NO LOVE HERE!
1John 3:11-18

Introduction

I have a friend who is with the Adams County Sheriff's dept. He informed me that there were already 11 homicides in Metro Denver, not including the surrounding areas of greater Denver. Conservative estimates indicate some 20 murders in the greater Denver metro area. Murder is pandemic in our society. You are more likely to be gunned down in New Orleans or Los Angeles than in Bosnia. America's youth are the greatest perpetrators and victims of murder. The murder rate in America is 14,000 per year. A study finds that a baby born in one of America's 50 largest cities has a 4% chance of being murdered in his lifetime. You are also much more likely to be killed by someone who knows you and claims to love you.

Murder is mankind's oldest recorded crime. The presence of murder, hatred and indifference indicate the absence of love! You would think that anyone would be able to figure out that murder, hatred and indifference means there is no love here!

John's letter keeps returning two three main topics; love, obedience and truth. Even though it may seem repetitious, each time we are looking at a subject with a different point of view. We know we are to love the brethren (2:7-11); but the emphasis earlier was on fellowship. Remember, a believer who is walking in the light, will evidence the fact by loving other Christians (the brethren). Christians love each other because they are born of God, which makes us spiritual brothers and sisters. I think it ironic that some people associate the word "spiritual" with "not real". Nothing could be further from the truth. Your brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ may be much closer than your flesh and blood family.

Obedience and love are both evidences of sonship and brotherhood. Earlier (vv.1-10) we saw the true Christian practices righteousness. But what is righteousness? In a real sense love is righteousness. Love is the practical expression of righteousness. We again look into this matter of love. The truth is stated first in a shocking examples where there is no love! I need to draw something to your attention. In the section on fellowship (vv. 2:7-11) we were told that loving the brethren is a matter of light or darkness. If we don't love each other, we can't walk in the light. No matter how much you declare your love for God, for truth, for Jesus! In this section--John sticks the probe a little deeper into our hearts. Here we are told that our willingness to love each other, and then practice loving each other, is a matter of life or death. (v.14) "He that loveth not his brother abides in death". No further proof is necessary than to stare into the face of a person full of love or full of hate! It will show the glory or the darkness of their heart!
When it comes to love, there are at least four levels of relationship--if you want to call it that. MURDER; Hatred; Indifference and Christian Compassion or love. The first two are evil, non christian, the third is subchristian and the fourth is the only one compatible with Christianity.

Outline Murder; Hatred; Indifference; Love

MURDER (VV.11-12)

1. John emphasizes origins in verse 11. Go back to the beginning! The implication is the "beginning of revelation". Way back in Genesis, God's revelation was one of love. What have you heard? Love each other. If your spiritual origins are truly with the Father, we must love one another. But if our origins are with Satan, we will hate each other.

2. When you were a little kid, did you ever say, "I wish you were dead"? I know I did. I may have said that, but what I usually meant was, I don't care if you are alive, just so long as it is in outer Mongolia, far away from me! I met a woman who was accused and I believe convicted of killing her husband. I remember asking her, "why didn't you just get a divorce?" She said she was a Christian and didn't believe in divorce! This is the ultimate low level in relationship!

3. Murder is living on the level of Satan. The Bible says the devil was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). Cain is the only proper name mentioned in this epistle. John gives his life as an example of murder and hatred. The story is told in Genesis 4:1-16.

Don't forget, Cain and Abel, had the same parents, same neighborhood and schools (they were home schooled), the same revelation of God. Both grew up with covenant parents, both were religious, both brought sacrifices to God. Cain is not presented as an atheist, we don't see him with a leather jacket riding a Harley, some social misfit or some outlaw. Cain is presented as a worshipper of God. This should be a warning! The make-believer masquerades as a Christian. Children of the devil can disguise themselves like children of God. They can go to religious meetings and bring religious sacrifices. Having a godly family, living in a great neighborhood, attending church is not valid proof that a person is born of God. The real test is loving the brethren--here Cain failed the test.

4. Cain betrayed his paternity by killing his brother. This passage reveals his motivation: He killed his brother because his works were evil--and his brother's deeds were righteous. Cain hated his brother--and in his own twisted way believed he loved God. But Cain was unwilling to worship and love God on God's terms. So Cain invented his own religion--a bloodless sacrifice and a loveless sacrifice. Cain killed his brother because he hated him. His sin was against love. It was not the murder that made Cain's heart evil. Cain's heart was evil because it was not controlled (dominated) by love. John is concerned, lest an evil heart appear in the family of God, controlled by hate, and violence to the family of God.
HATRED (VV.13-15)

1. (v.13) Jesus said this in his own ministry: "These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know it hated me before it hated you." (Jn. 15:17-18). The world is opposed to Christ. Cain's crime resulted in the death of someone he should have loved. Jesus' died for those who for all intents and purposes, not only hated God, but were incapable of loving Him. We can't look to the world to be our example! The Christian has Jesus, who demonstrates unselfish love, who considers not himself but others. The Christian life is the imitation of Christ. "Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5) "He left us an example that we should follow in his steps" (IPeter 2:21)

