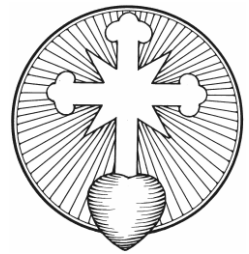


April 14, 2011



In Him Who First Loved Us

1 John 3:13 – 4:10

¹³Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵Everyone who continues hating his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

¹⁶By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his guts against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

¹⁹By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; ²⁰for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²²and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has given us the decree. ²⁴Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. **And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.**

13 review from last week- why does the world hate and not know us?

14 Does this verse mean to say that our hope in Eternal Life depends on our acts of love?
"Whoever does not love abides in death"- *Love is a fruit that surely and necessarily also follows true faith. The fact that a person does not love is a sure sign that he is not justified. He is still in death or has lost the righteousness of faith again, as John says. (FC SD III 27)*

15 Hate = Murder, see Matthew 5:21-26. We've defined Biblical "love," what does John mean by "hate?"
Augustine: You have only hated, and in so doing, so you have killed yourself first of all.

16 Here's the definition of "Love" that Christians must work with, in marriage & family, and all vocations.
Who are "the brothers"? (Hint: Remember 2 John)

17 "closes his guts against him"- the guts, not the heart, was the place where mercy was moved
Luther: God is merciful. Yet He is not idle. He does not let sinners go unpunished. To the humble, who fear Him, He is merciful... There are several degrees of love: an enemy must not be offended, brother must be helped, a member of one's household must be supported. You know Christ's commandment concerning love for one's enemies. But you owe more to a brother who loves you in return.

19 "reassure our hearts before him"- the mutual love & support of the Brethren is the way the Church should go

20-22 What a display of Law & Gospel at work!

23 Often asked question: What does God want me to do with my life? Believe & Love one another

24 The Spirit who dwells in us in conversion works in us through Faith to do good and abide in God

Lest we think acts of loving kindness are all that matter and true doctrine, the pure Gospel, and the sacraments are to be ignored, John continues...

^{4:1}Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. ⁴Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 “do not believe every spirit”- creatures without flesh & bone, they are either from God or devil
 “test the spirits”- examine their words and actions in light of the whole testimony of Scripture

2 “every spirit that confesses”- confession of belief is formal, liturgical, and expected of everyone
 “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh”- the creedal litmus test of Truth (2 John 7)

Polycarp: Everyone who shall not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is antichrist. Whoever shall not confess the testimony of the cross is of the devil...So let us forsake the vanity of many and their false teachings, and turn to the word which was delivered to us from the beginning.

3 “is in the world already”- the spirit of the antichrist was then and is now denying Christ

4 “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world”- (3:24) God abides in us through His Spirit

5-6 We revisit the World vs. God dichotomy. It’s very black & white
 “By this we know the Spirit of truth”- Knowing God means listening to His apostles, the Spirit of Truth is found in the Apostolic Scriptures!

7 Again, what does John mean when he says, “love one another?” (see 3:16)

8 One of the most MISUSED passages in the New Testament!! Biblical love, not worldly love

9-10 “God is love” means sacrificing His Son, paying for our sins, and granting us life in the true faith
 “Propitiation”- the sacrifice offered up for reconciliation with God

Bede the Venerable: We come to God not by our own merits but by the bestowal of his grace alone, as John bears witness when he says that we did not love God but rather he loved us.