

Lessons for Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

January 30, 2022

Psalm 71:1-6 (7-11) ~ *An expression of confidence in God's sustaining presence.*

Jeremiah 1:4-10 (17-19) ~ *God expressed His love for His people by choosing Jeremiah to turn them back.*

1 Corinthians 12:31b—13:13 ~ *When the gifts of the Spirit are used in love, they build up the body of Christ.*

Luke 4:31-44 ~ *Jesus healed many with His loving power and gathered them with the news of the Kingdom.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Let God's Love Have Its Way.

God's love is all-encompassing. God's love is beyond comprehension. It grasped Jeremiah before his birth and claimed him for the difficult job of confronting God's people with their waywardness. Jesus confronted demons and healed the sick because God's love compelled Him to share the good news of the Kingdom in words and actions. Although God's love is patient and kind, at times we will have to give up things we hold dear because God looks beyond the moment and forms us for His eternal purpose. Even when our lives are threatened, God's love wins out.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: God of mercy and of grace, do not let me stumble over words of correction or rebuke, but let me hear You speak in love through Your law as You lead me to depend more and more on Christ my Savior. Guide me by Your Holy Spirit as I live lovingly toward others. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God has entrusted us with many material blessings and has called us to use them in ways that are guided by His love for even the least among us. If we use them without love, they become demonic tools that tear apart the fellowship of Christ's body.

OFFERING PRAYER: O gracious God, it is Your way
to bless us from above.
Grant us to care for those each day
who need to know Your love. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: By His Spirit God gives us many gifts, which can be used in many ways. Often we use them to call attention or bring influence to ourselves. Jesus has come to us in love as a servant, healing us not only of diseases and destructive spirits, but also of the selfish spirit that places us over and above others. Along with the gifts comes the responsibility to exercise them in loving ways to build up the body of Christ. When we trust God's love we know that even when fellow believers point out our unloving actions, they do it to call us back to God's mercy.

Questions to Consider: What is tough about love?

- How can you tell Jeremiah was sent by God's love even though his mission was tough?
- Why is love the greatest gift of the Spirit?
- Why was preaching the good news of the Kingdom more compelling than healing the sick?
- What was the ultimate goal of Jesus' mission?

Bonus: Page two - Tumbling Walls

Tumbling Walls

From "The Ministry of Jesus Foreshadowed by Joshua"

Joshua 6:20; Ephesians 2:14 - 18

Joshua fought the battle of Jericho
and the walls came tumbling down;
Jesus fought the battle of sin and death
so that we may wear His crown.

Mighty were the walls that divided us
from the holy will of God.
Jesus is the One who has torn them down
by His cross and scourging rod.

Many are the walls that still cut us off
from the ones for whom Christ died.
When we know the price our Savior paid
then our hearts are opened wide.

Joshua took the city of Jericho,
and he claimed it for the Lord.
Jesus claims us all by His precious blood,
and He gives us His reward!

- Gilbert A. Franke, December 2005