2. Most of you have never killed anyone. Perhaps some of you have. But God says that to a Christian, hatred is the same as murder (Jn. 3:15; Matt. 5:22) In the OT law murder was forbidden. Jesus reminds them that anger and bitterness and contempt were just as serious sins. What is the difference? Level one-they die for real--level two they die in your heart! The outward act and the inward intent. A lady at the zoo was watching the big cats. She told the attendant, "oh look at those beautiful animals! They are just like my cats at home. See how they play with each other, and see how peaceful they are when they sleep! It seems like such a shame that you have to put these beautiful creatures behind bars! "My friend," the keeper laughed, "these may look like your cat, but there disposition is radically different. There's murder in their hearts. You'd better be glad those bars are there". I saw a film called dangerous animals which showed a woman who got to close to a giant panda, and the panda almost killed the tourist.

People have put bars in their hearts. I talked with a police officer, who reminded me that a lot more people would kill, if they thought they could get away with it. The question is not so much, "what did you do, but what did you want to do? What would you have done if you would have known that you would get away with it? This is why Jesus equates hatred in the heart with murder (Matt. 5:21-26).

3. I am not saying that hatred in the heart does the same damage as murder. I would rather you hate me than kill me (if those are my choices). In God's eyes, hatred is the moral equivalent to murder. Jesus says you have passed from death to life (John 5:24). When you were in the world, you hated Christians, loved darkness and now that you are a Chrisitian you are to love Christians and hate darkness. These verses (15-16) are like the earlier verses, in so much as they deal with habit patterns. A believer is in the practice of loving the brethren. You may have occasional angry words, or angry feelings, but the incident of anger does not nullify the principle of love. A believer out of fellowship with brothers and sisters is a believer who is out of fellowship with God!

Notice another thing. Can murderers be saved? Yes and no! Murderers cannot be saved who continue to murder! Can you imagine a person "struggling with murder?" What if a
person came up to you and said, "I used to be a serial killer, but now I only kill on occasion, I'm down two one or two every year or so." Would you rejoice and praise God that some progress is being made in his life? Yet the Apostle Paul, was a murderer, he helped kill Christians! Moses killed an Egyptian and buried him in the sand. David may not have pulled the string that sent the arrow that killed Uriah the Hittite (Hitman), but he was guilty of murder. No the real key issue is can a murderer become a Christian? The answer is yes. Can a person become a Christian and remain a murderer? The answer is no: "and you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (v.15)

4. Hatred will hurt you. Hatred damages the soul. Jesus said that anger put a man in danger of court. Calling a brother "an empty headed fool" the modern equivalent of "air-head" put him danger of the Sanhedrin (the supreme court of Israel). Calling him a cursed fool put him in danger of eternal judgment in hell. Hatred that remains unconfessed and unforsaken places you in emotional and spiritual bondage. The antidote for hatred is love. When you hate and are hating that is the normal experience of the unsaved. When you come to Christ, you can stop hating and start loving.

John Wesly was stopped by a highway man and robbed. The man took all of Wesley's money. Wesley said, "If the day should come that you desire to leave this evil way and live for God, remember that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin." Some years later at a church service the man came forward and gave his life to Christ. "Do you remember me?" the man asked. I robbed you one night, and you told me the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. I trust Jesus now. He has changed my heart and my life. I heard about a man who had special checks made up for his alimony payment. It showed him locked in a passionate kiss with his new wife. This was not a gesture of love, but of hate. Booker T. Washington once said, "I am determined to permit no man to narrow or degrade my soul by making me hate him."

INDIFFERENCE (VV. 16-17)

1. Cain is an example of false love. Jesus is the example of true love. (Warren Wiersbe) "A man does not have to murder in order to sin; hatred is murder in his heart. But a man need not even hate his brother to be guilty of sin. All he has to do is ignore him, or be indifferent to his needs. A believer who has material goods, and has the ability to help a brother in need, ought to do it." John addresses one more objection: Most people will not lay down their lives in an actual death. Jesus died on the cross. John's answer is-look if your brother is in need--help him!

Lets get practical for a moment. If you really want to help meet needs you must meet three requirements. (1) You must have the means necessary to meet the need. (2) You must know that the need exists. (3) you must be loving enough to want to share. A believer who is poor, or who is uninformed cannot be condemned. Paul wrote that one of the many reasons to work is give to those who have need (Eph. 4:28).
In an age of many social service agencies, and a failed welfare system--we sometimes forget our obligations. "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." (NASB Gal. 6:10)

Doing good isn't limited to money! Some people lack love and could just use your friendship. One pastor tells the story of a woman who admitted that she never seemed to find time for personal devotion with her boatload of children. All the children seemed to make the hours melt away. Imagine her surprise when two ladies from the church showed up at her doorstep. "We've come to relieve you". They watched the kids for two hours while she got to spend some time alone with the Lord.

