

**“Intimacy”** Sermon for April 15, 2018  
Psalm 4:3-5, 1 John 3:1-7, Luke 24:38-43

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13:34-35

Intimacy: Intimare-closeness, togetherness, attachment, familiarity, friendship, affection, warmth—

After two thousand years are we still able to realize what it means to say, “God is love”? The 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of John spelled out clear consequences for divine intimacy: The one who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in that one. God’s living in us, making us a dwelling place, is our living in love, of our having love as our center, our home, the foundation of our existence. Jesus as the Christ warns all who profess their allegiance to him, that without this intimacy he does not know them. The ultimate criterion for Jesus Christ is love.

## Matthew 7

<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Too many Christians confuse having a relationship with having an affair. A relationship with God through the Christ in us cannot be a “one-night stand.” It is not a good date. It is about commitment and communing and sharing—real intimacy.

Jesus was being intimate when he asked his disciples, “Do you have anything here to eat?” In his glorified body, he did not need to eat. The invitation to eat together, to give and receive hospitality, is an ultimate form of intimacy. We don’t call it just eating, we call it *koinonia* (having intimate participation with each other), in this case “table fellowship.” “They gave Jesus a piece of broiled fish, and he ate it.”

Only after reestablishing their intimacy with Jesus sharing food with him, were they able to have their minds opened to understand all that the scriptures had prophesied of him. It is only after becoming intimate with Christ that we will come to know God, to share in Christ's fullness. And John reminds us that intimacy with God generates intimacy for all.

As a young man, to be in the presence of the late Sarah Hoffman, Esther Belle Henderson, E. L. Wilburn, Gregory R. Dell, J. W. Patterson, Bishop Jesse DeWitt, Kwame Touré, the Reverend Maceo Pembroke, or of still living saint Rev. William Jarvis Vance, Sr., was to experience God's love firsthand. These were people I knew and met who always made room for you, whether they knew you or not. They could be in a small room and welcome a great gathering, and everyone felt included and important.

They seemed incapable of exercising limits, caution, censure or sanction in their relationships with people. They would stop whatever they were doing to welcome you, embrace you, recognize your value.

Such intimacy undercuts theological arrogance and religious intolerance, bigotry and isolation. It is more than mere justice, of simply having faith and hope. It is living in the full maturity of Christ-God's presence aflame within us. It is the intimacy that all, not some of us, are called to live in with Christ. If we achieve it and only as we are living toward it and for it, do we experience the blessed joy and peace of Christ.

What the world needs now is love, sweet love  
It's the only thing that there's just too little of  
What the world needs now is love, sweet love,  
No not just for some but for everyone.

Amen.