

Love

Scripture Reading — 1 John 4:7-12

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

1 John 4:10 —

When you think about it, it makes sense that love is the first of the virtues listed in Galatians 5:22-23 as “the fruit of the Spirit.” The spiritual qualities that follow are further elaborations on the primary fruit of love. It’s no wonder that 1 Corinthians 13, which details the attributes of love, has much in common with the description of the fruit of the Spirit. When we read there that love is patient, kind, and rejoices with the truth (see 1 Corinthians 13:4, 6) we see how the virtues of patience, kindness, and joy are expressions of love in action.

Love is a word used in many different contexts and is easily misunderstood. Our basic problem as sinful people has to do with love. You might say we all have a terrible love life: we love the wrong things for the wrong reasons and in the wrong ways. Even our love for good things can often go wrong.

The only cure for our lovesick hearts is the pure love of God. That’s the love God has shown us in Jesus, his Son. God’s love for a fallen world is a love so powerful that it enables us to love God, others, and even ourselves rightly. It’s God’s love that is the foundation for our love, just as a branch’s capacity to bear fruit depends entirely on the vine. Only God’s love for people will make us loving people.

Prayer

Thank you, Father, for sending Jesus into the world. May your great love continue to change our hearts so that we will love others as you have loved us. Amen.

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Printed on July 17, 2019

