

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Fifth Sunday of Easter — April 28, 2024

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

– 1 John 4:11 –

Love is a gift from God; without Him it is impossible for us to love. We love because God first loved us, and God calls us through His love to love others. Sure, nonbelievers love. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, love is strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties; attraction based on sexual desire; affection based on admiration, benevolence, or common interests. All human beings are capable of love.

There’s another definition of love, a more difficult kind of love. It is the unselfish, loyal, and benevolent concern for the good of another: as the fatherly concern of God for humankind or brotherly concern for others. It is especially difficult to love strangers and enemies. How do we do love those who do not love us back? We look to God. He loved us so much that He gave up His own Son. Now, He calls us to this sacrificial love. This love is impossible without God.

John writes, “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Jesus, the Son of God, suffered the humiliation of the cross, quietly died for our sake, paying the price for our sin. This is the Gospel message: that God so loved us that He sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him.

Love is sacrificing oneself for the sake of another; hate is sacrificing another for our own sake. If we think so highly of ourselves that we can ignore or reject the cries of our brothers and sisters, it is impossible for us to love God. God comes to us in and through the needs of others. We have the opportunity to love God by offering a drink to those who thirst. We love God by sharing our lunch with those who are hungry. The sick, imprisoned, unclothed, and homeless provide more opportunities for us to love God. We love God when we love them with our whole selves, our resources, and our actions. God’s love is not meant to be kept to ourselves, hidden from the world. He loved us with the most sacrificial love there is so that we will love our neighbors with unselfish, loyal, and benevolent concern for their own good.

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