

Dear Grace of Christ Family,
12/11/2020

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 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. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4.9-11)

We are drawing closer and closer to the Christmas. Each Sunday reminds us of how close we are getting. There are four Sundays prior to Christmas, the four Sundays of Advent. This Sunday is the 3rd Sunday of Advent. We have looked at HOPE and Peace the past two Sundays. As we gather together for Worship this week, either in person or across the internet, we will take a look at LOVE.

It is difficult to actually say how many times the word "love" is used in the Bible. It depends on which version of the Bible you use, and how you interpret the Hebrew or Greek. Some have said the word "love" appears 310 times in the King James Bible, 348 times in the New American Standard Bible, 551 times in the New International Version and 538 times in the New Revised Standard Version.

If you look up the word "love" in a dictionary, ideally you should only find the name "Jesus Christ". Unfortunately, the word "love" has been used for a variety of reasons. We may say we love baseball, and we love our mom and dad. Does that mean baseball and our mom and dad hold the same place in our heart? Not really. The true definition, or manifestation of "love" is found in the manger, in the person of Jesus.

As followers of Christ, we now have Jesus within us, and by definition, we then have "love" within us. We then are able to love God, because He first loved us. We are also to love others. We do so by being a living demonstration of "love", not according to any dictionary, but according to who we are in Christ.

So, during such unusual times, with only a few lefts before Christmas, let us show and offer the love of Christ to those we encounter, or those whom God puts on our heart. Send a note of encouragement. Call someone who could use some cheering up. Pray for those who are going through their first Christmas without a loved one. Gift a Starbucks gift card to someone you see on a street corner, holding a sign, and asking for help. Spend time with your family, or get them all together on Zoom. Be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Pay attention to what is right in front of you. Open your heart to someone in need.

Because of Christ, and in His Grace,

Pastor Bill