

So everything Jesus did was love. Being born in poverty was love. Being a refuge was love. Being hated was love. Being crucified was love in action.

I like this definition of love from one of Paul's letters; "Do what is best for the other person, that it benefits them according to their needs and you pay the bill." (Eph. 4:29) That's my paraphrase.

If I don't find myself living the way Jesus describes, then I need to go back to the source of my love; that's Dad. I need to sit down and talk with him, inviting Jesus to send the Spirit to enlighten me, to motivate me, to lead me to repentance – that simply means

change me to live to the beat of his heart. I want to be living to the rhythm of Jesus' grace.

Today, believe Father. You have a wonderful new nature. In Jesus you are love. Today, invite the Spirit to grow you, to mature you, so that you live true to who you are. Invite the Spirit to open your eyes that you see Jesus more clearly, that you might step out and do as Jesus does.

Today invite Jesus to send the Spirit to grow you, to mature you. Ask him what he wants to work on. Then ask him to lead you, grab the first thought that comes to your mind, and have a go. That's called living by faith, and Jesus loves it.

Today ask Jesus to send the Spirit to grow you in your new loving nature that he has birthed in you. Ask, take the first thought, and go with it. Why wouldn't it be Jesus, you just asked him!

16 December 2018

## LOVE Advent 3



Last week I finished with a thought that really surprised me when I wrote it down. I think it was one of those God things, where God revealed an amazing truth in a way I'd never thought of it before; God is love, that's his nature. That's why God loves, it's simply who he is. That's not the surprising part.

The surprising part is that if I'm, through baptism, united with Jesus, recreated in Jesus, given a new heart, Jesus' heart, through baptism, then God's love is my new nature. In Jesus, God's heart of love, beats within me. I have a new heart, so I now can love for no other reason than that's my new nature. That's the thought that surprised me. Did it surprise you?

In Jesus, the reality is that you are not a poor miserable sinner who deserves punishment in time and eternity. In Jesus, God has rebirthed you, his child, with his heart, so that I can now say your new nature is love. God is love, in Jesus, you are love.

Try that on for size; instead of using the word God replace it with your own name and see how that feels. God is love. Tim is love. Put your name there and say it out aloud; how did that feel?

When I said it, I must admit it felt weird, like almost not true. Of course that's what the devil would want you to believe.

What happened straight after Jesus' baptism? The devil

came seeking to get Jesus to doubt what he clearly heard his Father say at his baptism.

The Father clearly said; 'You are my loved son, in whom I delight'. And the Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove. Jesus' identity was clearly declared, clearly proclaimed. Jesus, without a shadow of doubt was declared to be Father's loved son.

And straight away the devil comes to sow doubt. Just like he did with Adam and Eve; 'Did God really say that'? The devil loves to sow doubt.

He comes straight to Jesus and says; "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread." In other words; prove it.

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### Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am  
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

In other words, you can't trust what Father says.

Was there any wavering in Father's voice? No. Was there any fine print? No. Clearly, simply, for all to hear, Father said; 'You are chosen and marked by my love, the delight of my life'. What a beautiful truth.

Do you believe it? For in baptism Jesus unites us with himself. In baptism God, the Father, makes a covenant with you. That's more than a promise. That's a promise backed by a vow. That means you can hold him accountable; he's backed this promise with his own life. Guaranteed! That's the whole point of the Holy Spirit; God is guaranteeing his word; he's already come to share his life with us in person. Do you believe it?

I'm sure the devil is whispering; 'If you

are God's loved child, why do you make mistakes.' 'If your new nature is love, why do you act unloving at times.' 'If God is your Father, why does he allow you to suffer'. All thoughts designed to sow the seed of doubt. What 'if' statements has the devil used on you?

Live true to who you are.

Don't believe them. He's a liar.

Does my life display at times that I've got some maturing to do? Sure does, and in Jesus, that's what will happen. Does my life display unloving actions at times? Sure does, and the Spirit continually reminds me that that's not who I am. I've got some maturing to do as I seek to live true to who I am.

Have you notice that children are born with amazing gifts and talents; but they need time to grow and mature in those God given gifts and talents. We don't ride them off just because they made a mistake. That's also part of the growing, maturing of a person's character.

Notice I don't create it, it's a gift. I couldn't create God's character. For no other reason than left to myself I've got no

idea who God is let alone what his character is like.

If you don't believe me, just look around the world, and how many have come close to describing the relationship we see lived out between Jesus and Father?

I hear lots of people telling me to work hard. If I work hard then I'll succeed, then I'll be a success. Whatever that means. Some even

tell me I've got to do this repeatedly, till I get it right. That sounds rather hellish and confusing to me. If I've got to keep going around till I succeed then who am I; I was a cabbage, followed by a cockroach, followed by a cow, followed by a butcher, which was naughty so I went back to being a cabbage. Does anyone know how to be a successful cabbage?

Sadly, humanity left to their own devises, simply has no idea about who God is let alone knowing him personally.

Thank God, he came to us personally. His personal name is Jesus, born my brother. Born that I might not only know there is a God, but that I might share life with him personally in a wonderful conversational relationship of love and affection.

That's God's master plan in Jesus. He plans to bring everything together in Jesus, that we might live with him under his smile, so that we take on the beauty of his smile in Jesus.

At your baptism, seeing you were baptised into Jesus, God the Father said;

In Jesus, You are love!!!

'You are my child, chosen and marked by my love, the delight of my life.' At the same time the Spirit, that's God in person, came down to live with you. That is who you are, without a shadow of doubt.

The exciting thing is that now, together with the Spirit, you get to grow and mature, discovering more and more of you true nature. Jesus has given you

his nature, in him you are love.

Don't confuse love with mere sentimentality. Love isn't that weird feeling you might get at times. You're more than a feeling. Sure love involves feelings, why else do we have feelings, if it wasn't that God

wants us to know in our heart and soul his love. He wants us to experience the reality of his love, that's why you're

blessed with emotions.

Actually left to our own devises I don't know that we actually know what love really is, let alone live it. Left to myself I'd sadly have to admit that my idea of love revolves around me getting what I want, it's about me feeling happy, about me receiving good vibrations from another.

Jesus lives out love, because he is love.