

1 John 4: 7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Within us, among us, before us,

CHRIST IS COME TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW

Christianity does not ask man to live in the shadow of the Cross, but in the fire of its intense zeal.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Since the first of the year we have been looking at some of the BIG WORDS of our Christian Faith in an effort to appreciate the ways they help us make meaning in our lives and meaning of the world around us. These are words which are sometimes used too casually, too glibly in the church and in the culture. We are wanting to honor these words for their theological depth and for the many ways they can bring light to our understanding, opening up our minds and hearts to a deeper sense of the ways of God.

Today's BIG WORD, our sixth BIG WORD is ATONEMENT. Two words to go after this week. RESURRECTION and SECOND COMING.

I offer you this preview because these three words are sort of a theological trifecta, they relate to each other and support the others in ways we will see as we go along.

For example, when talking about atonement or the atonement, you come in short order to Good Friday, the cross, the death of Jesus the Christ. But you cannot begin to flesh out the meaning of Good Friday without also touching upon the resurrection. When the first generation of Christians began to make meaning of Good Friday, they did that by looking back through their sense of Easter right? The light of Easter really illumines Good Friday.

So as we consider today's BIG WORD, ATONEMENT, we cannot help but take next week's BIG WORD, RESURRECTION, into account.

Now, atonement is a hot topic in theological circles these days. This word has been undergoing re-assessment since the middle of the 20th century. Many of you read the work of Richard Rohr, who is a good example of a writer who is wanting to offer new perspectives on atonement. He is offering his readers a lot to think about.

But instead of coming at all this from a "thinking" perspective, let's begin our work with this BIG WORD at the "heart" level of our being.

My educated guess is that as you ponder the state of your soul, you are aware of yourself as a sinner. There is willful resistance to God's will in your being. There is a general presence of selfishness and self-centeredness in you. Am I right? Ok. Let's continue this brief time of interior self-examination.

My educated guess is that, along with that sense of yourself as in some ways in willful resistance to God's will, you are ALSO aware of yourself as NOT AT ALL outside of God's capacity to forgive you for this, to love you, to accept you, to cherish you. Would it be possible also to say that you have a sense in your heart that God's love for you, NOT your willful resistance, is the primary truth or reality of your interiority? In other words, that it is your sense that, as Paul famously says, "nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord?" My hope and prayer is this is true for you.

IF THIS IS TRUE, then there is a holy and mysterious soul saving and world healing thread that leads from your and my interior experience of all this back to the cross. To the "atoning sacrifice for our sins" as our text puts it today. What happened there, makes possible my interior and your interior sense of the immensity of God's love for us, that God can live with

me and I can live with myself as in willful resistance because God took great pains to demonstrate to me on the cross that, while MY and OUR willful resistance causes God pain, God's love is not withheld. Paul says it well----“while we were yet sinners...”

Our text today is a doxology of the love that was released into the history of humanity by that atoning sacrifice. The Epistles of the New Testament are mostly about exploring the depths of what it means to be graced by such an atoning love, and roughly 25% of each Gospel is devoted to the events of Holy Week. The writers of our sacred texts REALLY want us to be looking at Christ's “atoning sacrifice.”

Remember when Jesus called himself a ransom for many? I've been pondering that image this week. A ransom is something of value, given in return for something of even MORE value right? Can we see here that God in Christ is giving God's very self in return for something God cherishes EVEN MORE THAN GODSELF? Namely--humanity?

When we talk about the atonement, we are talking about a love released with incalculable, effortful and suffering-self-giving energy, into human history, which continues, with incessant oceanic waves, to wash over the world and to find its way into the souls of human beings in a way that is profoundly liberating and empowering and healing for those who were and are graced to experience it.

Day by day, as I sit prayerfully in God's presence, as I look into the eyes of God's beloveds, (like each of you) as I behold the natural world in its dynamism, as I read scripture, as I come to the table, the dynamic and determined atoning love of God washes up onto the shores of my willful resistance to God, and ever so gently re-shapes my heart and yours too.

So that God comes, finally, as our text says, to “live in us, and to perfect his love in us.”

SHAPED BY GOD'S WORD-GRACED AT CHRIST'S TABLE

NORTH OAK CHRISTIAN CHURCH-DISCIPLS OF CHRIST

February 17, 2019

In Jesus' Name, Greetings!

Music for Gathering

This is the Lord's decree: I have set my anointed on the holy hill.

