

2018 04 29 Scripture Reading

My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God is love—so you can't know Him if you don't love. This is how God showed His love for us: God sent His only Son into the world so we might live through Him. This is the kind of love we are talking about—not that we once upon a time loved God—but that He loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they've done to our relationship with God.

My dear, dear friends, if God loved us like this, we certainly ought to love each other. No one has seen God, ever. But if we love one another, God dwells deeply within us, and His love becomes complete in us—perfect love!

This is how we know we're living steadily and deeply in Him, and He in us: He's given us life from His life, from His very own Spirit. Also, we've seen for ourselves and continue to state openly that the Father sent His Son as Savior of the world. Everyone who confesses Jesus is God's Son participates continuously in an intimate relationship with God. We know it so well, we've embraced it heart and soul, this love that comes from God.

God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so we're free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ's. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love.

We, though, are going to love—love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. God loved us first. If anyone boasts, "I love God," and goes right on hating their brother or sister, thinking nothing of it, that person is a liar. If they won't love the person they can see, how can they love the God they can't see? The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You've got to love both.

1 John 4:7-21 (MSG)