

Text: John 3:1-17

Theme: God Loves You!

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation today is the Holy Gospel according to Saint John the third chapter verses one through seventeen.

Boys and girls, what do I have here? Right, I have a heart. A heart with a cross. We use a heart to show how much someone loves someone else. We say that their hearts overflow with love. For example, how much do your parents love you? They love you more than the world. They would do anything for you to make sure that you have clothing, food, drink, toys, receive a good education and grow in the faith, anything that you need for this body and life, they give you. Why? Not because you deserve it, but because of their love for you. Yet, this heart has something special. It has a cross in the middle, to show how great God loves you. How much does God love you? How does the cross show this? Ponder these questions as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

You do not deserve love

Love is something that all of us need and desire. It is one of our most core and basic needs according to psychologists. We need the love of our parents when we are babies and children. We desire the love of our spouses in marriage and to show that love to them. We desire and need the love of close friends and co-workers. As Bob Merrill used to sing, "Love makes the world go round." We make a big deal of showing our love to others in a wide variety of ways. Sometimes we show our love through the giving of gifts, physical touch, our words, and, actions. Yet, as much as we need and desire love, is it something that we deserve?

No, none of us deserve love. We do not deserve the love of our parents, spouses, or friends. Love is not something that we earn or deserve simply because we have been good people or have done good things. Those we love the most also know best the evil we do in thought, words, and deeds. We do not deserve their love and yet they choose to still love us anyways! If we do not deserve the love of others around us now, how much less do we deserve the love of God our heavenly Father!

We do not deserve the love of our heavenly Father for many reasons. For one, just look at how we react to His great love. He gives us daily breath; without Him we could not survive for even an instant. What do we do? We take the life for granted. Instead of using it for the glory and honor of God's name. We use our lives however we want to use it. We do not see it as a good gift from God but something that we can take from another person, simply because we feel like it.

Our heaven Father gives to us everything we need for this body and life. We have the gall to think that it is something that we have provided for ourselves by our own hard work. We turn towards the things of this world for our security, our money, our possessions, our houses, our things, instead of turning towards God as the provider of all good things. We think that if we try our best, then we can ascend up into heaven by our own power under our own good works. Truly, we do not deserve His love in any way shape or form.

Yet see how great the Father Loves you!

And yet...God the Father still loves you, even in spite of how greatly you misuse the gifts He gives. He loves you so much that He knows you can never ascend to heaven on your own, under your own power. He knows how far from perfection you are. How grievously you sin. Instead of destroying you, God descends to you! As our Lord says, No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man¹". Our Lord

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Jn 3:13). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

descends from the eternal joys of heaven for you and your salvation. He descends in order to ascend upon the cross. “The Son of Man must be lifted up.” There He shows His great love for you by bearing your sins, by His suffering, bleeding, and dying upon your behalf. Buried, he rises from the dead, breaks forever the power of death over you, and gives to you newness of life.

You can love the Father!

Jesus continues to show His great love for you even now. You have newness of life given to you by Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit which creates and sustains faith in you through the waters of Holy Baptism and the Bread and Wine of Holy Communion. Because of His working in you, you can love the Father who sends the Son to be our Savior. You can use your life to the praise and glory of His name. Though the Holy Spirit given in the grace of God, working faith in you, you can indeed believe in Him, and by believing have eternal life in His name. You can turn towards Him in repentance of your sins, hear the blessed words of Absolution, and receive forgiveness for every single one of your sins.

Deserving of His mercy and grace shown in the great love of our Lord upon the cross? Deserving of anyone’s love? No, yet the Father shows us His great love in sending His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior as well as sending His Holy Spirit to give, and sustain, us in the faith, that we may in turn, love those around us, even as undeserving as you are.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.