

Righteous Love • 1 John 3:10-12

Read vs. • Groups

1. We love to put people in groups & **label** them.
  - a. We do it by race, nationality, & age.
  - b. We refer to Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, Y's, & Millennials.
  - c. We categorize people by what kind of music they listen to, where they live & shop, the clothes they wear.
2. John sets people in just 2 categories: The Lost & Saved.
3. But he uses different labels

V. 10

In this the children of God & the children of the devil R manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

1. Come on John, that's not very kind—calling someone the devil's child.
2. Is he really calling them the **spawn of satan**?
3. Let's remember who John writes to **Believers**.
  - a. This wasn't addressed to unbelievers; it's not **evangelistic**.
  - b. Be assured if he did intend this for them he wouldn't have labeled them as "children of the devil."
4. So we can understand **why** John sets people in these 2 categories, let's back up & look at **WHY** he wrote the **whole letter**.
  - a. Even though it's still the 1<sup>st</sup> C & the Church is only 50 yrs old, people are already getting wonky in following thru on their commitment to Jesus.
  - b. In the book of Acts, which chronicles the early yrs of the Church, we see that it grew rapidly.
    - 1) On the day of Pentecost, just 40 days after Jesus ascended to Heaven, the Church grew from about 120 to over 3000!
    - 2) We read that they met in the temple courtyard to listen to the Apostles teach about Jesus.
    - 3) They met in homes in small groups where they prayed for each other, shared meals, and worshiped.
    - 4) Every day, more and more people came to faith and joined the movement. Exciting times!
  - c. Persecution by the Jewish authorities didn't have any effect. On the contrary, it seemed to only make more people interested.
  - d. So the devil, being the clever conniver he is, followed the old rule; If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.
    - 1) There was a married couple named Ananias & Sapphira who joined the Church.
    - 2) They were posers; spiritual frauds who had their own corrupt agenda.
    - 3) God smoked them out by, well – smoking them. They dropped dead, in church!
    - 4) God dealt with Ananias & Sapphira so **dramatically & publicly** because it was a critical moment in the Church.
    - 5) Everyone needed a reminder that the Church was a HOLY community.
    - 6) Luke says fear came on all; a godly, holy fear. They all realized what they were a part of was serious business.
  - e. We'd assume the death of Ananias & Sapphira would put the kibosh on growth.
    - 1) Let's go to this church; it has a great kid's program.
    - 2) This other church has amazing worship.
    - 3) That one has outstanding teaching & preaching.
    - 4) The coffee's great over here.
    - 5) This church – people drop dead! **Awesome** Let's go to THAT church!
  - f. Fascinating that the Church **kept** growing.
    - 1) It popped up in other cities & towns all over Israel, Samaria, Syria, Asia Minor, Italy, Egypt & across N Africa.
  - g. Problem is, some of those who joined were posers like Ananias & Sapphira.
  - h. God didn't take them out as He had them, because in His mercy & grace, His Spirit convicted them & urged them to repent.
5. John wrote this to help Christians & churches discern who was **really** following Jesus & who was a poser.
6. He reminds them of the fact that all people are either lost or saved.
  - a. They are either on the way to Heaven or Hell.

- b. They're born again or spiritually dead.
  - c. There's no other category.
    - 1) No one is "kinda' saved." // No one is "not *exactly* lost."
    - 2) I don't know how many times I've heard someone described that way.
      - a) I have this friend and he's in this situation. What should I tell him?
      - b) Is he a believer?
      - c) Well, he's *kinda* saved. // He's not a Christian, but he's not lost, *exactly*."
    - 3) Actually, if he's not born again, not a believer & follower of Jesus, then lost IS exactly what he is.
    - 4) And either you're saved & on your way to heaven, or your not and on your way to hell.
    - 5) No one is kinda' saved on their way to purgatory.
7. John is utterly clear throughout this letter; Either we are in sin and lost or in Christ & saved.
8. He says it this way in 10 = we're either children of God or the devil.
9. Everyone you see/meet is either on their way to Heaven, or Hell.
  - a. Jesus came so those on the way to Hell could **switch** their destiny to Heaven.
  - b. He & He alone is what makes that switch possible.
10. John says the children of God, **prove** they're on the way toward Heaven, by **demonstrating** certain behavior. The children of the devil **won't**.
11. Note the word "*manifest*"
- In this the children of God & the children of the devil R manifest:
- a. The word means **to make visible**.
  - b. God's kids DO certain things.
  - c. They aren't just talk – they WALK!
12. Works do not save. But the saved work.
13. Specifically, John says they "**practice** righteousness." They do what's right.
  - a. They take their idea of what's right from God, rather than this fallen, rebellious world that lies under the sway of satan, as we saw last week in 2:15.
  - b. This is why it's so important we read & study God's Word. It's there we discover what's right.
  - c. We can't trust ourselves to know what's right. Twice in Proverbs we read [14:12; 16-25]
- There is a way *that seems right* 2 a man, but its end *is* the way of death.
- d. That's why we need our minds renewed, as Paul says in Rom 12:2
- Don't B conformed 2 this world, but B transfrmd by the renewg of ur mind.
14. We must filter the world thru [Bible]; not [Bible] thru the world.
15. John says God's people "practice" what's right.
  - a. The word means to actually, really DO something.
  - b. The emphasis in this word is on the certainty of it.
  - c. If John were writing today, he'd say when it comes to what's right, God's people "git 'er done."
  - d. And the tense is **present**; meaning continuously.
  - e. They don't practice **AT** it once a week; it's their regular mode of living.
  - f. Like a doctor **practices** medicine; the children of God **practice** doing what's right.

