

Walk the Talk

(1 John 2:7-11)

10/12/16; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

Every December since 1946, Billboard has published a list of the top 100 of the previous year.

It is simply meant to recognize the most popular music of the year.

Now let me ask you a question, what would you think is the most popular thing to sing about in the songs that were the most popular in America since 1946?

In other words, what do people want to hear about in the music that they listen to?

What subject seems to make a song more likable?

Well, I went to a website where you can search these top 100 lists for the past 70 years...

And I simply typed in the word "love" and I found that **586 songs** that some of the most popular of all time have the word "love" in their title...

From Elvis' Pressley's "Love Me Tender" in 1956 to the Beatles' "Love Me Do" in 1964 to Taylor Swift and "Love Story" in 2009,....

Songs with love in the title have often been the year's most popular songs.

Now, this doesn't even count songs with the word "love" in the lyrics...

If that were the case, the number of songs would be in the 1000s...

Now, with all this singing about love, we would assume that people know what love is, right?

Yet, that is not the case at all...

Love is still very much misunderstood by the general population..

But it is also misunderstood in the church, and that is not good because we as believers should know what love is...

In fact, the Bible defines love for us...

Love is laying your life down for your friends...
John 15:13

Love is giving your Son to the world. John 3:16

God is love. 1 John 4:8

And then you get to 1 Cor 13:4-8, which expands the definition of love in all directions.

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 [b]ears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails;

No matter how many songs try to define love, if love doesn't meet God's definition of love, it isn't love...

Now, it is important to know what love is, because a test of true salvation is to examination how well you love...

How well you love God, and how well you love others...

The first examination of love is to examine your love for God, and how do your measure your love for God?

Do you count the number of goose bumps on your arm when someone sings Amazing Grace?

Do you measure it by a feeling that you have toward God each day?

No and no.

The Bible says that you measure your love for God by how well you keep His commands...

Jesus said, "if you love me, you will keep my commands."

And we saw that test of love last week in 1 John 3-6, where people who are truly saved walk in obedience to the Lord..

John wrote last week, that whoever keeps the commands shows that he has expressed the highest form of love for God..

1 John 2:5...

5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected.

Simply put, saying you love God is no proof that you do...

You show the most perfect evidence of your love for God by keeping his commands...

Now this week, we come to another test of salvation in verses 7-11, and this is also a test of love, but today it is a test of our love for others...

Truly saved people love God, and truly saved people love others...

Let's look at these verses and read them all together and then we will come back and pick up every verses and shake it a little harder to firm up our understanding of it...

1 John 2:7-11

7 Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. 8 [c]On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining. 9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. 10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11 But the one who 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.

Let's look at these verses in three parts...

I. An Old Commandment (7)

II. A New Reality (8)

III. A Great Test (9-11)

Let's begin by going back to verse 7 and seeing...

I. An Old Commandment (7)

7 Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

John begins this 4th test of true salvation by telling the church that he really doesn't have anything new to say to them about love...

Long story short, these Christians, the majority of which had grown up Jewish, knew what God had said long ago about love...

Look at Deuteronomy 6:5 on the screen...

4 "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Then look at Leviticus 19:17-18...

17 'You shall not hate your [c]fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

The Jews grew up around the Scriptures...

They knew the OT well...

The people that John was writing knew that God commanded love for him and love for their neighbor...

And John is simply opening this test of salvation by telling these former Jews that they knew that God expected their love for him and for their neighbor...

Every family has house rules....

They may vary from family to family, but every house rule starts this way...

It is stated and then repeated and then it is assumed that everyone knows it and keeps it...

If I find a plate or a cup left in a room or on a table belonging to the girls...

And I say, "Anna, why didn't you take this plate to the kitchen?"

The response "Well, I didn't know that you wanted me to do that" isn't acceptable...

And how will I respond to her, "Yes, you did know that. We have told you that 100s of times before."

And so as John begins this test of loving your neighbor, he simply says,....

Look guys, I am not about to tell you something brand new...

You have heard from the very beginning that you are to love God and love your neighbor...

It was part of the word that your read and have heard spoken to you as Jews...

And so, loving your neighbor was commanded by God from the very beginning..

But there is also another aspect of this as well...

Because John is also suggesting that these Christians had heard they should love their neighbor ever since they had put their faith in Jesus and been saved....

Because Jesus had preached that message and it had been passed along to the church through the disciples...

What did Jesus tell the disciples on the night before his death in the upper room?

HE told them to love one another, so that the world would know that they were his disciples...

Though God had given this command to the Jews 1000s of years earlier, Jesus repeated the command to all His followers as well...

And John is simply telling his readers, you have known this because God commanded it in the OT and Jesus repeated it in the NT...

And look, even people today have the expectation that Christians should love their neighbor...

