



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

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**Sunday – March 19, 2023**

## **Heart to Heart...**

***"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."*** (I John 4:20)

What a powerful statement and teaching. Love your brother or you don't love God. This 'agape' love, is a love of choice, not feeling. This is the very heart of God. (I John 4:7-8) God chooses to love and He acts, not speaking that love. God's love is demonstrated not spoken in words. ***"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."*** (I John 4:18) God demonstrated His love toward us by sending His Son to die in our place. (Romans 5:8) Jesus never said He loved but demonstrated His love by willing to move on behalf of another.

Too many are speaking love and not demonstrating it. Too many show greater love for the lost world than they do the Lord's people. Something is wrong with this. We know that many times there are those in Christ that aren't acting right and choosing the wrong path but love demonstrated toward them will try to get them to turn their attitudes or actions around. Sometimes people need to be corrected. That's love in action. (Hebrews 12:6) 'Agape' is not doing nice things, in nice ways while never rocking the boat. Sometimes you must stand for what is right, correcting the foolish hearts of a brother or sister. In so doing, it must be done with kindness, but it still needs to be done. That's how true love responds. ***"Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted."*** (Galatians 6:1) This is love for a brother or sister.

If we claim to love God and hate our brother or sister, we are not lovers of God. Hate is a strong word. How do we show hate? Just don't show love! Read I Corinthians 13 and see how love is demonstrated. If we don't show love for the brethren, we don't love God.

We show our love for God when we love the brethren. Saul was breathing threats and murder against the people of God. Jesus intervenes and speaks, ***“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”*** (Acts 9:4) To ignore God’s people, the church, to hurt God’s people, the church, to not want anything to do with God’s people, the church is demonstrating hate for them. What does that say about our relationship to God? That one does not love God. God invested in each one baptized into the name of Christ for forgiveness of sin with His blood, His life. For us to respond in anyway other than seeing the value they are to Jesus, trying to help His children move forward, that is our hate.

Jesus taught, ***“Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it do Me.”*** (Matthew 25:40) Jesus takes our attitudes and actions toward brothers and sisters personally. How’s your love for His brethren, the church? Think about it!!!

*Brent*