

GOD IS LOVE

Speaker: Adult Team Member

Time: Sunday 8:45 a.m.

Length: 20–30 minutes

Purpose:

Since TECites have come to encounter Christ, we introduce them to Jesus, the Son of God, who is love. To encounter the resurrected God is to encounter the essence of God (which is love). God seeks out and calls us, and we encounter Him in His Word. If we are to live God's love, we must experience that love in Jesus.

Outline: Begin Your Talk Here

Scripture reading: 1 John 4:7–11

Response (ALL): God is love, and whoever lives in love lives in union with God and God lives in union with him. (1 John 4:16)

Introduction:

Ask the group to consider these questions:

1. What is your idea of God?
2. How does God meet, or encounter, you?

I. Maturing Faith

A. We often start with a childlike idea about God (1 Corinthians 13:11). Some childlike ideas may include these false ideas of God, which distort who God really is:

1. The “far away” God: out in space, “out there” or “up there.”
(Give examples. See Acts 17:22–29 to see what the Bible says about this false notion.)
2. The “vending machine” God: giving us anything we want, whenever we want it.
(Give examples. See Psalm 139 to see what the Bible says about this false notion.)
3. The “team captain” God: picking sides and dividing people up.
(Give examples. See 1 Corinthians 12:25–27 to see what the Bible says about this false notion.)
4. The “surveillance camera” God: ready to catch us when we break the law.
(Give examples. See John 8:3–11 to see what the Bible says about this false notion.)

B. False and childish ideas can distort the true and honest picture the Bible gives to us of God. A maturing faith comes to know who God really is through His Word (Ephesians 4:13).

II. The triune God is love.

The Creed shows us the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit): an incomprehensible fact (1 John 4:16); three-in-one and one-in-three, coequal and coeternal.

- A. The Father is love.
 - 1. Natural knowledge of God: seen in creation (Genesis 1:31); God makes everything beautiful. *(Give examples of the beauty of the world.)*
 - 2. Revealed knowledge of God: seen in giving and sending His Son (Romans 5:8), as made known through God's Word.
- B. The Son is love.
 - 1. Seen as our only way to the Father (John 14:6–11).
 - 2. Seen as God for us (Hebrews 1:1–6).
 - 3. Seen as a human for others (Romans 1:2–4):
 - a. He gave life to others (Matthew 9:1–26).
 - b. He gave love to others (Luke 10:30–37).
 - c. He gave care to others (Mark 8:1–9).
 - d. He gave salvation to others (John 15:13).
- C. The Spirit is love.
 - 1. Seen in the love He creates in us (1 John 3:23–24). *(Give examples of the Spirit moving us to love others.)*
 - 2. Seen in love as community (1 Corinthians 12:23). *(Give examples of the community/church caring for one another.)*

God is love as He shares Himself in Word and Sacrament, as we worship, pray, and share our Savior with one another. We mature in faith not only with age but also as we study His Word. False ideas of God change to an honest, true, and scriptural picture of the powerful love of God.

III. Our Response

- A. As God stretches out to make contact with us in Jesus Christ, touching us in love, so we respond by reaching back to Him. *(The TEC emblem of outstretched hands—Michelangelo's work from the Sistine Chapel—can be explained here.)*
- B. We turn to Him to receive Him in the Sacraments.
- C. We turn to Him in prayer and love (Matthew 7:7–11).
- D. We turn toward one another in loving care, concern, and service (1 John 3:11, 16).
- E. We live a life of love for God and others (Matthew 22:34–40).

Conclusion:

God not only represents love, He is Love. God sent Love—His Son Jesus.

QUESTION (asked by Lay Director following this talk):

How do I know God loves me? OR How do I respond to God's love?