

Creation Series—Sacred Earth: Sacred Work—Week 6 of 6

“Healing Relationships”

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August 26, 2018

The New Testament lesson is from 1 John 4: 7-21. *Bold letters are spoken by the congregation.* Dear friends, let’s love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and **knows God**. The person who doesn’t love does not know God, because **God is love**. This is how the love of God is revealed to us: God has sent God’s only Son into the world so that **we can live through him...**

Dear friends, if God loved us this way, we also ought to **love each other**. No one has ever seen God. If we love each other, God remains in us and God’s love is made perfect in us. This is how we know **we remain in God, and God remains in us**, because God has given us a measure of the Spirit.

We have seen and testify that God has sent the Son to be the savior of the world. If any of us confess that Jesus is God’s Son, **God remains in us, and we remain in God**. We have known and have **believed the love that God has for us**. God is love, and those who remain in love **remain in God, and God remains in them**. This is how love has been perfected in us, so that we can have confidence... because we are exactly the same as God is in this world. There is no fear in love,

but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love.

We love because **God first loved us**. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates a sibling, they are a liar, because the person who doesn’t love a sibling who can be seen can’t love God, who can’t be seen. This commandment we have from him:

Those who claim to love God ought to love their siblings also. This is a Word of God. **Thanks be to God.**

All creation is a word of God. **All creation speaks volumes of God.**

Please pray with me. Blessed God who creates us in his image to be transformed into who we are destined to become. When we feel alone move us out of isolation so we might turn to you and toward our brother and sister in the Lord. Move in us to work for wholeness in our lives. For you alone are the healer of all hurt, and the repairer of all brokenness. Amen.

The mind of the Apostle John is focused on God’s love—a lot—and in this passage John makes his point very clear. Since God sent his only son to die on the cross for our sin, we know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that God loves us. He proved it to us (Rom 5:8). Before we were even born, before we had done either good or bad, God sent his Son Jesus to die.

Nothing heals relationships like God’s love, and that’s what the human race needed—healing. Still, we struggle to forgive and love someone who has offended

us. We admit that without God loving us first we couldn't love him or each other, but still, we struggle. We justify excuses for our behavior. We choose to not forgive and if that's the case, God says his love doesn't live in us

If you don't love your sister or brother in the Lord you choose to not forgive. We might say, "I forgive them, but I don't want to be around them." That kind of love isn't God's love. That's conditional love—if you do this sister—then I'll love you. God's love is *unconditional*; it loves and receives no matter what. John writes that the only way that God's love remains in us is if we love one another. Fully accepting, all-embracing, supporting, and forgiving. How many times?

Real love can only come from God. So, we release the hurt, the loss, the anger, and we agree with God. We confess our unforgiveness. It feels uncomfortable; it can hurt, but it's our greatest commandment to love God with all we have and to love each other. It's then we know and can rejoice, that God's love lives in us. This is how we love ourselves—by loving each other. And there is no other way to live a transformational life except through loving each other.

That's the only way to prove to the world and each other that love doesn't come from us; it comes from God who loved us first. That's how we live through Him. People will let you down. They'll disappoint you, but never lets us down. He keeps his promises, never makes mistakes, and always blesses. God's love isn't sporadic—it's constant. When everyone and everything is going haywire in the

world, God is not. God's love for you never changes and that's how God defines love—by himself!

Verse 16 tells us that the love of God, living and remaining in us drives away our fear. So you want peace? Love the way God loves and expect nothing in return. God loves us because God chooses to love us. It's who God is and that's who we should strive to be. If we truly want peace and joy without fear, only the love of God in us can give us that.

God's love is transformational within us. It's believing that God loves us no matter what we've done, where we've been, or how hateful and angry our hearts may be. The best part is that God never ever gives up on us. He wants the best for us, so he'll constantly be teaching us how to love and forgive. Fact is, no matter what, God is in love with us and nothing can take that love away.

Our focus is first to love God and what naturally follows is that we love each other. When we allow God's love to heal us it's out of that healing that comes the ability to begin to love others the way God loves. So relax. Stay in the presence of God's abiding love and you will be transformed.

So what's so great about being transformed? This is where fear runs away from you because God's perfect love lives in you. You're free. So if that's where you want to be in life, free, joyful, and at peace—this is where you begin. Love God and love others with God's love. Please pray with me.

God of love, strengthen us inwardly by your Spirit because we're exactly the same as God is in this world when others experience your love. The world sees our unconditional love for them and they see God. Plant us deeply in your love as we petition you to transform us by the love of Christ. Show us the broad dimensions and fullness of your love. Demonstrate to us God, once again, that you're able to do, exceedingly, abundantly, above all, more than we could ever ask or think. Nothing is too hard for you. Let it be so God. Let it be so. Amen.