

## 10. Learning Why the World Hates

In our last topic, we saw that one of our goals, as Christians, should be to help our physical and spiritual children learn to become more like Christ. We saw that we help our physical and spiritual children become more like Christ as they learn to think and act Biblically, instead of continuing to remain conformed to the world. However, learning to become more like Christ will often cause the world around us to react to us. We will see that as we learn why the world hates. Our focus, in this topic, will be how to help our physical and spiritual children learn to recognize and accept the hatred of the world.

In John 8:44, Christ told the Jewish religious leaders, “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” In this verse, we see three key characteristics of Satan. First, we see that he was a murderer from the beginning. Second, he does not stand in the truth. Third, he is a liar and the father of lies. Christ told the Jewish religious leaders that they were like their father and so they did what Satan did. In the same way, we need to help our children understand the character of Satan and help them realize that those who follow Satan will show the characteristics of Satan. That is why 1 John 3:10 tells us, “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.” The person following Satan cannot show the love of Christ in his or her life.

In contrast, 1 John 3:11 says, “For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” Here, we see that one of the characteristics of a person who is following Christ is showing the love of Christ to others. However, we realize that we cannot show that love in our own strength. When we depend on our own strength, we will act out of fear. That is why most new Christians are still acting out of fear most of the time. 1 John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” However, as we grow and mature in Christ, His love is being brought to maturity in our lives. As a result, we are no longer driven by the fear of man. Instead, we are learning to be led by the love of Christ. It is that love that Christ showed to His disciples, and to us, and commanded us to show to others. The world cannot understand the love of Christ.

First, they cannot understand the love of Christ, because their father is filled with hate. This was shown clear back with the first children in the world. Cain was very religious. We see that he even brought an offering to the Lord. Cain was a gardener and brought some of the fruit of his crops to the Lord. Here, we see that he was depending on his own efforts to try to please God. Even though he brought an offering to the Lord, his heart was controlled by sin. He was following his father, the devil. This is explained so well for us in 1 John 3:12, where we read, “Not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his

works were evil and his brother's righteous." Cain could not love, as Christ loved, because he was following his father, the devil.

Second, they cannot understand the love of Christ, because their father does not stand in the truth. Earlier, in John 8:32, Christ had told the people gathered around Him, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The Jews immediately replied, in John 8:33, "They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, "You will be made free"?"' Here, we see that the Jews thought they were free and had never been in bondage to anyone. However, Hebrews 2:14-15 tells us to whom they were in bondage. Those verses say, "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Here, we see that all people who are not Christians are in bondage to the devil and he controls their lives by fear.

Christ explained the only way a person can be set free from that bondage, in John 8:36, where it says, "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." Only Christ can set people free from the bondage of sin and the fear of death. That is why we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Christ has given them liberty and set them free from that bondage. Galatians 5:1 says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." The book of Galatians clearly shows us that those who try to live their Christian lives by keeping the law have placed themselves under a new form of bondage. That is why Galatians 5:13 tells us, "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." As Christians, we have been set free from the bondage of fear so that we are free to serve one another in love.

Third, they cannot understand the love of Christ, because their father is a liar and the father of lies. In the previous paragraph, we saw one of the examples of the fact that the devil is a liar. He leads false teachers to lie to Christians and try to get them to try to grow in their spiritual lives by keeping the law. Ephesians 4:14 tells us that immature Christians are easily deceived by such false teachers. That verse says, "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting." Here, we see that Satan uses lies to try and cause Christians to remain as spiritual toddlers. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 and verse 11, here, in Ephesians 4:14, and in Hebrews 5:11-14, we see ten characteristics of spiritual toddlers who have been deceived by the lies of the devil.

However, with people who are not Christians, Satan controls their lives with the three characteristics of Satan mentioned above. As a result, we see that it is in the heart of those who do not know Christ to hate Christ. Christ told the disciples, in John 15:18-19, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." This is why it is essential to help new Christians understand that there will be

people who will oppose them. They are just following their father, the devil. We need to help our physical and spiritual children learn to follow the example of Christ and not take that hatred personally, because the world will hate us when they hate Christ.

It was for this very reason that Christ prepared the disciples to expect opposition and hatred. However, He also prepared them to respond to that hatred with love. In Matthew 5:43, Christ reminded people what the world taught. That verse says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’” Christ said that those who choose to follow Him are to respond in a very different way. Matthew 5:44 says, “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” Here, we see that as we learn to be led by the love of Christ, we will respond in four ways to those who hate us because they are controlled by the devil. We will love our enemies. We will bless those who curse us. We will do good to those who hate us. We will pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us.

Peter also taught us how to respond when people hate us and do evil to us. 1 Peter 2:20-24 says, “For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.” In these verses, we see that Peter encourages us to follow the example of Christ when we suffer for Him because of the hatred of the world toward Christ. We also want to help our children learn to follow the example of Christ when those who hate them make them suffer for Christ.

After talking about Cain, in 1 John 3:13-15, John said, “Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” In these verses, John points out the fact that we should not be surprised when the world hates us. We want to help our children realize that the reason the world hates us is due to the fact that they are following their father, the devil.

In contrast, we want to give our physical and spiritual children an example, through our own lives, of how to follow the new commandment of Christ. In John 13:34-35, we read, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” We want to show our children how to enjoy the liberty Christ has given them by learning to serve one another in love. Galatians 5:16-25 says this will happen as we show them how to walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit and learn to live in the Spirit. Then, their lives will bear the fruit of the Spirit. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your physical and spiritual children how to respond to the hatred of the world with the love of Christ.