4:16 [READ 1 John 4:16b – 'God is Love']
- The template, the origin for love according to John, is God.
- Love means nothing if we don't understand its origin.
- What we have here is a good candidate for the origin of love – it is God himself.

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

---

- Is love a feeling? Is love an action? Is love something that I can determine?
- John says, whatever love is,  
it *starts* with God,  
it is *expressed* in God,  
it is *exercised* because of God,  
it is *determined* most clearly by God,  
and it is *experienced* by anyone loving like God.



PAUSE

- In fact, when we say ‘God’ here, I think we have in view the perfect relationship of the Godhead.
- God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit. [Slide 1]
- Look at the very trinitarian way that John describes what it is like to live under the experience of God’s love. Chapter 4:13 [READ 1 John 4:13-16 emphasis ‘Spirit’, ‘Father’, and ‘Son’]
- To know the love of God,  
you have been given his SPIRIT,  
and the Spirit has been given in the context of what the FATHER did when he sent his SON to save  
– such that anyone who acknowledges Jesus as the SON, lives in the love of God.
- If we are to understand anything about the nature of love – we need to look first at the relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit and what they together did to love us.
- In the Godhead we see *perfect love, perfect truth, perfect obedience*.
- They are the perfect example of what loving another should look like.

PAUSE

- One of the implications here – is that if you take God out of the picture, then what you have is a tainted love.
- I don’t mean to say that a person without God is incapable of love – we only need to look around our world and we should be able to see

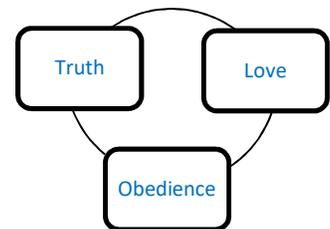
**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

countless examples of people from all walks of life experiencing love – meaningful, real, genuine love.

- The kind of love that John has in mind is a *Christian Love* – one that is first demonstrated in the Godhead and so if replicated will be (by very nature) Christian - whether or not it is accepted by the world.
- *Love that is Christian, is a love that is both pleasing and acceptable to God before it is to the World.*

PAUSE

- What I want to do from here is look at what John says about Christian Love, but to do that it is important to see that *Love* is integrally connected to *Truth* and to *Obedience*, such that you cannot separate the three.
- What we should see is that those three ideas intersect with one another at almost every point. [Slide 2]



- Without *love*, truth will not be valued.
- Without *truth*, it is difficult to know how to obey.
- Without *obedience*, it is impossible to demonstrate true love.
- It would be lovely if John, worked through each of these ideas one at a time for us, but that is not his style and so as we look at the text we need to consider each of these three.

**Love**

- 1 John 3:11 [READ 1 John 3:11-16]
- The context here is that John is looking at the difference between being a child of God and being a child of the devil (3:10).
- You want to know if you are a child of God, then John - presumably remembering what Jesus had taught him (c.f. John 15:16-17) says: 'Love one another'.

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

- To make the point he tells the story of two family groups. The first is the story of Cain from verse 12. The second is the story of Jesus from verse 16. Don't be like Cain. Be like Jesus.
- Cain murdered his brother Abel as recorded back in Genesis 4.
- He was motivated by hate and envy.
- Both brothers presented the Lord an offering.
- Cain, some of the fruits of the soil and Abel some of the fat portions from his flock.
- For an unstated reason, God looked in favour on Abel not Cain (Gen 4:3-5). We don't know why God preferred one over the other, but the point was that Cain had a choice going forward – to do what was right or to do what was wrong in the eyes of God.

*Illustration*

- Imagine, that I ask two of my children to take the garbage and the recycling.
- When they return one has taken the garbage out, but the other has instead cleaned up the family room.
- Whilst it is lovely they have both done something helpful, one has done what I asked and the other has not.
- This helps us understand something about love and obedience.
- To do something loving, but that is not what was asked for is not particularly helpful.
- Push this a little further, when the second child is still asked to take out the recycling – it helps no one to storm off indignantly because they had 'helped' but just not in a way that was obedient.
- Cain had a choice – to do what was asked of him. If he did, it would be pleasing to God, when he didn't he still had a choice, and that was to do what God had said.
- Instead of love he hated and took the life of his brother.
  
