

N U R T U R E  
**F A I T H**  
with  
Dr. W. Douglas Hood, Jr.

November 12, 2017

Dear Hate

**READ:** 1 John 4:16b (Common English Bible)

*“God is love, and those who remain in love remain in God and God remains in them.”*

**MEDITATE:**

*Dear Hate* is a deeply moving song, written as an epistolary conversation with hatred itself, introducing hate as a character “on the news today” and having the capacity to “poison any mind.” Written by Maren Morris, Tom Douglas and David Hodges and performed by Morris and Vince Gill, the song pinpoints the garden – presumably the Garden of Eden from the pages of Genesis – as hate’s origin. The voices of Morris and Gill, supported only by two acoustic guitars, lead the listener along a serpentine path from Selma, Alabama (“you were smiling from that Selma bridge”), to Dallas, Texas (“when that bullet hit and Jackie cried”), culminating in New York City (“You pulled those towers from the sky”). Yet, hope remains, “But even on our darkest nights, the world keeps spinning ‘round.”

Hatred’s power, made visible, is answered three times by a confident affirmation, “love’s gonna conquer all.” It is then that the last chorus flips the narrative of hatred’s destructive ambitions to address love as someone who is personal and omnipresent. Though doubt is identified, “Just when I think you’ve given up,” the presence of love becomes unmistakable once again, “You were there in the garden when I ran from your voice. I hear you every morning through the chaos and the noise. You still whisper down through history and echo through these halls.” Love then speaks, “love’s gonna conquer all.”

Here in 1 John, love’s name is revealed, “God is love.” More, a promise is made. Anyone who clings to love, not as a feeling but as intentional conduct towards others, will discover that they are, in fact, taking-up residence in God and God in them. It is precisely the demonstration of love toward one another, in obedience to Jesus’ example and command, that the reassurance of love’s power over hate becomes unquestioned. By the intentional and active force of love, given freely to others, Christians are able to abide in God and God in them, in a state of mutual indwelling. And it is precisely by this mutual indwelling that we know we are loved and that the very best that hate can summon will not defeat us.

*Dear Hate* stands among a growing canon of songs that grapple with hatred – most notably for this writer, Tim McGraw’s Grammy-winning, “Humble and Kind” – and offers a heartening message that love is stronger. Most days, it seems, the news swings the camera toward another appearance of hatred, moving among us at its foulest. All of us fight back tears and struggle with doubt. It is precisely at those moments that Maren Morris and Vince Gill seeks to encourage us with the good news, “love’s gonna conquer all. Gonna conquer all.”

