

All We Need Is Love

Homily for Sunday, August 12, 2018

Introduction: Who is John?? He is the author of five New Testament books: the gospel of John, three epistles (1,2,3,John), and the book of Revelation. He is one of the twelve apostles and was part of Jesus' "inner circle" along with Peter and James. His importance in the twelve grew as he matured, and after the crucifixion he became a "pillar" in the Jerusalem church, ministered with Peter, and finally was exiled to the island of Patmos by the Romans.

He is not to be confused with John the Baptist. The Apostle John is the brother of James, another of the twelve disciples. In their early years they were called "sons of thunder" because of their zeal, passion and ambition. John's zeal for Jesus was also influenced by his natural ambition, as seen in his request (through his mother) that he and his brother be seated on Jesus' right and left hands in the Kingdom.

As John aged he underwent a remarkable transformation as a disciple, from the quick tempered Son of Thunder to the compassionate apostle of love. John's is the only gospel that records Jesus washing the disciples' feet. He was the only one of the 12 apostles present at the cross.

Jesus had enough confidence in John to turn the care of His mother over to him, a charge John took very seriously. From that day on John cared for her as if she were his own mother. John's rash request for special honor in the kingdom had given way to a compassion and humility that would characterize his ministry in his later life. He supposedly outlived all of the disciples, dying of old age at Ephesus, perhaps about A.D. 98.

This is the third Sunday in a row that our scripture reading is from the first letter of John to the faithful. Linda shared with us what John had to say about living in the light versus darkness. Virginia shared that John was passionately devoted to the proclamation of truth versus the antichrist. Today we look at John as he is referred to as the "apostle of love" versus fear and hatred. John's gospel is strikingly different from Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They are referred to as the three synoptic gospels, which means "seen with the same eye".

John in his own gospel refers to himself as "the one whom Jesus loved". He is depicted as the one leaning against Jesus' breast at the last supper. His brief second epistle is filled with expressions of his deep love for those in his care. He addresses his first epistle to a group of believers whom I love in the truth and exhorts them to "love one another" by walking in obedience to Jesus' commands.

So what are some of the things we can take away from John 4:7-21?

"Let Us Love One Another"

The church father, Jerome, said that when the apostle John was in his extreme old age, he was so weak that he had to be carried into the church meetings. At the end of

the meeting he would be helped to his feet to give a word of exhortation to the church. Invariably, he would repeat. "Little children, let us love one another." The disciples began to grow weary of the same words every time and they finally asked him why he always said the same thing over and over. "Because it is the Lord's commandment, and if this only is done, it is enough."

"1 John 4:9-10 compared to John: 3:16"

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

1John4: 9-10 – 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.

It is believed that John writes these words for a later community of the faithful. It suggests that "eternal life" is not only life in the world to come, but that it is life in the present, through faith in Jesus Christ.

"We should love one another because God is love (4:7-8)"

Our culture uses the word "love" in many different ways:

"We love pizza, we love the mountains, we love our families. We love lots of things. We often think that love is a sentimental, syrupy feeling. Some scholars use the term Biblical love and define it as follows:

Biblical love is a caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved.

At its heart, biblical love is a caring commitment. It is not just an attitude or feeling, but an action: it shows itself in deeds.

So what does love look like, how can we continue to create love in our church, family, in our community, in our world?

We as a faith community already practice biblical love in many different ways. Look at

All the activities, projects, take place in our faith community. The following are some other examples of ways to share our love with others as we move forward in calling a settled pastor.

- Recognize that we may have different ideas of what love looks like, and respect that. Listening to one another helps to create love. So
- Be a good listener.
- Place others interests higher than our own and seek an understanding of those who are unfamiliar, dissimilar and / or unlike us. On our desk at home we have this quote from Wade Davis, an explorer in Residence at the National Geographic Society. "The world in which we were born is just one model of reality. Other Cultures are not failed attempts at being us. They are unique manifestations of the human spirit."
- Treat all people the way you want to be treated.

- Love, accept, welcome, ALL people.
- People working together without strife. People discussing problems with a willingness to give and take. Respect for others. Abundance for all to share.
- Treat everyone with respect and equality. Accept differences and celebrate individuality.
- Respect for each other's differences and ideas.
- Warmly embrace those with whom you disagree – and truly mean it.
- Seeing all people regardless of external factors as complex and worthy of love

Remember the Beatles song? All you need is love. Here are the lyrics.

Love, love, love
Love, love, love
Love, love, love

There's nothing you can do that can't be done
Nothing you can sing that can't be sung
Nothing you can say but you can learn how
To play the game.
It's easy
There's nothing you can make that can't be made.
No one you can save that can't be saved
Nothing you can do but you can learn to be you in time
It's easy
All you need is love
All you need is love

One writer shared what he calls the "Life lesson from John the Apostle:
Christ is the Savior who offers every person eternal life. If we follow Jesus, we are assured of forgiveness and salvation. As Christ loves us, we are to love others. God is love, and we, as Christians, are to be channels of God's love to our neighbors."

So in closing listen to the last verse of a Franciscan blessing (author anonymous)
Appropriate for our continuing journey of transition, discernment, and change.

May God bless you that you remember:
We are called to continue God's
Redemptive work
Of love and healing
In God's place, in and through God's name,
In God's spirit, continually creating
And breathing new life and grace
Into everything and everyone we touch. Amen