

## **SERMON    Easter 6   Year B**

### **The Epistle 1 John 5:1-6**

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

### **The Gospel John 15:9-17**

Jesus said to his disciples, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

**Prayer:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Sermon:**

John's Gospel, focuses on Jesus -- as the Son of God--  
Jesus was all about relationships.

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God  
“...All things were made through him....”<sup>i</sup>

In last week's Gospel we heard Jesus say:  
“I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer”.  
Since that's true, we must be the grapes!

Every harvest begins with the Father.<sup>ii</sup>  
And Jesus told his friends:  
“... Even as the Father has loved me, [so]  
I ... have loved you. Remain in my love”.

*Jesus was all about relationships.*

We are gathered here today, because God is love.  
Mothers, Fathers, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Friends ...  
Every enduring relationship, hinges on love.

Jesus was all about relationships.

Father. The Son. The Holy Spirit.

... and God's people.

We are gathered to do the work that God calls us to do.

Jesus was knee deep in the real world!

His work is God's work,

and we are called out into the world.

But the world is a crazy place. Never been easy.

Even though I'm not really into swimming,

I love being underwater.

I love those few peaceful moments.

Cut off from the world's racket and tumult.

But I'm not a sleek dolphin.

God didn't design me to stay down there too long.

Really quick, I've got to come up for air.

I've got to come back to the real world.

Jesus intended *for each of us* to live in the real world.

Our beautiful blue and green, island home.

Church is our safe place. We come here,

to get away from the racket of our crazy world.

We come here to be rejuvenated and lifted up.

And that is God's plan.

Yet, we're not supposed to stay at Church.

Because God calls us out to the real world –

*Out there, is where Godly work needs done.*

As we do God's work, as we struggle and push back

and carve out a Godly life, God reveals Her boundless love.

Jesus said: "... love one another ... as I have loved you."

The Greek word *agape* is kind of familiar in church circles.

*Agape* is Greek for "love". That's the word Jesus used. <sup>iii</sup>

*But he was talking about Love as a Verb.*

*He was talking about love in action.<sup>iv</sup>*

Jesus was all about love in action. Jesus was all about *giving love*.

*He died so that we'd understand that receive love,*

*You've got to give love.*

I know that sounds idealistic. And it is.

But Jesus was no day dreamer. Jesus was the real deal.

He was a practical guy, who lived in the real world.

Jesus's love is practical, and it thrives in the real world.

When we follow Jesus, we have to engage the real world.

We must do what we can do ... *out there!*

We must figure out how to feed and clothe and shelter  
the hungry and the naked, even if we don't like them,  
even if we don't enjoy their company.

*Jesus said.:*

*“You didn't choose me ... I chose you”,  
And so it was, and so it is and so it will always be.*

We've all been chosen by Jesus.

The Lord has given each of some special work. <sup>v</sup>  
As a Church, we've all been called out.

In God's economy, nothing goes to waste.

Wherever we are, in our lives,  
Jesus calls us to serve the Kingdom.

God chooses whomever God chooses.

Wherever we are, and whoever we are,  
We are called to step out ...  
to live in the bright light of Jesus' love.

God chooses whoever God chooses, wherever we are.

Don't doubt that you've been chosen!  
*God uses us as we are.*

God uses our strengths, and our weaknesses,  
our bumps and our bruises,  
our age and our youth, our wealth and our poverty.

*I've alwasy known that God chose me ---*

*And if God would chose me, He'll choose anyone !!!*

*Ask what God has called you to do ... listen... and then get to work!*

But, when you answer God's call, remember these two things:

- 1. God wants your whole heart; and*
- 2. God wants us to work together.*

Somewhere along my ordination path, I looked at medieval mystics.

Did you know that St. Anselm of Canterbury  
described Jesus as our mother?! <sup>vi</sup>

“Jesus”, he wrote, “... you gather your people ...

[as] gently ... as a mother gathers her children.” <sup>vii</sup>

*Mommies love their babies. All their babies!*

It's easy to get caught up on social questions. <sup>viii</sup>

But that's not our vocation.

Jesus said, "... when I am lifted up", "I will draw *all people* to me." ix

Jesus was a real person.

But he didn't worry about who was in, or who was out.x

We are called to love one another as Jesus loves us.

A mother's *sacrificial love*.

*No ifs. No buts. No Exceptions.* xi

- When we love one another, with sacrificial love,  
we will step over the lines, that others have drawn between us.
- When we love one another, with sacrificial love,  
*we will be called by Grace ... to God's table.*
- When we love one another, with sacrificial love,  
We will pursue our dreams; we will be blessed.  
God will satisfy our needs, our hopes and our prayers.

**AMEN**

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<sup>i</sup> See, John 1:1-3.

<sup>ii</sup> See, Ridderbos, 519 cited in <https://sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary-old/john-159-17/>

<sup>iii</sup> ἀγάπη, agape

<sup>iv</sup> e.g., the Greek verb *agapate*, instead of the noun, *agape*.

<sup>v</sup> See, the Greek: *etheka*, which is from *tithemi*—τίθημι, (active) to place, put; (passive) to be placed or put; (mid.) to set, appoint, decide, arrange, or to set aside

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermon/love-one-another-as-i-have-loved-you-easter-6-b-2012/>

<sup>vii</sup> He compared Jesus' agony on the cross to a woman's labor pains.

<sup>viii</sup> In the early church, just like today, people struggled with the idea of who was in and who was out.

<sup>ix</sup>Emphasis added

<sup>x</sup> I know a guy who can preach, but because he's divorced, cannot be called "pastor". It is hard to find a Godly balance.

<sup>xi</sup> I imagine Jesus laughing and telling jokes, at the 6-day long wedding reception, in Cana. I can't imagine Jesus checking people's credentials.