

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

June 17, 2020

Psalm 103:1-13

Of David.

- 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.*
- 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits—*
- 3 who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,*
- 4 who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and
mercy,*
- 5 who satisfies you with good as long as you
live
so that your youth is renewed like the
eagle's.*
- 6 The Lord works vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.*
- 7 He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel.*
- 8 The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast
love.*
- 9 He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.*
- 10 He does not deal with us according to
our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.*
- 11 For as the heavens are high above the
earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those
who fear him;*
- 12 as far as the east is from the west,*

*so far he removes our transgressions
from us.*

- 13 As a father has compassion for his
children,
so the Lord has compassion for those who
fear him.*



Meditation

Read 1 John 4:7-21.

“And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.” (1 Cor. 13:13)

Love is a word with many nuances of meaning. We can love chocolate, we can love a dog or a cat, we can love a new car, we can love a wife or husband, we can love God. All are similar, but all are different. So what does love mean in scripture?

God's heart and character define love, for God's essential nature is love (1 John 4:7-8). God is the ultimate measure of love. We don't describe love in human terms, and then see how God measures up. It's the other way around. When we understand the nature of God's love, we can see how our human attempts to love measure up or fall short.

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Love God.

(Continued from page 1)

The meaning of love is found in God's actions toward us in Jesus Christ (1 John 4:10). God's love is self-giving, for he opens himself to us in the person of his Son, Jesus. In Jesus' life we see what God is really like. God's love doesn't focus on God's emotional needs or God's self-satisfaction, it focuses on our greatest good. God's love is sacrificial, for Jesus gave his life for our sake on the cross. God's love accepts us just as we are, without judgment, for Christ died for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). God's love comforts us and challenges us, protects us and asks us to take risks, and calls us to live by the truth even when truth may be painful to us.

We learn to love God and others by experiencing God's love in our own lives (4:19). Love is caught rather than taught. When God accepts us as we are we learn to accept others in the same way. When we comprehend Jesus' sacrifice for us we find reason to sacrifice for others. When we understand that Jesus put our needs ahead of his own life we begin to see things from another person's perspective, and put their needs ahead of ours. Our experience of God's love transforms us, and shows us how to love others as God loves us.

Godly love is about action, not feeling (1 John 4:9-12). It's much easier to love someone if we form a positive emotional connection with them, but it's not essential. Jesus tells us that we should love even our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matt. 5:44). Love is reaching out to do what is truly best for others in spite of our own feelings, or our own need to be needed. What we do matters more than what we feel.

If we really love God, we love our sisters and brothers as well (1 John 4:20). The truest test of our love for God is our love for our fellow human beings. To love others is to listen for their unspoken words so that we may hear their hearts. It's to try, in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, to put ourselves in their place. Once we begin to understand their hearts, we begin to learn to set aside our own needs so that we may consider theirs. To love others is to be willing

to risk, even sacrifice, for their sake. It's to seek their highest good, realizing that there may be times when we need to speak the truth in love. It's not to do *for* them (or *to* them), it's to walk *with* them on their journey. It's to work with them for peace with justice for themselves and others in our society. It's to treat others in the same way Jesus treats us.

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love." (1 John 4:7-8)

—Pastor Rick



Prayer

Lord God, your nature and your name is love. Grant us grace, that we may experience your love day by day. Fill us anew with your Holy Spirit, that we may love others as you have loved us. Help us to express the real meaning love in our hearts and through our lives.

We pray for our nation and our world in difficult times. Heal us Lord, of deadly diseases, both the diseases of the body and the diseases of the soul. Heal all who suffer from COVID-19, and comfort those who have lost loved ones. Heal the racism and violence that infect our lives and our nation, and teach us to work for true peace with justice in our world. May your love reign in all things, in all places, and at all times; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Love your neighbor.

Crisis Hotlines and Helplines

During these trying times, it's good to be aware of some of the positive resources available in our community. Many people are under extraordinary stress because of the current situation. Please feel free to share this information with others as you feel appropriate.

CONTACT Helpline: (800) 932-4616

Wellspan Behavioral Health Helpline (Philhaven):
(800) 932-0359

TrueNorth Crisis Line: (866) 325-0339

Substance Abuse Hotline: (800) 662-4357

Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-7233

Adams-Hanover Crisis Information Referral Hotline:
(717) 632-4900

GUMC's On-Line E-giving Service

We are excited to announce that we have added a significant easy-to-use on-line giving tool. The E-giving tool is accessible through a link from our webpage at www.gettysburg.org or can be downloaded as an app for your smart phone. It offers you a quick and secure way to offer your stewardship gifts to a variety of GUMC ministry programs (General Fund, Mission Can, Building Fund, Memorial) either on a one-time or recurring basis. You can donate by using your credit card, checking account or savings account. You can access the service from your home computer, or you can download the e-giving app to your smart phone (more info on our website). This service may be especially useful while we are "staying at home" during the Covid-19 crisis, saving you postage and using your paper checks.

If you have any questions concerning our new E-giving program, feel free to contact Cindy Tousiant, Church Treasurer or Bob Berkey, Chair of the Finance Committee.



Roof Update

Roof repairs were finished on Friday of last week! We are so thankful that these much-needed repairs have been accomplished through your generous support!

Church Woman United Cancelled

We've been asked to inform you that the Church Women United Meeting & Luncheon scheduled for Wednesday, July 1, at the Gettysburg Church of the Brethren has been cancelled.

Worship Services Resumed

June 14

Our regular Sunday Worship Services resumed last Sunday (June 14) at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary. In order to ensure the safety of all who attend, special guidelines have to be followed. The guidelines are available on our website. Each person and family should prayerfully make their own decision about attending at this time. We support and respect whatever choice you make.

Our modified online worship services will continue to be available on Facebook every Sunday. The sermon for the online service will be the same as the sermon that will be preached in the Sunday morning Sanctuary service.

Sunday School is not yet reopening.

HYMN

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Charles Wesley, John Zundel

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling;
all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation;
enter every trembling heart.

2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit;
let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.

3. Come, Almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

4. Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Charles Wesley was born in 1707 in Epworth, England. With his older brother, John Wesley, he founded the Methodist movement. He was educated at Oxford and ordained a priest in the Church of England. Renowned as a preacher, he traveled throughout England spreading the gospel until he was married and settled down in Bristol. During his lifetime he wrote over 6,500 hymns, and is considered one of the greatest hymn writers in the English language. John Zundel was born in Hochdorf, Germany, in 1815. He came to the United States in 1847, and served as organist at several churches in the New York City area including the Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn, whose pastor was Henry Ward Beecher. He died in 1882.

Wesley wrote the words to this hymn in 1747. It reflects the Wesley brothers' strong emphasis on entire sanctification (or Christian perfection), which is "a state of perfect love, righteousness and true holiness which every believer may obtain by being delivered from the power of sin, by loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and by loving one's neighbor as one's self." (from the *Confession of Faith*, Article XI, 2016 UMC *Discipline*, p. 75) The tune was written in 1870 to be used with this hymn. It may be found as No. 384 in *The United Methodist Hymnal*.

We greatly appreciate your continued faithful donations to GUMC during this time of change and crisis. Your faithfulness has enabled us to continue to pay all of our expenses, and we are very grateful for your continued generosity.

Sunday worship video services are uploaded to our GUMC Facebook page every week. You don't have to be a member of Facebook to view them. If you have any trouble watching our services, feel free to call Larry Speer at 717 642-6123 (H) or 717 387-3577 (M).

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