

REFLECTIONS



MAY 16, 2021

CHILDREN BORN BY LIGHT AND LOVE

by
Norm Wright

During this Easter Season, we have reflected on the First Letter of John. On this last Sunday of the Easter Season we reflect on a few of the insights John's letter offers regarding God and what it means to be a child of God.

GOD IS LIGHT [1 John 1:5]

The resurrection of Jesus was not only a reset of creation according to God's original script of love, but it was a reset of our understanding of God. God is light is more than a metaphorical reference to God being like light, but rather that God is consistently active in creating life and sustaining life. Physically speaking, we would not exist long without light; as such, we would not exist at all without God. Spiritually speaking, light enlightens our understanding. Ever since we humans have pursued knowing the difference between good and evil and attempting to be gods unto ourselves, our attention has been drawn towards the shadowy, dark side of such knowledge; drawn to what we fear in ourselves and what we see in others. The light of God, however, bestows wisdom granting us discerning insight into the knowledge we possess.

GOD IS LOVE [1John 4:8]

God's love for the world, a love displayed through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, is immeasurable. Why God loves us so much is hard to fathom, but the experience of it leads us to understand that God is love. Love is God's nature. Just as God is always life-giving, God is also constantly loving. It is love that nurtures life in all of its shapes and forms. It is love that gives our lives meaning and direction. It has always been God's intent that we who are created in the image of God to be as loving as God is loving and to return God's love by loving and caring for that which God loves.

CHILDREN OF GOD [1 John 3:2]

Love does not exist in a vacuum. God's love requires love returned. That is why we are here. That is why we are made in the image of God. Since Adam and Eve were made the first children of God, all of their descendants are children of God, made in the image of God. This central truth of our existence was re-introduced to those of us who follow Jesus. As a result of Jesus' forgiveness of all while a victim of human injustice, Jesus was raised to new life, the first fruit of a new creation. Just as we proceeded from our first parents as God's children, all of God's children are raised to new life in Christ Jesus.

LOVE IN ACTION [1John 3:18]

Love is more than a sentiment and an ideological belief. Love is meant to be an act of faith and put into action. Jesus commands us to love one another as he loves us. Such love requires that we are willing to put our own agendas aside for the sake of those in need of love's nourishment. We cannot merely say we love, we must actively love. We must be willing to let love guide us in our daily activities. Love in action casts out fear and puts aside hatred, giving us the ability to continue with Jesus' healing ministry on earth; to forgive, to redeem, and to restore in tangible and meaningful ways.

PURE LOVE COVERS ALL [1 John 5:4]

In last Sunday's reflection, I inserted a verse from Peter's first letter to mitigate the language of conquest. The somewhat militant language as if we're at war is understandable given the nature of our bellicose world, but I find it distracting from the overall perspective of scripture. Overriding the "either this or that" language found in our scriptures is a sense that all is in God; that "there is no darkness in God at all" [1John 1:5 that both day and night are alike in God's view [Psalm 139:12]. Where God is concerned, all is light and all is loved; all is covered by the purity of God's love. The problem we face is living in a world that has yet to embrace this truth.

* * * * *

Reflecting on the first letter of John reveals that God journeys with us; helping us navigate through the world of our making. In the teachings and redeeming actions of Jesus we are graced with a new understanding, a new vision, that all of God creation is covered by the love of God. It is God's love that brought us into being and will see us through this life until we find ourselves in the presence of that light which gave us life and that love which has nurtured us to new life in Christ. That is our hope and that is our faith.

Amen