**“Love as God”**

#

Psalm 98

Acts 10:34-48

1 John 5:1-8

John 15:9-17

 Easter 6

Jesus said: “As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his **friends**.”

Christ **is** risen! He is **risen, indeed!** Alleluia! Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

1a

The origin of the expression: “having a face only a mother could love” is unclear. There’s an obscure 1976 film that used the term toward the end (and claims origination), but the Greek mythology of Medusa (with her hair of snakes) is suggested to have brought the idea forward.

It’s not a compliment … except **to the mother who looks beyond everything** **to** **love what others apparently can’t or won’t**. **I** might “resemble that remark” on some levels, so appreciate my mom overlooking (out of love) most of my flaws. She loves me **motherly** **as I am**. I doubt she “**likes**” me all the time, but what I do know (because **she’s my mother and that carries with it this reality**): “she does **love** me … and (for the most part) **no matter what**” …

… which **expresses** quite a bit of the point of the texts for this weekend. Without too much stretch, we (without exception) have faces only **God** could **love purely**. Mothers of each one of us stand (no doubt) **close to that by their nature**, but **God’s love for all of us** **in spite of the “us” that we all are**, **THAT** has **no real equal**.

I skipped over commenting more (last week) on the account of the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading and wondering about Isaiah’s 53rd chapter. Reading the section “like a sheep He was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opens not His mouth. In His humiliation justice was denied Him. Who can describe His generation? For His life is taken away from the earth.” “And the eunuch asked Philip, ‘About **whom** does the prophet say this, about himself or about **someone else’**?” The answer was mostly the “**Someone Else**” of the Son of God, and I (along with how Philip did it) want to spend a little more time (this weekend) talking about that.

See, I picture my mom **giving her life for me**. I can easily imagine a scenario where, given the choice of my life or hers, she’d (without hesitating) die so that I can live. My mom (I have no doubt) would do that without even having to think about it. **Your mom would die for you**. Given that choice, I have almost not an ounce of doubt that every one of **your moms** would (without batting an eye) donate her life so that you can keep yours.

That next weekend Mother’s Day acknowledgment gets sullied only by the **absolute extreme abuse and abomination of an abortion**. What makes the **abortive act** so much the breakage of the **5th Commandment (on steroids one could say)** is the fact that **it’s against (completely) the selflessness and natural nurture of motherly love**. A mother of **any species** would **STAND BETWEEN** death and her children … you don’t mess with a mother with young … and **human mothers can’t choose the inhumanity of** **offering up her own child for death without something being seriously wrong in the cosmos**. “**Greater love** has no one than this, that **someone lays down his life for his friends**,” and motherly love **naturally befriends her children**. **Jesus (the “Someone Else” of the eunuch’s inquiry) befriended EVERYBODY in THAT WAY**.

If Mother’s Day is a time to **honor motherly love in women** (which **abhors contradictions to that as more obviously OFF and UGLY than much of anything else could be**), then what is the day where we **honor the sacrificial and well-beyond our nature (but natural love of God for everybody in Christ Jesus), because “AS the Father has loved Me, SO have I loved you. So, just, Abide in My love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be full.”**

2

There’s a **command** in this text (a **second part of this** **tremendous Gospel** that’s demanded to be, at least in some semblance, **like the first**). Jesus **wants His joy in us that “our joy may be full”**, and that “fullness” reflect from us a **minimally motherly loving “of ONE ANOTHER AS Christ has loved us”**. “**Friends**” Jesus called **enemies even**. He loved (each one, who even hated Him) by **laying down His life for them … each** and **all** …

… and it’s for **that fact** that I am absolutely floored by the hardest thing that I know the Lord Jesus will have to do in His future: to judge and condemn **“friends” of His**. **There will be those (He says)** on Judgment Day, where He will have to remain after He’s ushered believers up to Heaven to say a final “Goodbye”, then, to people He was willing to (and did) “lay down His life for”. He **LOVED** (in a motherly-and-well-beyond-way) the **world** all the way **to death**. He followed through with a **natural expression for Him** by having to (within 24 hours of when He spoke about this “greatest love”) **SHOW IT** by allowing Himself to be arrested, unjustly tried, whipped, then nailed to a cross for an excruciating execution **out of love for “friends” that He calls “even the ones hammering the nails”**: “Father, **forgive them**” He said while it was happening. And the **faces** of Roman soldiers and Pharisees and Sadducees and mocking criminals also dying and deriders watching as well as those not even bothering to come watch … **faces** **“only a mother could love” …** were **loved by that “Someone Else” (Another who’d befriended them more than they could ever imagine)**. Then **we’re** called to **love LIKEWISE**, out of “**His joy**” which we’re given to “**ABIDE (AND LIVE) IN**” … such that “**our joy, also, might be full**”. It was **Jesus’** “**JOY**” to love as that “**FRIEND**”. What a **FRIEND** we have in **Him**.

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It seems to me that fulfilling this charge starts with correct and proper **eyesight**. “A **face that only a mother could love**” is a matter, solely, of a mother’s **vision**. The **eyes** by which mom **sees children** hints at (but just hints at) the **eyes by which the Lord God sees sinners helpless as struggling babes to save themselves**. And He only hopes at their response yet **LOVES IN SPITE OF IT (as mothers so often do)**. **We must see even enemies as “friends”**, **that (by itself)** ought to make **loving** more naturally Good and useful and joy-filled for us.

Returning to last week’s account of Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch, he was called into a situation to **see a foreigner as a “friend”**. Philip (it says) **“ran to him and heard him”, then** **asked (concerned for him) “Do you understand what you are reading?”** Forever, for this traveler, there would be the memory of his eyes opened to Jesus’ sacrificial love for Him upon a cross (which the Isaiah text proclaimed of) … but also to a man (who he may never have gotten the name of) **taking the time with him**, **SEEING him**, so **NOTICING AS A FRIEND WOULD** **NOTICE HIM**, **giving him time (as if, for the time, his attention was all his)**. Part of what the Ethiopian eunuch would remember is the gracious way a stranger (yet brother) **saw him**.

1b

**I enjoy the way I look through my mother’s eyes**. And, with that as just a **hint**: **I LOVE the way that I look through God’s eyes**. In +Jesus’ name. Amen.