

1 John 4:7-21^{iv}

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

^{iv} About the Second Reading: 1 John 4:7-21

The author repeats his earlier theme: God's indwelling in the Christian is manifested in love for one another. In this reading, the theme is set in the context of the nature of God. Love is God's most characteristic activity.

But the author's assertion that "God is love" (v. 8) cannot be inverted to include the maxim that "love is God." Much of what we experience as "love" is far from God's love. God's love is not an emotion but an event, made known to us in and through Christ's incarnation and our redemption. Because this love is so intricately tied to Christ, the Christian's mission of love is of necessity a mission of witness. We love one another as a manifestation of God's life in us.