

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

People: Lord God, you spared nothing in sending your only Son to be our Savior. Jesus gave up His glory and suffered humiliation and death on our behalf. And yet we struggle to read the Bible. We think we're generous when we've given a gift out of our excess. We begrudge an act of service to a person we may think is undeserving. But WE were undeserving. We were in rebellion to you when you saved us. For this we thank you, but we also know how much we need your forgiveness. Forgive us again, Lord Jesus, by your great love for us all. Change our hearts so that our actions might match your will. It is in your name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Readings

August 23, 2009

Genesis 4:2b-16

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

But the LORD said to him, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

1 John 3:11-24

This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

John 15:12-22

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I

chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin.

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Sermon Outline ~ August 23, 2009

"Love, Love, Love! (?)"

1 John 3:11-24

Introduction: "A 'love-hate' relationship..."

"Love one another!" John 15:17

1. The world _____ us.

"And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming." 2:28

2. The world _____ us.

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" 3:1

3. THIS is love: "_____."

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.

And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." 3:16

- Before we were "worth saving."

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

- Willingly.

"No one takes (my life) from me, but I lay it down of my own accord."

John 10:18

- Sacrificially.

"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

Romans 8:32

- In much _____.

"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." 1 John 3:18

Answers to Sermon Outline: loves, hates, Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. more than words

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen

THE BENEDICTION

Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

People: **And the people took the blessing and held it in their hearts.**

Leader: Go in peace, serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**