

Scripture Reference: 1 John 3

Date: May 18, 2014

Title: "My Life Bears a Scar"

Focus: Love is all that really matters (John Series 3 of 7)

Chapter 1 - The life of the disciple matches the life of God.

Chapter 2 - God is characterized by love, so too will His followers.

Chapter 3- Love will identify those who walk in relationship with God.

vv. 1-3; God Provides His love. It Identifies People as His children.

The importance of love cannot be minimized.

In saying *love*, it must be remembered how God has defined it. What He is referencing is not love as demonstrated by humans, but love demonstrated by God (2:3-7).

This love is manifest by obedience. It shapes the whole person, both inner and outer, into the image of God.

While the believer doesn't know what he will ultimately, physically look like, the disciple knows he will be like Him. Even as he NOW looks like God because His love dwells in him (v. 2).

This hope compels the believer to pursue the character of God (v. 3).

vv. 5-9; Sin is not part of His Love

The two are incompatible. One who says he loves God but does not obey God is deceiving himself.

The one who claims to love God but cannot bring himself to love his neighbor is likewise in error.

Jesus defeated sin and its power. In doing so, He made it possible to love God and exercise His love in life (v. 5)

vv. 7-10; Those Who Claim to Follow God Conduct Themselves like God.

God practices righteousness and love, the believer practices righteousness and love.

Freed from the power of sin, it is possible to live a life of godly love.

vv. 11-18; God's Love is Testament to a Life Changed.

Doctrine, skills, *success*, behavior, these are not proof of the presence of God in a life (1 Cor 13:1-3).

For disciples it is the love of God that proves the presence of God in them.

Only love for God and love from God can prove that. Why does the disciple obey, because he/she loves God. Why does the disciple serve others, because God is loving through him/her.

The absence or presence of love motivates people (vv. 12-15).

God's love motivates the disciple to "lay down his life for the brethren" (v. 16).

What does laying down one's life for the brethren look like? Consider v. 17.

v. 17; "Whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

vv. 19-22; The Activity of God's Love Affirms a Person Walks with Him

There is confidence of a relationship with God when He is experienced to be moving in a life and His love is witnessed in action towards others.

The absence of evidence of such love robs people of knowing God is active in their lives.

The heart can lie, but the evidence, or lack, of God's love does not.

vv. 18-21; *"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God."*

vv. 23-24; Love is the Supreme Proof of God's Presence in a Life

Why? Because:

God is Love (1 John 4:8)

Jesus commanded His disciples to *"love one another"* (John 13:34-35).

The Spirit works to manifest God's love in and through the disciple. (v. 24).

The Last 18 Inches

Love for God is the fountain from which the character of God flows. If a person does not love God, he or she will not obey God. If a person does not obey God, they will never love those who persecute them, or visit those who are sick or imprisoned, etc.

The hard question that must be asked is, "Do you love God?" This question is hard because we want to answer it humanly, emotionally. Do we have an affinity for God, a warm fuzzy feeling?

But God asks, “Are you following me? Are you obeying me? Does my consideration weight more than yours?” It is in the answer to these questions a person automatically provides an answer to the question of whether he or she loves God.

Looking at our actions, we might not like what we see.

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