

- *This is a shorter message for the Sunday when David Ferguson was presenting more background material on their work in Japan with OMF.*

Introduction

- A **black and white** picture:
 - gives the outline, the impression, the sketch
 - fill-it-in in colour later
- John has done an initial sketch of how we are to love one another back in 2:7-11
 - here he is still filling in that initial sketch in black and white, drawing the stark, strong contrasts:
 - **love and hate**; **children of God & children of the Devil**; **life & death**; **murder & self-sacrifice**

Cain's Hatred & the World's Hatred (v.12-13)

- Genesis 4: Cain & Abel
 - Abel good sacrifice; Cain poor sacrifice - by deduction, some kind of disobedience on Cain's part, a lack of faith in God's will
 - **Cain murders Abel**
- Cain a symbol of all the is evil, the world opposed to God:
 - as he was, so is the world that rejects God; full of hatred and murder
 - even hating God's people - **derision on web-site for Cameron Stout?**

Christ's Love and the Love of the Church (v.14-18)

- **In contrast** - the white to the black of the previous verses - **is the love placed in the hearts of those who believe in the Lord**
 - a love that proves the new life that is present - in contrast to the death and murder of the world
- And the **essence of that love is self-sacrifice**
 - how do we know what love is? **Christ on the Cross!! (v.16)**
- And so, as we have that new life within us, it is a life rooted in self-sacrifice:
 - and **we will love self-sacrificially!**
 - example in **v.17** is possessions
 - but equally time, care, effort, listening.... **self-sacrificially**
 - **and doing it, not just talking about it!**

Digression: Assurance and the Condemning Heart (v.19-24)

- Simply:
 - seeing love in action, measurable in actual actions, is clear evidence of Christ's redeeming work within us when our hearts are troubled, our conscience's condemning us
 - for they are not ultimately reliable tests - helpful guides, but...
 - **God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything (v.20)**
- *(There is more here, but can't cover it all!)*

Conclusion

- **Bear the family resemblance:**
 - how did Christ, our big-brother and example behave?
- **With love:**
 - for those **excluded** by his society, lepers, women, tax-collectors;
 - for those **in need**, ill, demon-possessed
 - for those **cut off from God**, in spiritual poverty...
 - ultimately his love for us took him to the Cross
- **So: Love one another!**