

Easter 6 B– May 6, 2018 - John 15:9-17
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This morning I am going to present you with a buffet of items related especially to the theme of our John Epistle and Gospel readings, which I hope will help you understand more clearly than before, that you are a child of God, that God loves you and cares for you, and wants only the best for your life, but he will still be there when you reject him, or walk down the wrong path, or even choose to live a life of destruction God so loved the world.

From a sermon titled "Called to Love, Not Like" esermos.com May 6, 2018

Christian men and women are not called to like everyone. The old camp song is titled "They Will Know We Are Christians By Our Love," and not, "They Will Know We Are Christians By Our Likes and Dislikes." If there are folks to whom you do not warm, know please that you are not in violation of any Christian norm. We are not called to like, but we are called -- and this is the burden of our text -- to love: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you," says Jesus.

Everything Else Will Follow by Scott Hoezee, comments and observations on John 15:9-17.

If you study the life and words and parables and sermons and actions of Jesus, you will find an eternity's worth of things you should do. But there was precisely just one thing which was so vital that Jesus actually went so far as to phrase it as a command, and that was to love each other. We are to love one another, cherish one another, even lay down our lives for one another if need be, and it is all an extension of being a branch on Jesus the true vine. Apparently Jesus knew that if we could do just this one commandment, everything else would follow. If you bring a child to an ice cream parlor, you won't need to start issuing rules which insist that the child order a cone, eat it, enjoy it, find it delicious, and so just generally have fun! Once the child gets to the parlor, the rest follows. So also with love: if we can't do this, nothing else will work, either. If we can, the rest follows.

When I was a grade 8 student in Junior High, I had an English teacher who introduced us to poetry, not only introduced us, but had a memorize over a dozen classics of American and English literature, including -

The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution We the people ...
 Lincoln's Gettysburg Address Four score and seven years ago...
 Invictus Out of the night that covers me ...
 and my favourite, Abou Ben Adhem, a poem by Leigh Hunt describes a man by
 the name of Abou Ben Adhem who had a dream.

*He awakened in the night, and there in his room was an angel of the Lord
 writing in a golden book.*

He said to the angel: "What writest thou?"

The angel answered: "...The names of those who love the Lord."

"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so," Replied the angel.

Abou spoke more low, But cheerily still, and said,

"I pray thee, then, write me as one that loves his fellow men."

*The angel wrote and vanished. The next night the angel appeared again but
 this time with a great wakening light, And showed the names of those whom
 God had blessed.*

And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!

When Adhem saw his name at the top of the list of those who love the Lord, he
 asked the angel what had happened. The angel said, "If we love not our brothers
 and sisters whom we have seen, how can we say we love God whom we have not
 seen?"

During one of my summers in high school, cruising around Washington D.C. after
 getting my driver's license at the age of 17, the Beatles were launching a new
 single. We were not given the name, but the radio station played a teaser every
 hour on the hour for over 3 weeks until the tune was released. The Teaser.

All you need is love, da da da da da , All you need is love, love, love is all you
 need

Love: Greater Than Faith or Hope Rev. Patricia de Jong, "Partners and Friends"

In a beautiful sermon entitled "The Power of Love," Paul Tillich, one of the great
 theological minds of the twentieth century, writes of a Swedish woman who aided
 prisoners and orphans during the first World War. She ended up in a concentration
 camp herself because she gave aid and comfort. Tillich writes, "It is a rare gift to
 meet a human being in whom love—this means God—is so overwhelmingly
 manifest. It undercuts theological arrogance as well as pious isolation. It is more
 than justice and greater than faith or hope. It is the very presence of God in the

form of a human being. For God is love. In every moment of genuine love we are dwelling in God and God in us."

I would have to say in my 27 years of Ordained Ministry, I have officiated in dozens of weddings, and the almost unanimous choice for one of the readings from the Bible, is I Corinthians 13 on Love. Listen again to these great words of the Apostle Paul, listen as if you are hearing them for the first time.

And now I will show you the most excellent way.

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal,

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing,

If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs, love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth, it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.

When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face.

Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

PRAYER - God of Love, we thank you that you have reached out to us through your Son Jesus Christ. Only love like your can forgive. Help us to believe in you and accept your forgiveness. Help us to live lives worthy of your love. AMEN.