

Tuesday, June 30, 2020

**Love endures forever**

**- Pastor Hank French**

*O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever (Psalms 136:1)*

Those who know me well know that I am somewhat of a “Johnny one note” about love as the heart and soul of Christian faith. I’m not exactly alone in this. Psalm 136 has 26 verses; each verse ends with the words “for his steadfast love endures forever.” Clearly the writer of Psalm 126 was a Johnny one note as well. The Hebrew words for love appear 123 times in the Psalms—sometimes they express the writers’ love of God while sometimes they express God’s love of creation in general and of humankind in particular.

Those who wrote the Psalms would have said “Amen” to these words from the writer of 1 John, another Johnny one note: “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” (1 John 4:7-9). The word love appears 50 times in 1 John and the book only has 5 short chapters!

“Love is from God.” God is the source of all love. This insight is at the heart of Jewish faith and at the heart of Christian faith. According to Paul, “God’s love has been poured into our hearts...” (Romans 5:5) The question put to each of us, then, is will we allow ourselves to become channels of God’s love to a world that desperately needs to be loved.

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul writes: “If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things....

“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (1-7, 13).

The word love appears in the letters of Paul some 80 times. Paul, who wrote, “The only thing that counts is faith working through love (Galatians 5:6), is also a bit of a Johnny one note when it comes to love.

The great 20<sup>th</sup> century geologist, theologian and priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, wrote these hopeful words: “Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, [humankind] will have discovered fire.” To which I say a loud “amen” which means “Let it be so.”

Prayer: God, you who deep down in the heart of things moves the universe through love, move me through love to love. Amen.