No one gets saved, and then is surprised to hear that they must love others...

It is a universal expectation...

Then we leave the old command and move to...

II. A New Reality (8)

Look at verse 8...

8 [c]On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.

An oxymoron is a figure of speech where two words that have opposite meanings appear together to describe a new term....

Jumbo shrimp is an oxymoron...

Pretty ugly...

Bitter sweet...

John seems to contradict himself here in verse 8...

In verse 7, he is not giving a new command, but now in verse 8...

He is giving a new command...

So, which is it?

And it is both...

Loving your neighbor was not a new command...

But the ability to love your neighbor was a new reality for Christians, and here is why...

In the OT, God told Israel to love their neighbor, yet they couldn't do it...

And why not?

Because the Holy Spirit did not take up residence in OT believers...

At times, the Holy Spirit would reside in people in the OT, but even then He would come and go at the Father's direction...

It was not until the coming of Christ and his death and resurrection, that the Holy Spirit was sent to indwell all believers...

That anyone had the ability to actually love their neighbor..

And so John writes, I am writing you a new commandment in the sense that you can now actually keep this commandment to love your neighbor...

Jesus demonstrated with perfection how to love your neighbor in his life and ministry, and his followers who were given the Holy Spirit as a helper are now able to follow Jesus' example and love their neighbor...

This is so important for us to understand today...

There is no excuse for the believer to not love their neighbor today....

Jesus modeled it for us and then equipped us to do it when He sent the Spirit to live inside us..

So if you claim to be a believer, yet you don't love your neighbor, it isn't because you aren't able to do it...

The Holy Spirit which resides in all true believers enables you to do it...

So, if you don't love your neighbor and you claim to be a Christian, you so that your claim to salvation is a lie...

Because the first fruit of the Spirit is what?

Love.

In sum, saved people have the Spirit of God and the Spirit produces fruit, and the first fruit is love.

And then John adds this to the end of verse 8...

The darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.

John is simply highlighting the effect of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the world...

The OT was a dark time...

Yes, you had believers, but even then, there was murder and war and violence and sexual immorality even among the people of God....

And that darkness was the result of people not being led or walking by the Spirit...

Yet, Christ was the Light of the World when he came into a very dark world...

Not only was his life, death and resurrection, a light to the world...

He sent the Spirit to indwell believers and expand the Light in all directions and areas of the world...

Because believers could now live obedient lives, and that brings light to the world...

And the one of the greatest evidences of that light is how we love one another and our neighbor...

The OT knew very little of this kind of love...

Sure, people were expected to love God and love one another, but even the greatest men of the OT had a difficult time doing it...

David didn't love God all the time and he didn't love his neighbor because he rejected God's design for marriage and even someone made in God's image...

Yet, Jesus brought light to world, was a light to the world and enabled his followers to be lights in the world by sending the Spirit to change their life and lead them to obedience...

And so John writes....

Loving your neighbor is not a new command, but Jesus has made obedience to it a new reality...

You can and should love your neighbor in 2016 if you are truly saved because you were given the ability to it at salvation...

So, we have the old command and new reality, but let's finish with...

III. A Great Test (9-11)

9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. 10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11 But the one who 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.

Now that John has stated the old command, and told us that true believers have the ability to follow the command in them...

He puts everyone who claims to be saved to the fourth test and it is this...

Do you love your neighbor?

Do you love others?

Do you love you brothers and sisters in the Lord...

In verse 9, we are reminded that words are never a guarantee of salvation...

They are a part of being saved, but words can be empty....

Look at what John writes...

The one who says that he is in the Light...

This is clear...

This is someone who claims that he is saved in Christ....

Yet, John continues with this...

He says that, but his life shows that he hates his brother....

And therefore the truth is this...

He is not in the light, but he is in darkness...

What is John saying here?

The man who says he is saved but hates his brother is lost...

That's John.

Black and white, pure and simple...

What would hating your brother look like?

It would include self-centeredness without any regard for others...

It would include slander and gossip about others...

It would include a disdain and looking down upon others...

Let's look at hate in the Bible...

Genesis 37 and the story of Joseph gives us a glimpse of hatred...

37 Now Jacob lived in the land [a]where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan. 2 These are the records of the generations of Jacob.

Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a [b]varicolored tunic. 4 His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him [c]on friendly terms.

5 Then Joseph [d]had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. 6 He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have [e]had; 7 for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf."

8 Then his brothers said to him, “Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

What does hatred look like there?

Not speaking to someone on friendly terms (v 4)

Hatred is jealousy (v 5)

Hatred is lack of joy for other’s blessings (8)

Hatred takes many forms, yet it has no place in the believer’s heart...

Our hearts must be filled with love for others...

And so verse 9 gives us a picture of failing the test of salvation that is seen in our love for others...

Verse 10 gives us the passing picture of love for one another...

