

Trinity 1
(2018)

I take as my text today, from the 5th Chapter of St. Paul's Letter to the Romans:

....we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation
worketh patience;

And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is
shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given
unto us.

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always
acceptable unto Thee, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.”

The passage quoted from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans is from one of
the optional lessons appointed for Morning Prayer on this First Sunday
after Trinity.

With today's Epistle, from the First General Letter of St. John, taken in
conjunction with St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, we see the expression
of God as Love coming from two perspectives.

Though we may look at the two passages as being different perspectives,
they do, indeed, complement each other for their conclusion is that God
is Love.

John's Epistle passage is essentially a commentary on the verse from the
third chapter of his Gospel — John 3:16:

So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For John, this is the essence of the Christian revelation — that God is Love, not in an abstract way, but in living personal relationships with his Creation.

The Love of God — the highest attribute of his Being — is shown to us through the sending of his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to redeem us from all sin, and through the indwelling of Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Because God is Love, we are capable of love; and, because God loves us, so we should love one another.

Here, we see the two commandments coming together: to love God and to love our neighbor. The love we show in loving our neighbor is the outward sign of the reality and sincerity of our love of God.

When we spoke of the Trinity last week, we talked about the God as three Persons in one Nature or Essence bound together by Love. The reality being that Love needs an object to love and to return that love, we can, thus, understand God's Nature revealed, and we can understand the reason for our creation — not just created but made in the image of God, having the capability to love.

Paul, in his Letter to the Romans, in a sense, builds on this revelation of God as Love.

When we come to the realization that God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are brought into a new life closer to him; we enter into the haven of God's Grace; and a justification predicated upon that faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

Now, we Christians, as we have entered into Grace, have the tools of life to endure with fortitude the pressures, all that presses down upon us as Christians in this world, the difficult circumstances, sorrow, persecution, and rejection by the world. We are imbued with the Holy Spirit which is active in our lives, not passive, providing us with endurance to overcome the trials and tribulations of life. We have Hope.

That Hope is a reality, not an illusion, and it is founded upon the love of God.

Here, with the juxtaposition of Paul and John, we have the pragmatic and the existential pointing in agreement — very simply, that God is Love. That Love has been expressed in the sending of his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ into the world, who to look upon is to see God.

That we can love is because God is Love, and it is this Love that binds the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit together in the Holy Trinity, and which binds God to us and we to him.