



Daily Devotionals

[click here to go to website – stmatthewsrichmond.org](http://stmatthewsrichmond.org)

1 JOHN 4:7-12 BEING AND DOING LOVE

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Where in the world are people to meet God in this life? St. John's answer is in the Church. In his Gospel he has recorded Jesus as telling the Disciples that the world will come to know that they are his disciples because they love one another (John 13:35). The simple logic is that since a disciple does what his master does, when the world comes to know Jesus' followers by their love for one another they also come to know Jesus because that is the love that Jesus has for them (John 13:34). Likewise, St. Paul in speaking of the Church as the Body of Christ speaks about the unity of the Church being based on love among its members (Ephesians 4 and 5). In that letter he gives the magnificent command:

¹ Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:1-2).

We can love because we have been loved. The character and quality of our love is predicated on the love that we have received. Where the love of the world is given from its excess, the love of God is given from his essence. It is noble for a man to be willing to give one of his several sons for a cause in which he believes, but it is the divine love that is exhibited by God when he gives his only Son, the begotten One of the eternal Trinity whom he has always loved and by whom he has always been loved. On the human scale it is the trusting love for God that Abraham exhibited when he took Isaac, the promised and long awaited only son born by his wife Sarah, and was willing to sacrifice on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22). But where Abraham is willing to give Isaac because of his faith in God, God gave his Son in order to reconcile sinners to himself so that they might have eternal life.

This is the love we are to imitate among one another in the Church. The reason is simple. How else can the people who do not believe in God see the essence of God in their midst? If we talk about God as being love and then the only love they see among us is the self-serving, conditional and exploitive love of the world, then they have no reason to take us seriously. The Church's speech about love is to be articulated by what we do and explained by what we say.

Father, you created me in your image and have revealed yourself to be the eternal Trinity of love. Yet, I seem incapable of loving others, even those closest to me, with the love that you have demonstrated for me. Forgive me for trivializing your divine love by only giving from self-interest. Recreate me so that I might love with a self-giving rather than a self-gaining love. Especially regenerate my relationships within my church so that those who do not know you might come to see your awesome nature through the life of our community. Amen.

Chuck+