

Second Sunday of Advent

December 6th 2020

Children's Message:

This morning as we would have lit the second Advent candle, we are to think about love and Joseph, Mary and the Baby Jesus. As I was thinking about this topic, Joseph came to my mind. The more I thought about him the more I realized that Joseph was a man of deep and strong love. He loved his girlfriend Mary even when she was pregnant. The baby that was inside of her was not even his but the Holy Spirit's. Yet in all this confusion and craziness, Joseph continued to love Mary. Joseph took her at her word and trusted that she was telling him the truth. Joseph could have sent her home and found a new girlfriend, but he did not because he truly loved Mary.

Joseph also protected Mary from gossip and shame. Joseph loved Mary so much that he took her to meet his family in Bethlehem. Joseph's sisters, aunts and mother most likely helped Mary to deliver the Baby Jesus in the manger. Out of a deep love for Mary and the Baby Jesus, Joseph protected them from harm and went into Egypt. The more I reflected on the story of the birth of Jesus and the trip into Egypt the more I understood Joseph as a man of strong character and love. He encourages us to love strongly to trust and be dedicated to our families.

Take another look at Joseph and tell me if you changed your mind about him? I certainly did.

Adults Message:

This Sunday as we would have lit the second Advent candle, we should focus, reflect and pray about love. Mostly we reflect on God's love for us. Remember that we are His children created in His image. We are created out of an act of love and we were created to love. We are to reflect that divine love in us, back out into our world. Love is that powerful creative force in the universe. Hate and evil cannot overcome love. It has its root in God and His creative energy and essence.

This season is the time of love. When we reflect on God's love for us. When we are to put aside our animosities and love even our enemies. This is the time when we go beyond ourselves and perform random acts of kindness. To let God's grace flow to those around us. This may look like sending out Christmas cards and greetings, sending an e-mail or reaching out by phone. This year our love has to be safe and creative.

When it comes to understanding God and love, 1 John is the epistle to go to. In 1 John 4:7-9, he tells us to love and that love is synonymous with God. 4:7, "Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone 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 manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." This is not so much a description of His relationship to us as our Father. It is a call for us to love and follow the example that was set for us. John later breaks down the incarnation as an act of sacrificial love for humanity. We find the call and challenge to love in verse 11. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." John challenges us to be God like

in how we love. Did you notice that most of the quotes started off by calling us beloved? This is all grace at work and John tells us so in verse 19. “We love Him because He first loved us”. God was the one that started this, not us. We did not ask for it. This was an undeserved and unexpected gift.

I remember having a liturgy at the local Catholic High School years ago. There were about 500 kids gathered in the gym. I preached on the topic of love. How God loves us and that it is a grace and that we are to love others. Much like this sermon this morning. After the service the principal came to me and told me that they had to remove two young couples. They were students that were making out in the bleachers. I saw everything and watched them being discreetly removed. The principal was very ashamed of their public expression of lust. Being cheeky, I told him that I felt that it was my sermon on love that may have set their behaviour in motion. That maybe they took my words to heart and put them into practice. I left him gobsmacked and speechless. It was beautiful. As I drove home, I thought this is the energy the world need, but directed and focused differently.

This Advent, please remember God’s love for us and why He sent an infant to redeem our world. We are encouraged to love our families more and in new ways and expression. Be an agent of Grace and make it flow to those around you. So do me a favour, Hug and kiss your man or missus and the kids when they least expect it. No need to say anything or to explain. Just let your actions speak for themselves. The energy may bring you back to High School. God Bless, Pastor.