



Around the Word BIBLE STUDY

Trinity, 2016

1 John 3:7-15

St. Augustine on Love:

"Belike, it is in regard of some one sin that he hath said, "Doth not sin," not in regard of all sin: that in this that he saith, "Whoso is born of God, doeth not sin," thou mayest understand some one particular sin, which that man who is born of God cannot commit: and such is that sin that, if one commit it, if confirms the rest. What is this sin? To do contrary to the commandment. What is the commandment? "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." Mark well! This commandment of Christ is called, "love." By this love sins are loosed."

(Homily 5 on 1 John)

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Introduction: In this text, we see the importance of the brotherly love that we as Christians are called to share with one another. We also see that this love is based in a mutual love and recognition of the Gospel teaching of Christ, not on the fleeting view of love that is present in the world.

Opening: Psalm 38:14-22

¹⁴I have become like a man who | does not hear,*

and in whose mouth are | no rebukes.

¹⁵**But for you, O LORD, | do I wait;*
it is you, O Lord my God, who will | an
swer.**

¹⁶For I said, "Only let them not rejoice | over
me,*

who boast against me when my | foot slips!"

¹⁷**For I am read- | y to fall,*
and my pain is ever be- | fore me.**

¹⁸I confess my in- | iquity;*
I am sorry | for my sin.

¹⁹**But my foes are vigorous, they are |
mighty,*
and many are those who hate me | wrong-
fully.**

²⁰Those who render me e- | vil for good*
accuse me because I follow | after good.

²¹**Do not forsake me, | O LORD!*
O my God, be not | far from me!**

²²Make haste to | help me,*
O Lord, my sal- | vation!

**Glorify be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

⁷ **Little children, let no one deceive you. Who-
ever practices righteousness is righteous, as
he is righteous.**

Look back to 1 John 2:26-29. Was the problem of the people being deceived a real problem that John is trying to combat?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-19. Do you think that the one who seeks to deceive believes that they are "helping" people in some way?

Does the righteousness that a person practices come from themselves or from another source?

⁸ **Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of
the devil, for the devil has been sinning from
the beginning. The reason the Son of God
appeared was to destroy the works of the
devil.**

What does say about the devil's character in John 8:44? What were the sins of the devil from the beginning?

Read Matthew 13:24-30 and 13:36-43. Into what two categories does Jesus divide people? Is there a difference then between God being everyone's creator and being a Father?

What does Paul say about the difference between a person who is apart from Christ and a person who is in Christ in Ephesians 2:1-9? How are we saved?

What does it mean that Jesus destroyed the works of the devil? Read Hebrews 2:14-15.

Read Genesis 3:15. When did God promise to send us a Messiah? What does he promise that the Messiah will do? Has that happened yet?

The devil's primary work is to deceive people and lead them away from God. How has Jesus destroyed this? Who has Christ given to you to help make sure you are not deceived?

⁹ **No one born of God makes a practice of sin-
ning, for God's seed abides in him, and he
cannot keep on sinning because he has been
born of God.**

In John 12:24, who does Jesus say the seed of God is?

Read Matthew 13:18-19. What is symbolized as seed in Jesus' parable here?

Look at John 1:1-3. Do these two different understandings of seed contradict each other?

How is one born of God? Read John 3:3-8.

¹⁰ By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Refer back to 1 John 1:6, 2:3, and 3:6. John here returns to his previous teaching that our actions serve to reveal what we truly believe. Is this still true today?

Based on what Jesus says in John 13:34-35, what does Jesus say is the sign or evidence of our faith?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:6. Is it loving to insist on true teaching and to not tolerate false doctrine? How does John instruct us to view those who teach falsely based on what you've read in this epistle so far?

What does Jesus say about false teachers in Matthew 7:15-23?

¹¹ For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

Twice now, John has alluded to what they had learned from the beginning, in 1:5 and 2:24. What should our disposition be toward our brothers and sisters in the faith?

Do you think that the command to love one another was the sole content of what John taught them?

¹² We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

Read the account of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-12. What we see here in 1 John is a theological interpretation of that event. Why did Cain kill Abel?

We see here what was in Cain's heart. Read Hebrews 11:4. What was Abel's condition?

If God saw Abel's faith and recognized his sacrifice, what then can we conclude about Cain, whose sacrifice was rejected and who was of the evil one? Did he have faith?

¹³ Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.

Here we see the rest of John's teaching on the importance of us loving one another. If Christians' relationship with one another is love, what is the world's relationship to us?



What does John call his fellow believers in this verse? Based on what he describes in the previous verse, do you think that he's saying something about how Christians view our brothers in faith?

Read John 15:18-20. Of what does Jesus warn the disciples? Read John 17:14. In his prayer, what does Jesus say about the world's view of his people already?

In Matthew 5:11, what does Jesus say about the one who is persecuted for his name's sake? Is this something that can apply to us?

¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.

How does Jesus say that we've passed from death to life in John 5:24?

Does John speak about this life with certainty here? Should we have certainty in our own life before Christ?

Look at Ephesians 2:1. Why were we dead?

Can dead people love? What is necessary for us to be able to love the brothers?

¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Does John here echo Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:21-22?

Some manuscripts include murder instead of envy in Paul's list of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21.

Would that be consistent with what we've read about murder so far in this passage? What does Jesus say about murders in Revelation 21:8?

Look back to 1 John 1:9. Does God put any qualification or caveats on this promise? Can a murderer who repents be forgiven?

Closing Hymn: Jesus Loves Me (LSB, 588)

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