Do you really want to experience the love of God? Try sacrifice. "Being indifferent to our brothers needs means robbing ourselves of what we need even more--the love of God in our hearts. It is a matter of life or death." (Warren Wiersbe).

Jesus gave his life so that we could experience forgiveness of sins, eternal life and truth. What a great verse to memorize and do! Christian love involves sacrifice and service. Jesus did not just talk about love--he died to prove it. Jesus willingly laid down his life--he could have gotten away at any time. "Self-preservation is the first law of life, of physical life. Self-sacrifice is the first law of spiritual life.

2. It is not good enough not to do evil. Love means that you must do good. "Cease to do evil; learn to do well (Isa. 1:16-17). Most of us will not die or lay down our lives for the brethren. Here the Lord says "help a brother in need." John wisely turns from "the brethren" (plural) to "his brother" in verse 17. It is easy to talk about the brethren and neglect the brother. Christian love is personal and active. You may not be able to help everybody, but can't you help somebody?

3. The solution to indifference is "compassion" (v.17). The love of God here is the same as compassion. There are two basic words in the O.T. that are translated 'compassion'. One means "to bear, to become responsible for, to spare someone trouble." This deals with the action of compassion. The second is more attitudinal. The word means "to be soft, gentle." The word is sometimes translated "womb" and it also means "to be wide" in terms of encompassing others. We might use the term "open wide" or "open arms". In the N.T. the leading word for compassion means "that emotion aroused by contact with affliction." The difference between sympathy and biblical compassion, true compassion will lead to action, something will be done!

The Greek word used to translate the OT concept of God's loyal, unfailing, covenant love (hesed). The stress in this word is the action that flows out our being as we are touched by another's affliction. Compassion is not measured exclusively by how I feel, but rather, by what I do in response to how I feel.

One Bible teacher has defined compassion as "our commitment to activate ourselves as
channels of God's love, mercy and grace, in tender, thoughtful understanding acts of help, deliverance, forgiveness, and restoration toward those in need." Compassion is really God's love, mercy and grace, looking for a place to get busy.

Jerry Vines gives a great illustration. "On a recent trip to England I noticed an unusual thing about their tow trucks. I have always known them as "wreckers". But the ones I saw in England have the word "recovery" written on them. Same instrument, same mission, but a radically different perspective." What kind of instrument are you in the hands of God? An instrument of love?

LOVE (v.18)

1. True love--for the Christian is attitude and action. We must love in deed and in truth. The opposite of "in deed" is "in word". The opposite of "in truth" is "in tongue". James wrote: James 2:15-16 "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?"

2. To love "in word" means to talk about a need. To love in deed means to do something to meet the need. You may think because you have talked about a need and even prayed about a need, that you have done your duty. But love involves more than just words, it involves sacrificial action. To love in tongue is the opposite of loving in truth. It means to love insincerely. To love in truth means to love someone truthfully or genuinely. From the heart, not just with the tongue.

3. Does that kind of love cost you? Yes! It cost Jesus his life. But the rewards, the benefits, both physical and spiritual will far exceed the sacrifice. The Bible principle is "give and it shall be given you" (Luke 6:38). This applies to love as well as money!

4. Do you have love and compassion for the brethren? For people in the world? Most of you do! The real problem is usually that our compassion is selective and inconsistent! Ask yourself-are you concerned about the typhoon in the Philippines? The plane crash that killed hundreds of people in Columbia? The AIDS victim who worked in the restaurant downtown? The dog who has been hit by the car? The convict who was murdered in prison? The black or brown or white family that has just moved in your neighborhood experiencing threatening phone calls? The homeless person begging for money on your way to work? The abortion Doctor who discovers plastic explosives on his new Mercedes Benz? How did you score?

We deny the character of Jesus Christ when we only care about people like us! Prejudice can keep you from helping. Jesus ministered to a woman at a well in John 4. Jesus did something not one of his disciples would dare to do! Not because they weren't religious Jews or even followers of Jesus! Their culture had cultivated prejudice against
Samaritans. No self-respecting Rabbi would talk to a woman in public! Not to mention a lifestyle less than admirable. 5 husbands and living with her boyfriend! Bad even by Hollywood standards. Should a rabbi who claims to be God in the flesh be caught with a Samaritan woman who sleeps around? We too are bound by prejudice, class, gender, race, religion.

Another hindrance is inadequacy. In John 6 Jesus is faced with 5000 men plus wives and kids who are hungry! Yet little can become much! Some of us have a great problem demonstrating compassion to homosexuals, or those who promote abortion, or those who pass out condoms. We can train our hearts to pray for them, but we have to have a burden to love them, and share the love of Christ with them. Like the prodigal son, who's father restored him with robes, rings and shoes, we need to extend grace. We must be in the business of restoration—not wrecking.

Don't you think its time some of you think about real ways of ministering to gangs, AIDS patients, homosexuals, the homeless, the disadvantaged, the physically disabled?