



Week of October 17, 2021

Community...It Starts Here, with Love

1 John 4:7-20

**Day One: Read John 1**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He existed in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. <sup>4</sup> The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. <sup>6</sup> God sent a man, John the Baptist, <sup>7</sup> to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. <sup>8</sup> John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. <sup>9</sup> The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. <sup>13</sup> They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God. <sup>14</sup> So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. <sup>15</sup> John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'" <sup>16</sup> From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

<sup>19</sup> This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Temple assistants from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup> He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup> "Well then, who are you?" they asked. "Are you Elijah?" "No," he replied. "Are you the Prophet we are expecting?" "No." <sup>22</sup> "Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup> John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Clear the way for the Lord's coming!'" <sup>24</sup> Then the Pharisees who had been sent <sup>25</sup> asked him, "If you aren't the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, what right do you have to baptize?" <sup>26</sup> John told them, "I baptize with water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize. <sup>27</sup> Though his ministry follows mine, I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal." <sup>28</sup> This encounter took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.

<sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" <sup>30</sup> He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.' <sup>31</sup> I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel." <sup>32</sup> Then John testified, "I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. <sup>33</sup> I didn't know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God."

<sup>35</sup> The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" <sup>37</sup> When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them. They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" <sup>39</sup> "Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day. <sup>40</sup> Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. <sup>41</sup> Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means "Christ"). <sup>42</sup> Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas" (which means "Peter"). <sup>43</sup> The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me." <sup>44</sup> Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown. <sup>45</sup> Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him,

*"We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth."* <sup>46</sup> "Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. *"Can anything good come from Nazareth?"* "Come and see for yourself," Philip replied. <sup>47</sup> As they approached, Jesus said, *"Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity."* <sup>48</sup> "How do you know about me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus replied, *"I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you."* <sup>49</sup> Then Nathanael exclaimed, *"Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!"* <sup>50</sup> Jesus asked him, *"Do you believe this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this."* <sup>51</sup> Then he said, *"I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth."*

- John introduces Jesus as a key contributor to the creation of all things. Sometimes we have a picture of Jesus that doesn't make it out of the manger. What does it do for your image of God to know that Jesus is also Creator?

### **Day Two: Read 1 John 4:1-6**

<sup>1</sup> *Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world.* <sup>2</sup> *This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God.* <sup>3</sup> *But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here.* <sup>4</sup> *But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.* <sup>5</sup> *Those people belong to this world, so they speak from the world's viewpoint, and the world listens to them.* <sup>6</sup> *But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.*

- John asks the people in this community to "test the spirits," that is, to be discerning with the wisdom of this world. Do you think there are spirits in your life that you have neglected to question? What's an example?

### **Day Three: Read 1 John 4:12**

<sup>12</sup> *No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.*

- What does it do for your sense of discipleship to know that people catch a glimpse of God when you choose to love?

### **Day Four: Read John 15:1-17**

<sup>1</sup> *"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener.* <sup>2</sup> *He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.* <sup>3</sup> *You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you.* <sup>4</sup> *Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.* <sup>5</sup> *"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.* <sup>6</sup> *Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.* <sup>7</sup> *But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!* <sup>8</sup> *When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.* <sup>9</sup> *"I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love.* <sup>10</sup> *When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love.* <sup>11</sup> *I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!* <sup>12</sup> *This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.* <sup>13</sup> *There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.* <sup>14</sup> *You are my friends if you do what I command.* <sup>15</sup> *I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.* <sup>16</sup> *You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.* <sup>17</sup> *This is my command: Love each other."*

- In John's Gospel about Jesus, he relays what Jesus said to the disciples about the Holy Spirit working in and through them as they continue to follow Jesus. John is reiterating that point here as he encourages this church to abide in Jesus. Are there times in your life when you feel as though you are empowered to love by God's Spirit?

**Day Five: Read Matthew 5:13-16**

<sup>13</sup> *"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.* <sup>14</sup> *"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.* <sup>15</sup> *No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.* <sup>16</sup> *In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."*

- Jesus compares the church to the salt you put on food. The church needs to keep its saltiness or else it will taste just like anything else. In your view, what are some of the ways that Prince of Peace is staying salty in the way it loves this community?