

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE

### LOVE YOUR BROTHER/SISTER – PART II

1 John 3:11-15 “For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother’s righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”

Today’s words from First John continue to exhort and encourage you to love your brothers and sisters in Christ. John recalls the outcome of a life where this exhortation becomes lost by citing Cain’s murder of his brother Abel. A fit of jealousy, Cain loving himself more than his brother, caused him to take his brother’s life. When love is absent hatred fills the void.

John reiterates that the mark of a Christian is his or her love for their brothers and sisters in Christ. The consequence of a lack of love for one another is ultimately, John writes, “death.” His language is quite strong, isn’t it? “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer.” Hatred, lack of love, is of the Devil. It abounds in the world around you. It flows from your own personal sinful nature that attempts to dominate and control your life.

God, through the pen of John, says to you to show love toward those with whom you are in Christian fellowship. It is important to note that from the many Greek words for love available to the Holy Spirit to give to John, the one that is found here is agape. This love God calls for you to have for and show to others, this agape, is a deep, caring, unselfish, giving of yourself for the benefit of others. It is helping instead of wanting others to help you. It includes personal sacrifice for the benefit of those you love.

Jesus demonstrated agape in that He loved you so much that He gave up heaven, took on your sins, paid their price to give you His own, personal righteousness. Jesus said, “as I have loved you love one another.”

Prayer: Forgive me Lord for the countless times I have not loved my brothers and sisters. As you forgive me for Jesus' sake so fill me with Your love from which to draw my love for others. Enable me always to love as you have loved me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Jesus, Thy boundless love to me No thought can reach, no tongue declare;  
Unite my thankful heart to Thee, And reign without a rival there!  
Thine wholly, Thine alone I am; Be Thou alone my constant flame.

O grant that nothing in my soul May dwell, but Thy pure love alone;  
Oh, may Thy love possess me whole, My joy, my treasure, and my crown!  
All coldness from my heart remove; My ev'ry act, word, thought be love.

This love unwearied I pursue And dauntlessly to Thee aspire.  
Oh, may Thy love my hope renew, Burn in my soul like heav'nly fire!  
And day and night, be all my care To guard this sacred treasure there.

In suff'ring be Thy love my peace, In weakness be Thy love my pow'r;  
And when the storms of life shall cease, O Jesus, in that final hour,  
Be Thou my rod and staff and guide, And draw me safely to Thy side!  
(LSB 683)