



Guided by His Word,
Serving in His Love

Newly of His

Abbeyville Road Christian Church

551 Abbeyville Road Lancaster, PA 17603-6399
717-393-8821 FAX 717-393-8660

e-mail: office@abbeyvilleroad.com

web site: www.abbeyvilleroad.com

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of our Lord Jesus Christ

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So, You Expected Affection?

¹¹This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹²Do 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. ¹³Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. – 1 John 3:11-13

In the Old Testament, Cain's murder of Abel is shrouded in mystery, but later inspired writers flesh out enough details to give us an idea of the dynamics at play when both brothers brought sacrifices to God. *Genesis* tells us that Abel, a shepherd, "brought the fat portions from the firstborn of his flock." Abel's gift was the best of the best. From *Hebrews*, we know that Abel acted in faith. By default, we can conclude that faith did not accompany Cain's gift, that the gift itself was of a lesser quality and that Cain well knew it. In *1 John*, we are not left to speculate about Cain by default. Cain "belonged to the evil one." Cain was evil – loveless toward men and toward God.

In fact, it seems to have been the righteousness of Abel that in large part set Cain off. The Jews of Jesus' day considered Abel to be the first martyr for the sake of righteousness (*Matthew 23:35*). The word for murder in the *1 John* text means "slaughtered" or "butchered". Cain was sent into a violent rage over God's acceptance of Abel. It has been the nature of fallen man ever since to be agitated by righteousness whenever it is manifested in others. R. C. Sproul, in his book, *The Holiness of God*, records the following:

A well-known professional golfer was playing in a tournament with President Gerald Ford, fellow pro Jack Nicklaus, and Billy Graham. After the round was over, one of the other pros on the tour asked, "Hey, what was it like playing with the President and Billy Graham?" The pro said with disgust, "I don't need Billy Graham stuffing religion down my throat!" With that he headed for the practice tee. His friend followed, and after the golfer had pounded out his fury on a bucket of golf balls, he asked, "Was Billy a little rough on you out there?" The pro sighed and said with embarrassment, "No, he didn't even mention religion."

God never compared Cain to Abel, saying, "Why can't you be more like your brother?" God loved Cain and desired that he repent before his hatred climaxed in murder. The Lord asked Cain: "Why are

you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷If 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 . . ." (*Genesis 4:6, 7*).

But, it is not the nature of evil to love righteousness. John must also have remembered the discourse of Jesus with the Jews he himself had recorded. They wanted to kill Jesus because His teachings exposed their self-righteousness to be lies:

⁴²Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. ⁴³Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning ... - John 8:42-44

Darkness hates exposure by the light. It is no wonder that John warns His readers as Jesus had warned him on numerous occasions: "Do not be surprised my brothers if the world hates you." And yet, so often it strikes me that the people of faith seem utterly mystified and even angry when this world treats them as objects of ridicule, double standards, false accusations and harsh generalizations. So, you expected the world's affection?

When the days of shock and whining about the world's disdain pass, perhaps, the church will finally recall why Christ left her in the world. She was never intended to enjoy a comfortable and popular existence, but, rather to encounter a fallen culture. How can we even expect it to be easy or pretty? The world hated Jesus. It must hate anyone who is conspicuously Jesus-like. Speaking to the Knights of Columbus Council in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia said:

"God assumed from the beginning that the wise of the world would view Christians as fools, and he has not been disappointed. If I have brought any message today, it is this: Have the courage to have your wisdom regarded as stupidity. Be fools for Christ. And have the courage to suffer the contempt of the sophisticated world."



Karl's Korner