**Jesus Christ Laid Down His Life for Us**

1 John 3:11-4:6

Key Verse 3:16

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 and sisters.

Introduction: Like apostle John, we came to know what love is through our Lord Jesus Christ who laid down his life for us. In the past we have no idea about what love is. Worldly people hate and murder one another, but believers must love one another. Loving our brothers and sisters is the evidence that we belong to God and have crossed over from death to life. Since we learned what love is, we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. We have passed from death to life, for we love each other. It is easy for us to be influenced by what the world operates, which is self-centered, materialistic, competitive, violent, hypocritical, judgmental, harsh toward other people. But we should not be shaken or lose our identity because we are called to be children of God. As long as we believe the name of Jesus Christ who laid down his life for us, we can love each other and shine Jesus’ light to this dark world as His beloved children. Of course, we discern antichrists through the Spirit of truth who resides in us.

Do Not be Like Cain

1. Read 3:11-15. What did John remind the members of the churches? (11) How did he warn them regarding hating a brother or sister? (12, 15) Why does the world hate God’s people? (12-13) How can we know that we have crossed over from death to life and have eternal life? (14-15) How are believers to distinguish themselves from the people of this world?

*3:11 For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12 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. 13 Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters,[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30593b)*] if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 15 Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.*

1. John reminded the members of the churches the message they heard from the beginning: “*We should love one another”* (1Jn 2:7-11, Jn 13:34-35, 15:12, 17)
   1. John first mentioned about the message they heard from the beginning in 1Jn 2:7.
2. John warned the believers *“Do not be like Cain”*
   1. Cain murdered his brother, Abel
      1. He belonged to the evil one
      2. His actions were evil
         * He murdered him because his own actions were evil and his brother was righteous
      3. God warned Cain regarding his evil actions before he murdered his brother (Genesis 4:7)
         * Cain did not repent even after hearing God’s direct warning
   2. John issued this warning to those within the church fellowship
      1. It was not for those that remained in the world, but for those that remained worldly within the church fellowship
3. The world hates God’s people because the actions of worldly people are evil and those of God’s people are righteous
   1. It is the same reason Cain hated his brother Abel
4. We know that we have crossed over from death to life and have eternal life, because we love one another
   1. A life of loving one another in God’s love is the way to know that we are truly alive.
5. Believers are to distinguish themselves from unbelievers through loving one another
   1. Worldly people hate and murder one another, but believers must love one another
      1. Loving our brothers and sisters is the evidence that we belong to God and have crossed over from death to life.

Knowing God’s Love

2. Read 16-18. How do we know what love is? (16) What does it mean to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters? (17-18)

*16 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 and sisters. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*

1. This is how we know what love is:
   1. First, Jesus Christ laid down his life for us
      1. We know what love is because Jesus first demonstrated God’s love for us through his sacrificial life and death.
   2. Second, we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.
      1. We can really know what this love is when we also practice it. We ought to live a sacrificial life for others, even to be ready to die for the sake of others.
2. To lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters involves real sacrificial actions on a physical or material level.
   1. It means to offer our whole life; time, energy, strength, sleep, sustenance, finances and material possessions.

The Benefits of Loving in Action and Truth

3. Read 18-24. What will happen when we love with actions and in truth? (18-19) How can we deal with feelings of condemnation? (20) How can we have confidence before God in our prayer life? (21-22) Why did John pair God’s command *to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ* with the command *to love one another*? (23) How can we know that God lives in us? (24)

*18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. 19 This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: 20 If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. 21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24 The one who keeps God’s commands lives 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*.

1. When we love with actions we gain assurance of our faith
   1. We can know that we belong to the truth
   2. We have confidence before God
   3. We can set our hearts and rest in God’s presence
      1. We are able to come before God
2. When our hearts condemn us:
   1. We need to remember that God is greater than our hearts.
      1. Our hearts condemn us because of our sins and we suffer from guilt and shame. We cannot really forgive ourselves, but God is able to forgive us. He has already forgiven us through Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins.
   2. We need to remember that God knows everything
      1. God knows our sins. He knows that we are going to sin even before we sin. We just need to come into the light of God and repent of our sins.
3. We can have confidence before God in our prayer life:
   1. When we overcome the condemnation in our hearts
      1. We cannot pray confidently when our hearts are condemned
   2. When we keep God’s commands and do what pleases him
      1. And, when we keep God’s commands and do what pleases him, we receive from him anything we ask.
         1. When we do God’s will, we are able to pray in the will of God.
4. John paired God’s command *to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ* with the command *to love one another* because:
   1. We can only love one another through faith in the name of God’s Son, Jesus Christ.
      1. We cannot love one another through our own strength or good intentions.
      2. We can love others through the obedient example of Jesus Christ, through the help of the Holy Spirit.
5. We know that God lives in us through the Spirit he gave us
   1. The Spirit He gave us is the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ

Testing The Spirits

4. Read 4:1-3. What does John encourage us to do? (1) How can we recognize the Spirit of God? (2) What is the Spirit of the antichrist? (3)

*4:1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.*

1. John encourages us to test the spirits to see whether they are from God
   1. There were many false prophets who had been part of their church community, but had gone out from them into the world
      1. These false prophets influenced the church community not only with false teaching, but also with a wrong spirit
2. Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God
   1. If we truly acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, then our words should match our actions (Romans 6:13, 8:13, 12:1)
3. The spirit of the antichrist is any spirit that does not acknowledge that Jesus--that Jesus came in the flesh.

5. Read 4:4-6. How can we overcome the spirit of the antichrist? (4) How can we differentiate between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood, or spirit of the antichrist? (5-6)

*4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 5 They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John+4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30610a)*] of truth and the spirit of falsehood.*

1. We can overcome the spirit of the antichrist through the Spirit of Christ living in us--the Holy Spirit.
   1. The one in us is greater than the one who is in the world
      1. In our flesh we are weak and cannot overcome the spirit of the antichrist, but through the Holy Spirit we can overcome
2. Those that have the spirit of truth listen to God and listen to God’s servants, but those with the spirit of the antichrist do not.

Conclusion: Thanks to our Lord, Jesus Christ who laid down His life for us, we can boldly keep His commands with actions. Also we are from God and have overcome the world, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. May the Lord help us to not forget that God is greater than our hearts and God is greater than our enemy. We will overcome the world and antichrists because the Holy Spirit who resides in us always strengthens us by the truth. May the Lord help us to love each other with action and the truth.

One word: This is how we know what love is!