16. They also love one another. John elaborates on that in v11.  
Vs. 11-12

<sup>11</sup> For this is the msg that U heard frm the beginning, that we should love 1 another, <sup>12</sup> not as Cain *who* was of the wickd 1 & murdrd his brothr. And why did he murdr him? Bcuz his works were evil & his brothr's righteous.

- 1. One of the first lessons they'd learned when they came to faith in Christ was the priority of love.
- 2. We're going to be doing a new believer's class soon.
  - a. It's going to be a bit different from the way we've done it in the past.
  - b. We're going to do it on Wednesday nights over 6 or 7 weeks during our mid-week study.
  - c. And while it'll be great for those new to the faith, it'll also be a good review for those who've walked with God for a while.
  - d. It's good to go back to basics and realize the power there is in the Gospel.
- 3. What John says here is a good reminder as we plan for that: Love is one of the first lessons.
- 4. We're saved by & for God's Love.
  - a. The love we're called to is

1<sup>st</sup> – To Respond with love TO God’s Love &

2<sup>nd</sup> – To love others, especially, other believers.

5. 1 day when Jesus was in Jerusalem, some **scribes** gathered round.
- Think of these guys as **religious lawyers**. The realm of their expertise was **religious law**.
  - They’d been in a long running debate over **which** of all God’s commands was THE most important.
  - Jesus had quite the rep as someone who possessed astounding wisdom.
  - So one of the scribes queued up and asked Him, “Which of the commandments is greatest?”
  - Without hesitation, Jesus replied, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, & mind. This is the first & greatest commandment.” [Matt 22:37]
  - Then, as so often happened w/Jesus, they got more than they bargained for; He wasn’t done.
  - He went on, “And the second is like it – You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two hang all the Law and the Prophets.”
  - Someone then floated the question, “Ah, but who’s my neighbor?”
    - Jesus told a story about a guy who got mugged while on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.
    - Wounded & bleeding on the side of the road, a couple of professional clergy passed by.
    - They saw the guy but did nothing, excusing themselves from getting involved by saying they were busy with God’s business.
    - Now, the men Jesus picked for this story were guys those lawyers who asked the question were friends with.
    - These guys were part of their tribe; their social group.
    - Then Jesus told of a third guy who came by, a Samaritan. Definitely NOT someone the lawyers listening to the story would dig.
    - But Jesus said it was HE, the despised foreigner, w/what the people of Jerusalem thought were goofy beliefs, who helped the poor guy lying in the ditch on the side of the road.
    - He’s the one Jesus commends, because his love wasn’t just a thing of talk, it walked; it DID something for someone who needed it.
6. I’m going to say something that could get me in into trouble. But, it’s been a while so I guess it’s about time.
- I’m a CC guy. CC is my tribe. > I love it here. I suspect you feel the same way.
  - But we need to recognize the Body of Christ is **a lot bigger** than CC.
  - There are some modern Samaritans who do things differently.
    - Maybe they don’t line up with us on every pt of doctrine.
    - But God loves them; they love God, & are loving one another.
    - We better love them too or we’re missing out on God’s heart for His people.
7. There’s a group within the CC movement that wants to draw a tight circle around our tribe that would harm the larger cause of Christ.
- They’re more interested in defending CC than in growing the Church & enlarging the borders of God’s Kingdom.
  - We must resist that!
8. I’m a CC pastor & as long as I’m here, this will be a CC.
9. But we’re not going to build a doctrinal fortress, run inside, pull up the drawbridge, then sit behind our walls and shoot arrows at everybody else outside the walls.
10. The Family of God is bigger than CC & we have a duty, an **obligation**, given by Jesus, to **love** them.
11. And John’s point here is that, that love can’t just be words; it must be **deeds**. v18  
My little childrn, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed & in truth.
12. In John 13:34-35, Jesus said  
A new commndmnt I give 2U, that U love 1 anothr; as I have lovd U, that U also love 1 anothr. By this will all know UR My follwrs, by the love U have for 1 anothr.
13. That grp of self-styled CC purists call what they’re doing “Staying the Course.”
- They claim to be holding fast to the original vision & mission of CC.
  - Here’s what appeared for years on the back of the bulletin at CCCM & was duplicated on hundreds of other CC bulletins
- Calvary Chapel has been formed as a fellowship of believers in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Our supreme desire is to know Christ and be conformed into His image by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are not a denominational