This is my Son, this day I have begotten him

WHEN HE ASKS, I WILL GIVE HIM THE NATIONS AND THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Be warned, you rulers, be wise you kings of the earth

SUBMIT TO THE LORD WITH AWE, BOW DOWN BEFORE HIM WITH TREMBLING

Lighting of the Candles

"... we are guarded by your love, sheltered by your grace." Psalm 91

59 This is My Father's World

Sharing Christ's Peace

305 Lord Listen to Your Children Praying

The Morning Prayer and Musical Response

Silence "You bring healing to your people..." Psalm 30

Children's Circle

All children thru 5th grade are welcome to come forward. A small outreach offering will be collected for our money jar. Following this time of sharing and prayer, children may attend their very own

"Worship and Wonder" time together in our classroom annex. Child care is offered for infants and toddlers but they are also welcome in the sanctuary.

Prayer for Illumination

Happy are they whom You instruct, those You teach Your ways

WHEN MANY CARES FILL OUR MINDS, YOUR CONSOLATIONS CHEER OUR SOULS

THE LESSON 1 John 4: 7-12

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, amen amen.

The Meditation "To Perfect His Love" Rev. Rob Carr

Gracious God, we have sinned against heaven and before you.

ACCORDING TO YOUR ABUNDANT KINDNESS,

FORGIVE US WHERE OUR THOUGHTS AND DEEDS HAVE HURT OTHERS.

For we keep company with fear and dwell in the house of ignorance.

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND, MELT OUR HEARTS OF STONE

AND BREAK THROUGH THE FEARS THAT LEAD US INTO DARKNESS, AMEN.

Silent and spoken personal prayers of thanksgiving confession, intercession

MLK NOCC Choir with Rob Carr-Soloist

The Offering

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below

Praise God above ye heavenly host, Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.
As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.

425 Let Us Break Bread Together

Welcome to the Table

If we claim to be sinless, we are self-deceived
AND STRANGERS TO THE TRUTH
If we confess our sins, God may be trusted
TO CLEANSE US FROM EVERY KIND OF WRONG

The Words of Institution

Praise and glory to you our Savior Jesus Christ
YOU RENOUNCED THE WAY OF EASE FOR THE WAY OF TRUTH AND LIFE
You do not call the righteous, but sinners to repentance
A CONTRITE HEART, O GOD, YOU WILL NOT DESPISE
Create in us clean hearts O God
RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN US

The Communion Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, amen.

Following the Lord's Prayer, please come forward by rows to receive the loaf and the cup.

The cup is non-alcoholic by choice of the congregation
Gluten free crackers are available on the table for those who prefer this option
Children also celebrate communion weekly as part of "Worship and Wonder"

529 I'm So Glad, Jesus Lifted Me

Glory to God from whom all love flows
GLORY TO JESUS WHO SHOWED HIS LOVE THROUGH SUFFERING
And glory to the Holy Spirit
WHO BRINGS LIGHT TO THE DARKEST PLACES, AMEN

TO OUR GUESTS-----WELCOME!

**SHAPED BY GOD'S WORD AND GRACED AT CHRIST'S TABLE
WE WALK HUMBLY, LOVE DEEPLY, LIVE SIMPLY, AND SERVE JOYFULLY**

We are delighted to include you today. Your presence and participation is a gift to us all. We hope you experience among us the warm spirit of our family of faith and the gracious touch of Christ upon your life. Refreshments and welcoming conversation are available after worship in the Community Room just down the hall. More information about NOCC and the Disciples of Christ is available via Facebook and these websites

www.nocckc.org www.kcdisciples.org www.disciples.org

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

THIS WEEK

Monday 6PM Troop 90
Tuesday 945AM Men's Bible Group
Tuesday 6PM Pack 900
Tuesday 7PM Women's Bible Group
Wednesday 7PM Music Ministry
Thursday 6PM Girl Scouts
Saturday 9AM Homes Association Meeting
Saturday 1130AM-2PM Pack 900 Banquet.

UPCOMING

BIG WORDS SERMON SERIES CONTINUES

February 24---Resurrection

March 3---Second Coming

ASH WEDNESDAY OBSERVANCE WITH HOLY FAMILY PARISH
MARCH 6 7PM

LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS BEGIN MARCH 13 6PM

REZOUND BELL CHOIR IN CONCERT APRIL 14 3PM

EASTERTIDE RETREAT APRIL 26-28 MARILLAC CENTER

YOU, ME AND THE ENNEAGRAM MAY 11, 16, 23

Keep these items in mind as you consider the remarkable ministry
of our friends at CHERITH BROOK with the homeless.
Blankets Blankets Blankets! Tennis Shoes, Cold Meds, Band-aids, Bike Locks,
Gloves, Hats, Chapstick
Cherith Brook Local Honey for Sale! Contact Eric 816-241-8047