

Sermon for January 10, 2021 “Love unknown to the world”

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:12-22 ¹² Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³ He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: ¹⁵ “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” ¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” **Jesus Calls the First Disciples** ¹⁸ As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Introduction: The Ministry of Jesus Begins

Today is the first Sunday after Epiphany. Epiphany is a celebration that commemorates that God revealed Himself to this world through Jesus. Humans cannot know God unless God reveals Himself to us. We can know God through the life and word of Jesus Christ.

So Gospel of John 14:9 says, "Jesus answered: Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, Show us the Father?"

Today's text is about Jesus revealing Himself to the world. Before revealing Himself to the people, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, and was tempted by Satan in the wilderness.

In last week's sermon, I told you to see the light of hope that Jeremiah saw in times of despair, to live together as Christians who sing hope, and how fear in our hearts may hinder us from living with hope. However, **1 John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”**

I hope that through today's message, we will know the evidence of Jesus' love for us. I hope that you will overcome your fears and produce abundant fruit with confidence in the love that the Lord gives you. Jesus shows us how He loves us by starting his ministry. So what is the first sign of this?

Body: Evidence of Jesus' love for humans

1. That we are in the covenant of God is evidence of the love of Jesus.

The first sign of Jesus' love is that we are children in God's covenant. In today's text, Jesus chooses Capernaum as the starting point of His first ministry. Jesus tells us His reasons for choosing Capernaum as His first place for ministry through the prophet Isaiah.

Today's text **Matthew 4:15-16 says, "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles--the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."**

This is God's promise to the Israelites from a long time ago. This is a promise of hope granted to those in despair. So David confesses in **Psalms 27:1, “The LORD is my light and my salvation-- whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life-- of whom shall I be afraid?”**

Life without God for humans is a life of darkness. If you live in darkness, there is nothing to be afraid of more than it. But if we walk into the light, we will be comfortable and fearless. Jesus' quote from Isaiah in the Old Testament clearly shows that what He is giving us through His ministry is His infinite love.

In the Old Testament we can see God's numerous promises to the Israelites in the midst of despair. God promised through Jeremiah that the destroyed Jerusalem would be restored after 70 years. God promised to Hosea that if the Israelites return to Him, God will also return to the Israelites (Hosea 6:1). Also, God promised

to Zechariah, that He will be a protective wall of fire around Jerusalem (Zechariah 2:5). All of these promises mean that when the Israelites return to hold on to God's promise, God will bless them.

We often overlook the fact that we are blessed in God's covenant. All the blessings we enjoy are because of the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ and also because we have entered into the covenant of God. This is open to everyone, but not allowed to everyone. It is only allowed to those who are in the new covenant with Jesus.

So being in the covenant of Jesus means that we are within the wonderful promises of Jesus, and it is proof that we are loved by Jesus. Then, what is the second evidence of Jesus' love?

2. Calling us to be disciples is evidence of Jesus' love.

Second, the proof that Jesus loves us is that He has called us as disciples.

Let's look at today's text **Matthew 4:18 and 21**. **“As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen (v.18). Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them (v. 21).”**

This verse is a scene showing Jesus calling twelve disciples for the ministry of the Gospel. Jesus took the initiative to call the disciples who were fishermen in the Sea of Galilee. He speaks to them, **“Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19)**. It is Jesus' mission to His disciples. Jesus wanted His disciples to live as beings that reveal the sins of this earth, reveal the glory of God to the world, and reveal the salvation of Jesus Christ.

So it is a wonderful outcome of love that we are chosen as disciples. Because we are chosen as disciples, we live a completely different path.

Those who are called to be disciples of Jesus must go a different way from the way of the world. It is walking the path Jesus walked. It is a narrow road and a road of suffering. If we had not been called to be a disciple of Jesus, we would have been able to go on a comfortable path. But all of Jesus' disciples walked the same path of service, devotion, and love that Jesus showed.

Everyone who has been loved by God is like this. Abraham, Moses, David, and the disciples of Jesus were chosen, so they went a different way from the way in the world, and they all received the glory that God had granted.

The Bible tells the disciples called by Jesus: **Hebrews 12:6-7 says, "Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?"**

Walking the disciple's path is to walk a narrow path, but that path is the path of glory promised by the Lord. So that we live as Jesus' disciples is evidence of Jesus' love for us. So what is another evidence of Jesus' love for us?

3. Jesus gave us the means to receive grace.

Finally, the evidence that we are loved by Jesus is that we have the means to receive grace. We have a church where we can worship. The reason the church is important is because you can experience God's presence through worship and keep the feasts of the church that God is pleased with.

We have a pastor who preaches the Word, and we have brothers and sisters in the church who love, serve, and comfort one another together.

Also, we have the precious Word of God, the Bible. The Bible illuminates our way, guides our steps, and enables us to know the will of the Lord.

So, Moses tells the Israelites in **Deuteronomy 33:3**, **“Surely it is you who love the people; all the holy ones are in your hand. At your feet they all bow down, and from you receive instruction”**

Being able to worship in church, get to know the Lord, and worship the Lord is evidence that we are loved by Jesus.

Conclusion: Love unknown to the world

Now, let's summarize today's sermon. Ask yourself a question. How are you convinced of Jesus' love? The Apostle John speaks in **1 John 3:1**, "**How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.**"

The world doesn't know how blessed we are. But we must know. Even if everything is difficult due to COVID-19, we need to know that it is the love of Jesus that can listen to God's Word, receive grace, through worship.

We no longer try to judge God's love by the standards of the world, but we always live in the love of the Lord who made us children of God, and hope that we all become the fruits of God's love.