church, nor are we opposed to denominations as such, only their over-emphasis of doctrinal differences that have led to the division of the body of Christ. We believe that the only true basis of Christian fellowship is His love, which is greater than any differences we possess and without which we have no right to claim ourselves Christians.

Then it ends with

We Believe the worship of God is Fruitful. Therefore: We look for His Love in our lives as the supreme manifestation that we have truly been worshipping Him.

- c. If the Stay the Course purists really want to stay the course, then they need to get back to that & knock off all the name calling and line drawing.
14. Remember John's purpose: To help us sort out who's a child of God & who isn't.
  - a. God's kids are family, so love's expected because we're **brothers & sisters** in Christ.
  - b. John throws us a curve when he sets a **famous brother** from the Bible before us as an example of what we're NOT to be Cain; in v12 ...
- <sup>12</sup> [We're] not [2B] as Cain *who* was of the wickd 1 & murdrd his brothr. & why did he murdr him? Bcuz his works were evil & his brothr's righteous.
15. Cain **didn't** love his brother Abel; He killed him.
16. And he killed him because while they were both sons of Adam, they **weren't** both children of God.
  - a. Cain was one of the devil's kids.
  - b. And it's inevitable those under satan's sway aren't going to get along w/God's people.
17. John asks the question, "Why did Cain murder Abel?" because he wanted his readers to think!
  - a. But with the quiz, came the key.
  - b. Cain slew Abel because Able was doing the right thing while Cain wasn't.
  - c. He didn't WANT to do the right thing. He wanted to do what he wanted to do.
  - d. And it all worked for him, until what he did was set alongside what Abel did.
  - e. Then it was obvious what Cain had done was wrong.
18. If Cain had been a child of God, when he realized he was wrong, he would have confessed, repented & set out to make it right. Right?
  - a. He would have said thanks to Abel for helping him get straightened out.
19. But Cain had no interest in making things right, only in making himself feel about what he wanted to do.
20. He blamed his feelings of being wrong on Abel. Abel was the problem. Solution: Get rid of Abel.
21. Folks, that's the template for relations between the children of God and the devil ever since.
  - a. The lost do what they want to do without regard for whether or not it's right.
  - b. When they realize they're wrong, instead of making it right, they get angry at whatever it is that reveals they're wrong.
  - c. Instead of applying themselves & their energy to making it right, they attack was IS right.
  - d. Because it's keeping them from enjoying what's wrong.
22. This is why the Gospel is being marginalized today.
  - a. We're told it's okay to believe whatever we want, but only as long as we keep it to ourselves.
  - b. It's got to be a private affair; tucked away behind closed doors.
  - c. Don't dare bring a bible to work or school & set it on your desk.
  - d. Someone might be offended by seeing it.  
It might make them think about God & **that** might move them to skip Happy Hour.
23. Not long after 9/11, workers found in the rubble 2 steel beams that had fused into the shape of a cross.
  - a. It became a rallying point for hundreds of workers overwhelmed by the immensity of the loss.
  - b. People would gather around it and pray for hours.
  - c. It was eventually relocated to the Ground Zero museum.
  - d. Several atheists filed suit to have it removed.
  - e. They call it "offensive & repugnant" & claimed it gave them stomach aches, depression, headaches, anxiety, mental pain & anguish.
  - f. The State judge tossed their suit, so they've now taken it to Federal court.
24. John wants to steel his readers with a dose of reality.
25. While we're called to a lifestyle of active love, we ought not expect the world to love us back.
26. It won't. It hates God, so it's going to hate His people.

