

Lessons From I John

Distinguishing Marks

(I Jn 3:10-15)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of "Lessons From I John."
 - a. We looked last week at "Sin & The One Born Of God."
 - i. Here John described two different kinds of people.
 1. One who continuously practices sin and therefore is of the devil.
 2. One who is born of God and does not continuously practice sin.
 - b. This week we are going to look at "Distinguishing Marks."
 - i. John continues in these verses to illustrate the contrast between the "children of God" and the "children of the devil."
3. John gives us two main reasons why we "MUST" love one another.
 - a. The first is...

I. It Distinguishes The Child Of God (10-13)

- A. Two things are "evident" or "manifest" (10)
 1. The Greek word here is "φανερός" or "phan-er-os."
 - i. "open to sight, visible, manifest" (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)
 - ii. "apparent, manifest, evident, known...to come to light, come to open view" (Thayer, J. H. (1889). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti. New York: Harper & Brothers.)
 - a. Thus the idea is to be easily recognized.
 2. What two things therefore are easily recognized in the child of God?
 - i. The practicing of righteousness.
 - ii. The love for the brethren.
 3. What two things are lacking in those outside of the child of God?
 - i. The practicing of righteousness.
 - ii. Brotherly love.
- B. The command to love the brethren is "from the beginning" (11)
 1. The idea of "hearing" from the beginning means:
 - i. From the time the gospel started being taught to them.
 - a. In fact it has been taught in the gospel as far back as Jesus.
 1. **Jn 13:34-35** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this **all people will know that you are my disciples**, if you have love for one another."¹ (emphasis mine)
 2. Notice that Jesus also pointed out that loving the brethren is an identifying mark of a Christian.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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- C. The practice of righteousness will lead to conflict (12-13)
1. Example given...Cain & Abel.
 - i. Cain murdered Abel because Abel practiced righteousness and he did not.
 - a. **Gn 4:6-8** "The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." 8 Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him."
 2. We shouldn't be surprised to when sin charges against us.
 - i. Many Christians loose heart because of the persecution that comes from being obedient to Christ and His law.
 - a. **Mt 13:5-6, 20-21** "Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, 6 but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away...20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away."
 - b. **II Ti 3:12** "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted"
 - ii. Logically we shouldn't be surprised though. They persecuted the prophets of old, the apostles, and Jesus Himself. Why would it be different for us?
 - a. **Mt 5:10-12** "'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."
 - b. **II Co 11:24-27** "Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure."

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- c. **Mt 27:27-31** "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. 28 And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30 And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. 31 And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him."

II. It Marks The Passing From Death To Life (14-15)

- A. This is a noticeable indication of true conversion (14a)
 - 1. It naturally is not the only one as seen in verse 10.
 - i. Practicing righteousness is a mark as well.
 - a. **Ga 5:22-23** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."
 - 2. However it is a positive sign that true conversion has occurred.
- B. The lack of love for the brethren is an ominous sign (14b-15)
 - 1. This one "abides in death."
 - 2. The one that "hates" his brother is in darkness.
 - i. **I Jn 2:9, 11** "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness...11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."
 - 3. Thus John draws sets forth the conclusion that hating ones brother makes one a murder just like Cain.
 - i. Why is this murder?
 - a. Simply put, because one cares nothing for the soul of his/her fellow brethren and has committed spiritual murder, by not wanting that brother/sister to go to heaven.
- C. When Christians do not love their brethren there are only two options
 - 1. The first being they never were truly converted.
 - i. From time to time there are those that simply get wet instead of being obedient to God's plan of salvation and thus are Christians in name only not reality.
 - ii. How does this happen?
 - a. When one knows what they need to do and they do it not for the right reasons, to give their life to God, but for the simple reason of "I should do this" or "everyone expects me to do this."
 - iii. The only reason to obey God's plan of salvation is because you are willing to give your life over to Him.

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2. The second reason is they were truly converted but the Christian is still a "babe in Christ."
 - i. This is scene in those that have recently obeyed God's plan of salvation.
 - a. **I Co 3:1-3** "But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?"
 1. Notice there is an expectation of growth. Brotherly is learned, it doesn't just happen, but it better happen none the less.
 2. **II Pt 1:5-7** "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with **brotherly affection**, and brotherly affection with love." (emphasis mine)
 - ii. This is also scene in those that have simply not matured as they should have.
 - a. **He 5:12-14** "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."
 1. That is why the Hebrew writer wrote to guard against this.
 2. **He 3:12-14** "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end."
3. Either way it is not what God desires for us, He wants us showing the mark of brotherly love.

CONCLUSION

1. I like what one man wrote, "John will have more to say about love and its value, but may these two reasons compel us to examine our hearts and our attitudes toward our brethren." (The Necessity Of Brotherly Love by Copeland, Mark)
2. Question: Is the distinguishing mark of brotherly love found in you?
 - a. If not why not? What are you doing to correct that?
 - b. If yes continue to grow thereby.

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3. Invitation²

- a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**

² Mark Copeland's sermon outline "The Necessity Of Brotherly Love" was extremely instrumental in this outline.