



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“Friends: Loving Righteousness & Hating Wickedness”

Ps Rice Broocks – Feb. 23, 2014

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- What was a house rule growing up that you broke a lot?
- Did your mom or dad have an unusual house rule when you were growing up?
- What is a house rule that you have now that you are fussy about?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at bethelbrentwood.org/media.

The apostle John often referred to himself in his Scriptural writings as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." John especially wrote about friendship with and love for God in both his Gospel and first epistle. To be God's friend, we must know what pleases him and what is despised by him. Then we must give ourselves to living accordingly.

But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." (Hebrews 1:8, 9 ESV)

Too often people do not share in God's love of righteousness and his hatred of wickedness. But if we will desire and give ourselves to walking with a heart toward God like Jesus has, then we will be filled with God's joy! We must learn to root out those things which God hates, and embrace the things he loves.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5-7 ESV)

God is absolutely pure and holy. There is no hint of evil in him. If we belong to him, we are drawn to him. We will bring out into the light what has been hidden in darkness. If we are to walk as friends with Jesus, we must live honestly and transparently before him.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17 ESV)

To walk as God's friends, we must love what pleases God and be committed to doing his will. God hates sin because it is a spiritual cancer that destroys both us and others. To love the world is to stand against all that God cares about. God wants to be our friend. He is consistent in what he loves and cares about.

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12, 13 ESV)

The Word of God is able to pierce us inwardly at the deepest level of our being. Many people live their lives according to their desires, their deep longings. But when they do, they often are not discerning what is truly pleasing to God. We need God's word to expose what is really going on inside of us, so that we can be aware of what is good and evil in God's sight. Just because we desire something doesn't mean it is good and pleasing to God. And some things that are pleasing to God are not pleasing to us now, but are actually very good for us and our well-being in the long run.

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:4-10 ESV)

God changes a person from the inside out. The Spirit of God brings about our regeneration. Those who are born of God no longer continue to practice major sin. They instead have a desire put within them that desires to keep God's commands. The Spirit leads us to love what is good and hate what is evil. God honors us with his presence and revelation when we walk to please him (cf. John 14:21).

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:1-5 ESV)

Our ability to turn from evil and to obey God's commands comes from believing in Jesus. Through our born-again relationship with Jesus we grow in God's empowering grace, which enables us to grow in our obedience and sanctification.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- What are some things that you think God wants you to love and embrace more?
- What are some things that you believe God wants you to hate and turn away from?
- How can we follow through on living a consistent lifestyle that increasingly loves what God loves and hates what God hates?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- That God would give us revelation of how sins we might naturally engage in actually destroy us and others.
- That God would give us revelation of how godly thoughts and behavior bring joy and life and peace and strength to our souls, and blessings to others.
- That God would give us revelation that he really is our friend because we want to do the things that please him.