

1. October 2025

To abide in God

1 Jn 4:7-16

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Love is the central theme of our lives and is clearly emphasised by John. He is right, because without love, even the good gifts of the Spirit are like a noisy bell.

Much is said and written about love, and many images are produced, yet one gets the impression of living in an increasingly loveless world. It is not uncommon for even the basic conditions of human existence to no longer be taken for granted, namely that every child who is born will be welcomed by their family and the wider human family. In the worst case, the new citizen of the world is even denied entry into life. Much of what is called love does not deserve this beautiful name. Often it is passions that are focused on one's own experience. There are distortions of love to the highest degree, and the view of true love often remains blocked.

We know what this is connected with, and today's text also gives us an answer to this. In Luke 18:8, Jesus asks His disciples whether He will still find faith when He returns. Jesus could just as well have asked whether He would still find love. Our answer would probably have had to be: Little, Lord, too little!

We recognise that love and faith belong together, for John makes it clear: *“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through him”* and further: In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins.

Faith in the Lord allows us to recognise where true love comes from and who love itself is. In faith, we understand that we are loved by God first and that our entire existence is based on the love of our heavenly Father. This is a very far-reaching insight that helps us even when our concrete path in life has been marked by little or almost no love. Thus, faith and love are – or at least should be – in the closest union. We can easily see how strange it would be if people believed on the one side and yet remained hard-hearted on the other one. The question then easily arises as to whether such faith is true! John would probably say: The two cannot go together!

He insists that the fact that God loves us gives rise to the innermost obligation to love one another and thus follows the logic of love. For him, it is the sign that God dwells in us and remains with us. This is understandable, for where hatred, envy, slander and other ‘fruits of the flesh’ reign, our Father and His angels are not at home.

But God has given us His Spirit, the Spirit of love and truth, so that the ‘heart of stone’ may be removed from our breasts and we may begin to love as God loves, thus awakening to true love for people – especially for our brothers and sisters.

We know very well that for the Kingdom of God on earth, for which we pray daily, an authentic encounter with Jesus as the Saviour of the world is necessary, who calls us to convert our lives. To believe that this kingdom (or the kingdom of peace) could be established solely through human goodwill is a grave illusion. History, with all its aberrations, has already shown this to be true. But even in the religious sphere, it is an illusion to believe that a humane, fraternal world can be established without an encounter with the Lord and the corresponding conversion of life and obedience to God's commandments.

If we could construct a peaceful world without redemption the Saviour would not have needed to come!

Let us rather hold fast to the words of the text: *“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”* Then we will live in truth!

Meditation on the day's Gospel: <https://en.elijamission.net/spiritual-childhood/>