- John uses this story to teach what true love really looks like. It is to love one another. For him, *true love, is that which is both pleasing and acceptable to God.*

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

- It is a love, which in its practise may not be accepted by the world, because it is not first and foremost about the world, which is why John says the world may hate, like Cain.
- John calls people to love one another, he calls them to love as a child of God – but important - this love of others must be in a way that is pleasing and acceptable to God first.
- ‘do not be surprised if the world hates you’, says John - because you love in a way that puts God first, and that will often not be the way the World wants. Don’t be like Cain.

*Illustration*

- What is it that the world wants you to love?
- Well this list is endless, isn’t it? – we could answer that question in so many different ways. The world wants us to love - possessions, ideals, lifestyles, behaviours.
- Whether or not those things are good, the point John wants to make is that *a love that is Christian, is a love for others that is both pleasing and acceptable to God before it is to the world.*

And here is a contrasting observation – the opposite to this kind of love could be hate, as demonstrated by Cain, but that is not all. The opposite to this Christian love is fear.

Look at 4:18 [READ 1 John 4:18]

- If your love is Christian love, then there is nothing to fear. There is no punishment that goes with a love that is pleasing and acceptable to God.
- But if you taint that love. If you call for a love that is not pleasing and acceptable to God, then as a tainted love, it is logical that people will fear that kind of love.

PAUSE

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

## Truth

- Okay what does it look like to love one another?
- Go back to 3:16 [READ 1 John 3:16-20 – emphasis ‘actions and in truth’ and ‘we belong to the truth’]
- Contrary to Cain, we see Jesus who laid down his life for another – in fact, John uses this act as a way to define love.
- When Jesus stepped up to the cross, he did that as the only one who didn’t need the cross to *make himself* acceptable to God. Why? Because, in Jesus we see the perfect Abel.
- Everything that Jesus did and said was pleasing to his Father, in him there was no sin - look at 1 John 3:5 (see also 1 Peter 2:22; Heb 4:15).
- And when Jesus stepped up to the cross, he did it to *make others* acceptable to God.
- Jesus not only gave his life so that others might have life, he demonstrated what real love looks like.
  
- Love doesn’t destroy another’s life. Love gives its own life that another might live.
- In the very least, you would have to say that this kind of love is self-sacrificial. It puts the needs of others before your own.
- For Jesus, it meant literally laying down his life. For many Christians across the ages, they too have forfeited their lives for the sake of others – but generally that would not be our experience here in Adelaide.
- Which makes the challenge of verse 17 all the more helpful.
- John challenges the *indifference* that Christians can easily demonstrate.
- That temptation to turn a blind eye way from those who may be in material need.

## Illustration

- A little over 200 years ago, William Wilberforce campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade in England.
- In calling his fellow parliamentarians to set aside their own conveniences for the sake of those who were in slavery – he famously said:

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

“Generosity means very little if it does not damage the luxury of our own lives.”

“Generosity means very little if it does not damage the luxury of our own lives.”

- For John, love is not a sentiment or an emotion. It is not merely words or platitudes.
- It is a love that costs, a love that is not looking for return, a love that may be undeserved, a love that is without self-interest, a love that gives, a love like that of Christ.
- Don’t be like Cain. Be like Jesus.
  
- And what directs this kind of love? – *truth* lived out.
- He says, love not just with words or a tongue, love with actions and in truth (18).
- As Christians hold to the truth that they know in the gospel of Jesus, then it calls them to live it out – that is what it means to ‘belong to the truth’ (19).
- You cannot claim to belong to the truth, if there is no evidence of your love for others. And you cannot claim to belong to the truth if you don’t obey.

*Application*

- There are so many ways that we see that kind of love being demonstrated in our church family week in and out – be it the supplies that are dropped off each week for those who don’t have the means to provide for themselves, to the ministries of City Light which aims to care for those most vulnerable in our society, or Operation Child Christmas Boxes which we do each year – not to mention the countless ways that folk here serve one another each week (formally and informally).
- My impression, is that for most here – we like the idea of being loving towards others and to love both truthfully and obediently.

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

- And here is a contrasting observation – if we let go of truth, then falsehood will diminish love because it will erode away the very basis upon which love is built.
- If as a society we rip that which is true from its moorings and replace it with an ‘alternative truth’ then that will have an effect on the way we both understand love and live out our love.
- It will mean that as a society we will try to love in ways that are not pleasing or acceptable to God.
- And it will also mean that that love will show itself to be problematic – and in the end not really loving at all.
  
