

April 28, 2013

TIME OF REFLECTION

“There are two basic motivating forces: fear and love. When we are afraid, we pull back from life. When we are in love, we open to all that life has to offer with passion, excitement, and acceptance.”

~John Lennon (1940-1980)

“The people who heard Jesus’ disciples proclaiming the Good News were as impressed by what they saw as by what they heard. They saw lives that had been transformed—men and women who were ordinary in every way except for the fact that they seemed to have found the secret of living. They evinced a tranquility, simplicity, and cheerfulness that their hearers had nowhere else encountered...”

“The only power that can effect transformations of the order we have described is love...”

“God’s love is precisely what the first Christians did feel. They had experienced Jesus’ love and had become convinced that Jesus was God incarnate. Once that love reached them, it could not be stopped. Melting the barriers of fear, guilt, and self-centeredness, it poured through them like a torrential stream and heightened the love they had hitherto felt for others to the point where the difference in degree became a difference in kind. A new quality, Christian love, was born. Conventional love is evoked by lovable qualities in the beloved, but the love people encountered from Christ embraced sinners and outcasts, Samaritans and enemies. It gave, not prudentially in order to receive, but because giving was its nature.”

~Huston Smith (1919-present), Religious Studies scholar

“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.”

~A paraphrase of 1 John 4:10 by Eugene Peterson (*The Message*)

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “The Transforming Love of God”– *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *1 John 4:10-5:5 (NASB)*

¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. ¹³By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. ¹⁴We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world.

¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. ¹⁹We love, because He

first loved us. ²⁰If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Chapter 5

¹Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. ⁴For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

⁵Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?