

Doubt and Faith
March 1, 2009
John 15:18-16:4
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Synopsis:

Resistance to God does not arise from honest doubt, but from allegiance to another master. In our times that master is usually the Imperial “I.”

It's not so much that we *can't* believe in God,
It's that we *don't want to*.

I.

Love and Hate

John 15:8 If the world hates you

I started this sermon looking at *doubt* and *faith*, and ran straight into *love* and *hate*. How did that happen?

OPEN Bible to John 15

Ch 15:9-17 = LOVE, LOVE, LOVE (song)

Then abruptly

Ch 15:18-19 = HATE, HATE, HATE (song?)

Same theme as John 3:16, 20 LOVE and HATE

Hate is a supercharged word in our culture

- I hesitate to preach on it, but it is there
- worst thing one can do, e.g. disagree? you hate
- yet it is here (Democrat vs Republican)
- yet it is here (Arab vs Jew)
- yet it is here (Kikuyu vs Masai)

This sermon: Doubt and Faith

- Keller's book: Doubt and Faith (Intermission chapter)
- John's Gospel: Hate and Love

*Doubt, Faith/ Love, Hate = how do these go together?

II.

Love and Hate in John's Gospel

John 15:9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you

Upper-Room Discourses: Chs 13-17

- starts with foot washing (13)
- strange language about Father-Son-Holy Spirit (17)
- *What does the life in F-S-HS sphere look like?

LOVE = life in relational sphere of *Father-Son-Holy Spirit*

- Ch 15 Vine and Branches, abiding (their metaphor)
- God is a basketball team of love (another metaphor)
- God is a loving family (another metaphor)
- God is a dance around (perichoresis)
- Characteristics: love, joy, giving, fruit
- *Life in sphere of F-S-HS looks like self-giving love

HATE = life in an opposing sphere called *the world*

- world = not creation, but sphere opposed to Jesus as Master
- for Jesus, no neutral position (Jesus or world as master)
- we choose a master to follow
- our master/loyalty determines how we respond
 - E.g. Obama speech =
 - you liked it based upon party loyalty
 - a window into how we respond to God
 - we either love him or hate him
 - E.g. Nagel quote p.119 (Keller)

*It is not so much that we can't believe in God (rational)
we don't want to (relational). Doubt and faith are about ordering our love
and hate.

Take away: Having problems with faith?

Is there a lifestyle/relational issue? My experience

III.

God's Decision to Love

John 15:26 When the Advocate comes

How does God respond to a world that hates?

READ John 3:16 LOVE = sends in *agape*

READ 15:26-27; 16:1-4 = sends in love

God sends (F-S-HS)	= self-giving love
Spirit Witnesses	= self-giving love
We witness to Jesus who suffers	= self-giving love
We witness and suffer (Jesus)	= self-giving love

John's Gospel: Written around Ephesus

- life in Ephesus as a Christian
- licit and illicit religion in Roman Empire
- Christians kicked out of synagogues
- rebellion against the empire = death

How do Christians respond? Act like God

- don't fight back
- they do what F-S-HS does = self-giving love

Take away: What do you do when someone opposes you?

- primarily = show up in self-giving love
- secondarily = reason is only part of it, arguing

IV.

Our Decision to Love

John 15:27 You also are to testify

What do we do when someone opposes us?

Church as sphere of F-S-HS

-Context of John 13-17 is life in F-S-HS

-Disciples embody life of F-S-HS

Characteristics: Look at chs 13-17

Loving (community) = Jesus in our heart
e.g. how we treat people when they come
how we share life in small groups
Come and see

Words/Commands = Read Bible

e.g. how much our life is informed not by culture but by
Scripture; read your Bible!

Sending (F-S-HS) = Feet out the door

e.g. ways we show up in L Woods/Aliso
ways to show up in neighborhood