10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

Simply put, the one who loves his brother proves that he has the light and lives in the light because the light of the Holy Spirit is in Him..

And where there is light, there is no stumbling...

If you have ever tried to walk in this sanctuary without the lights on, you may end up with bruises on your thigh...

Because you can fall over a chair in no time because it gets pitch black in here without the lights one....

When you walk in this world with the light of the Holy Spirit guiding you, you will fall everywhere because you have no direction and no guidance in anything...

You have the sunlight during there day, but even then you are blinded by your own dark heart...

Those in the light and living by the light love their brother and dont stumble...

However, John ends with people who claim to be saved but prove otherwise by their lack of love for others...

Verse 11...

11 But the one who 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.

You ever heard the phrase....

Blinded by jealousy?

Well, there is truth in that phrase....

And what does it mean to be blinded by jealousy?

It simply means that we make poor choices based upon our overwhelming feeling of envy of others...

Jealousy towards others blinds us.

Anger toward others blinds us..

Superiority over others blinds us...

And hatred of others clearly blinds us as well...

Unbelievers walk through this world with their eyes wide open, but they have no idea where they are going...

They are as blind as blind can be...

Conclusion

Let me end with a little practical help for us...

Because it is easy to say that you love others if you don't really know what love is...

So, let me help you test your love for your neighbor by looking at what love is and does...

And I think the best place to look at what love is in in 1 Cor 13....

So take your Bibles and turn there, and we will get some help figuring out if we do love our neighbor....

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 [b]bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails;

Do you love your neighbor?

Well, do you show patience toward others?

Love shows patience to your neighbor on the highway, in line at the grocery store, when he or she is insulting you...

Do you love with kindness to others?

Are you nice to them?

Do you serve them?

Or is it the pattern of your life to be rude and uncaring to others?

Do you love your neighbor by refusing to be jealous of what they have, what they do, or where they go?

Love for your neighbor does not grow jealous, but rejoices for them...

Do you boast and brag to your neighbor?

Do you want them to see what you have and try to make them feel inferior to you?

If you love them, you have no desire to show them up or make them feel less than you...

Verse 5....

Love for your neighbor prevents you from acting unbecomingly...

In other words, your behavior around your neighbor is not offensive or improper...

Love for your neighbor also puts their needs before your own...

Middle of verse 5...

Love for your neighbor is not provoked...

In other words, you will let your neighbor attack you and persecute you, but will refuse to return evil for evil...

Instead, you will stay calm and loving and kind and patient...

End of verse 5...

Love for your neighbor keeps no record of wrongs suffered....

In other words, you don't grow bitter to your neighbor...

You don't think, "Well, that's how they treated me, so I will return the favor.."

Verse 6...

6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

This is where most people get confused about love...

But love for your neighbor causes you to confront them in their sin...

Love does not overlook their unrighteousness, but calls them to repentance..

Church discipline is a great example of this...

Are we loving people when we go to them as a church and tell them to stop sinning?

You bet we are...

Do you love your kid when he reaches his hand up to a hot burner on the stove and you yell at him to stop.

You bet you are..

Love for your neighbor causes you to refuse to be a part of their sin and unrighteousness...

Love causes you to share the truth with them and leave them to go their own way of sin, praying that God would open their eyes...

It is not love to overlook sin...

It is not love to not tell people the truth..

Love causes us to call people to righteousness and truthful living...

And then verse 7 and the first part of verse 8 give us a few more things that love for our neighbor look like...

Love for our neighbor is long-suffering and bears all things....

Love for our neighbor is not pessimistic but believes all things...

Love for our neighbor is not defeated but filled with hope...

Love for our neighbor is not something that cause us to give up because love for our neighbor causes us to endure...

Simply because love for our neighbor never fails...

Look, there are people that are hard to love, but that is no reasons to stop loving them...

There will be some people that you can only love by telling them the truth for years...

There will be some people that you can only love by telling them to stop practicing sin...

There will be people that try your patience and kindness,...

There will be some that will provoke you to jealousy.

Regardless of how you are called to love them, your job is to love them in a way that is unfailing...

Now, the question tonight is this....

How well do you love your neighbor?

How well do you love others in the church?

How well do you love your family and spouse?

Because how you love others reveals true salvation...

Again, the standard is not perfection but direction...

So, look at the pattern of your life...

Do you love your neighbor?

Do you see that loving others is a priority of your life?

Do you care for others?

Are you kind to them and patient with them?

Do you desire to see them believe the truth and live in righteousness?

So far, the tests of salvation are what do you believe about Jesus Christ, what do you believe and sin, how do you love God by keeping his commands and how do you love others...

What you believe and how you love say much more about your salvation than what you say...

What you say is important, but what you do proves the accuracy of what you say...

Let us pray...