

Loving the Sinner While Hating the Sin

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- From St. Augustine's Letter 211 (424 AD) containing the phrase 'Cum dilectione hominum et odio vitiorum,' which translates roughly to "With love for mankind and hatred of sins."
- The phrase has become more famous as "love the sinner but hate the sin" or "hate the sin and not the sinner" (appearing in Mohandas Gandhi's 1929 autobiography).
- "Being a 'friend of sinners' is an accusation that Christians should wear as a badge of honor, for nothing could honor Jesus more, and nothing is more revealing of who God actually is." (Ronnie McBrayer)

Psalm 103:8-12

- “The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 9 He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

Matt. 9:9-13

- “As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, Follow Me. So he arose and followed Him. 10 Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? 12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance”

Separating The Sinner From The Sins

- The religious world does not understand that the sinner and the sins he commits are not the same thing
- They believe that hating the sin necessarily means that you hate the person who commits the sin
- The Pharisees believed this, too

Separating The Sinner From The Sins

- Can you separate the person from his actions?
 - God does; Jesus did; apostle Andrew did; Barnabas did.
 - The Pharisees didn't; Diotrephes didn't.
 - In which group are you?

Relationship Between Love & Service

- Jesus moved from service to love and back to service
 - Matt. 6:24 - “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”
- Love and service are Biblically tied together, just as faith and works are inextricably linked.
- We love God when we serve God in obedience
 - 1John 2:5 - “But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him”

Relationship Between Love & Service

- We love our brethren when we serve them
 - 1John 3:16-18 - “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

Nature Of God Must Become Our Own

- God is good, patient, and longsuffering
 - Rom. 2:4 - “Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”
- God’s love for us is shown by what He did for us
 - 1John 4:9-10 - “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

Nature Of God Must Become Our Own

- One who loves, chooses to serve even when his feelings are repulsed by the actions of the one who is loved
 - Rom. 5:6-8 - “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- It is hard to separate our feelings for the person from the feelings we have about what the person does. God does it; we can learn to do it

We Must Face The Fact That God Hates Sin

- God's goodness is matched with severity
 - Rom. 11:22 - "Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off."
- God is angered by sin, with good reason
 - Rom. 1:18 - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness"

We Must Face The Fact That God Hates Sin

- There are things God finds abominable:
 - Prov. 6:16-19 - “... A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, 19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.”

We Must Face The Fact That God Hates Sin

- The worship of idols - Jer. 44:3-4
- The hypocrisy of evil offered for good purposes - Isa. 61:8
- The worship offered by the wicked - Isa. 1:14-15; Amos 5:21-23
- Planning evil; making fraudulent promises - Zech. 8:17
- Divorce - Mal. 2:16
- The deeds of the Nicolaitans - Rev. 2:6
- Sin - Heb. 1:9

But He Does Not Hate The People Who Commit Sin

- There is a difference between the person bound in sin through weakness and the person who embraces sin and will not let it go
- God hates the workers of iniquity, the bloodthirsty, the violent, and liars - Psalms 5:5-6, 11:5-7
- Why? Can a person be loved, who refuses to give up sin, in the same manner as one who is struggling to leave the bondage of sin?

But He Does Not Hate The People Who Commit Sin

- God sends delusions to sinners - 2Thes. 2:10-12.
- Why? They have no love for the truth
- There is no hope for the reprobate mind that despises the love of God; therefore, God gives His grace and mercy to those who will receive it

When We Are Faced With Evil

- It is perfectly acceptable to view differently those who have given their lives over to evil
 - Psalms 139:21-22 - “Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? 22 I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.”
- The standard is their hatred of God, not your speculation and judgment

When We Are Faced With Evil

- But even faced with an enemy, we must treat them with love
 - Matt. 5:44-45 - “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust”
- We must give service equally
 - Rom. 12:20-21 - “Therefore If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

God Loved The World That Was Caught Up In Sin

- John 3:16 - “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”
- Christ died for us while we were sinners; but, not all will be saved
- Luke 23:34 - “Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. And they divided His garments and cast lots.”

God Loved The World That Was Caught Up In Sin

- God's love is not unconditional. When God's love is spurned and sin is willfully embraced, then there is nothing left for the sinner
 - Heb. 10:26-31 - "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. And again, The LORD will judge His people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

God Loved The World That Was Caught Up In Sin

- God wants every sinner to repent, but there is a limit
 - 2Peter 3:9 - “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”
 - Rom. 2:5-6 - “But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who will render to each one according to his deeds”

God Loved The World That Was Caught Up In Sin

- The sinner who struggles to leave sin is one who is trying to separate himself from his sin. God knows this and sees that the sinner and his sins are two different matters. We must come to see that, too
- The sinner who rejects the love of God and willfully chooses sin has bound himself to his sins. He chooses to eliminate the distinction between himself and his sins. If that is his choice, that who is God or man to treat him otherwise?