

1 John 4:7-8 (KJV)

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

For God is love. For God is an unselfish, giving, self-sacrificing love, agape.

As I have said many times and will repeat myself many times, we Christians are the only people whose Supreme Deity is love.

But with that fact comes a great responsibility. We are commanded to love God, then we are commanded to love each other. Then, if that weren't bad enough we are commanded to love each other as Jesus loved us, as God loves us.

You might think that is an easy task but think about is really hard. That means we have to love God and each other all the time with no breaks, no time off... day in and day out, week after week, year after year.

That is what separates Christians from the world, love. You know they are Christians by their love.

We heard this morning in the Gospel what happens when love breaks down. We had a rich man who lived well, very well and we have the beggar who had nothing but his disease and who camped out at the door of the rich man. The rich man must have had to step over him every time he left the house or came back. He must have had to totally ignore this "thing" that made his life inconvenient.

As Father Abraham told the rich man later as he was in Hell and tormented, **Luke 16:25 (KJV)**
Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Love had broken down. The rich man forgot the commandment to love his neighbor as himself.... He loved himself more than his neighbor.

Today we are in the beginning of Trinity Season, the long green season and as I was reminded by a letter from Father Nick Henderson what Kermit the Frog said, "It isn't easy being green." It isn't easy to go through the long green season of Trinity.

Trinitytide is the time where we look at our day-to-day lives as Christians. It is the time when we face the mundane, the ordinary, and the sometimes boring aspects of being a Christian. It is the time when there are few great feasts. There is just a long path on our journey with God where we have to face the worst of our temptations, ourselves; just our ordinary, ornery selves.

This is where the journey becomes difficult. There are few mountaintops and a lot of flat, boring straight and narrow stretches ahead of us. The side paths are tempting to take and the shoulders of the road are rocky and fall off steeply. All we can do is plod on and plod on.

But it isn't all that bad. But it can be if we make it so.

God doesn't call to feats of greatness. He calls us to love.

God doesn't call us to become wealthy and powerful, rather he calls us to look after those that are less fortunate.

We all have a social responsibility to each other, but Christians are called to even a higher standard of life, one that is self-sacrificing.

C. S. Lewis tells us if what we give doesn't hamper getting what we want, then we are not giving enough. If we are living better than those that are in the same income level, we are giving to little.

That sure is not what we hear today is it? The world says to accumulate. The economists say to spend our way out of this depression because personal spending is what drives our economy not production. What is wrong with this picture? Doesn't it sound just like what got us into this depression?

One thing for sure, it is not the Christian thing to do.

We are called to be simple, peculiar folk, not spending what we do not have. We are called to give, in love, to others that are in need both in time and with our purses.

If that makes us look like Mennonites, so be it, there is nothing wrong with that.

Remember if someone can't tell if we are Christians by the way we live then we are not doing what we are supposed to be doing.

1 John 4:11-15 (KJV) *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*

Amen.