- Christians must love, we know how to love, because in Jesus we have true love demonstrated sacrificially.
- *Love that is Christian, is a love for others that is both pleasing and acceptable to God before it is to the world.*

PAUSE

**Obedience**

- What is this love that is pleasing first to God?
- Look at 3:21 [READ 1 John 3:21-24a]
- A love that is pleasing to God is a love that follows his commands.
- And with obedience comes the blessing of knowing that God is happy with us.
- It is not that we are earning his love, it is that we are living out what it means to be loved and love in return.

*Illustration*

- A few years ago, I remember talking to a parent who recounted a comment that her son had made to her after he had done something wrong.
- He said to her ‘I don’t like you very much when I am doing the wrong thing’!

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

- John says that if you are loving the way that God wants you too, then you should have every reason for confidence, knowing he will be pleased. There is only a problem if you are not doing what pleases God.
- That love is being obedient to his commands – particularly his command to do just two things:
  - Believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ
  - and secondly, to love one another.
- If that sounds familiar, it is because that is what Jesus said when asked about the most important commandment – ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all you soul and all you mind’ and the second is like it ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’
  
- The contrasting observation – if we ignore what is commanded of us, then what we are doing is putting our own wants before what God wants of us. That is simply showing us to be selfish – just like Cain.
- And without obedience, it is impossible to demonstrate true love.
- *Love that is Christian, is a love for others that is both pleasing and acceptable to God before it is to the world.*

PAUSE

*Illustration*

- In 1885 a Presbyterian minister in Edinburgh named Rev Robert Law suggests from 1 John, three tests for anyone wanting to determine if they were Christian:
- A Theological Test, A Social Test, and A Moral Test.
- The **Theological Test** was to ask yourself:
  - Do I *believe* that Jesus is the Son of God – if not, you are not a Christian (3:19, 23).
- The **Social Test** was to ask yourself:
  - Do I *love* others, because God is love and it is clear that a loveless person does not know God (3:11; 4:7-8)
- And the **Moral Test** was to ask yourself:

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

Do I *practice* righteousness and the keeping of God’s commands – because if not, your claim to be Christian should be challenged (3:22-24).

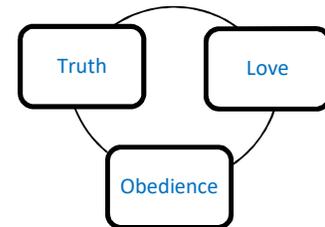
- I think those ‘Tests’ are quite helpful – one focuses on *truth*, one on *love* and one on *obedience* – and without all three your claim to be Christian should be questioned.

**Tainted Love, Truth and Obedience**

- So, let me bring this together. And show you what happens when we play with love, truth and obedience. [Slide 2 - repeat]

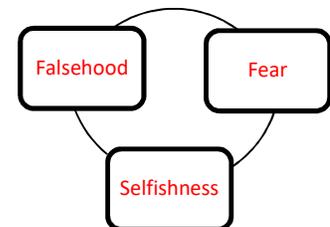
- On the screen, we see our three core ideas intersect.

- *Christian love*, is love where truth is valued.
- *Christian truth*, tells us how to obey.
- *Christian obedience*, demonstrates true love.



- Corrupt any one of those core ideas and you corrupt all of them. [Slide 3]

- Replace Love and you have Fear.
- Replace Truth and you have Falsehood
- Replace Obedience and you have Selfishness.



- If you get *love* wrong – it will show itself in falsehood and selfishness.
- If you get *truth* wrong it will show itself in fear and selfishness.
- If you get *obedience* wrong – it will show itself in falsehood and fear.

- Is that not a picture of our society today?
- So often we live in fear, falsehood or selfishness.

PAUSE

**Talk – 1 John 2:7-11; 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:7-21 – Love & Hate**

- Our job as Christians is quite simply to do the opposite - Love one another. In truth. Obediently.
- And even if that love, truth or obedience is rejected or mocked or ignored – then keep loving our world, because God first loved us (4:19).
- *Love that is Christian, is a love for others that is both pleasing and acceptable to God before it is to the world.*

Pray