
True Love Doesn't Judge

**An Evensong meditation by the Rev. Canon George Maxwell
The Sixth Sunday of Easter – Year A**

In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

About a year ago, the standup comedian Nick Kroll, released on Netflix a skit titled, *Why Are We So Mean To Our Mothers?* And in this skit, he talks about how reactive he is to his own mother.

“She could,” he says, “send me an article about the Art Deco movement in Los Angeles, and I would say, ‘why did you send me that article?’ You know I hate Art Deco. That is my least favorite architectural style.”

“Or,” he says, “she could compliment me on my coat. And I would say, ‘What about all my other coats? Don't you like them just as well?’”

There was something about his relationship with his mother—and maybe some of ours—that leaves us reactive. But why? Because as we all know, your mother from your earliest age is typically the one who you can actually fall apart with. You can hold it together in school. You can hold it together at work, but when you have to fall apart, your mother is often where you go.

Why do we have this paradox where the person we want most to love us is the person we're often rejecting?

I think this results from a fundamental yearning on the part of all of us to be fully known and fully loved. But the challenge of wanting to be fully known and fully loved is that if you're not willing to reveal yourself fully for fear of rejection or judgment, then you'll never be fully loved. And herein lies this quandary in life.

I think the disciples in our reading from John are right here in this quandary. We're in the farewell discourse of John. Jesus has come to his disciples and told them that it is time for him to go away. He is the one who knows them. He is the one who loves them like a mother.

They are understandably afraid. And he says, “I will send you an advocate. I will send you the Holy Spirit, worry not.” And then he says, “Because the Father is in me and I am in the Father and I will be in you, and you will be in me.”

As complicated as that sentence structure is, what I think he is saying is that I have dedicated myself to the Father fully. He has become part of me. You have seen him because you have seen me. And you must dedicate yourself to the Father just as I did, and you will feel the Christ working in you just as I have felt the Father working in me.

All of which is to say, by dedicating yourself to God, you can experience union with God. You can actually discover that it is possible for you to be fully known and fully loved, but it won't be something that you read in a book. It won't even be something that someone tells you. It will be something that you experience, that sense of being fully known and fully loved.

Let me give you an example from scripture. The story about the prodigal son, which is really a story about the prodigal father.

You remember the story: the youngest son decides that he wants his inheritance. He's had enough of this hardworking life on the farm, and he takes his money off to a distant land where, with dissolute living, he

spends it all, finding himself working, let's just say, in a level of society he would never have experienced and having lost any sense of himself, having felt no love for anyone.

He then decides he will return to his father, and he decides he will apologize. He will take responsibility. He will reveal himself for who he really is and see what happens. Do you remember what happens? As he is on the road approaching his father's estate, his father comes running out of the house and embraces him before he can utter a word, before he can apologize, before he can confess, before he can do anything. He is fully known and fully loved, and it is an experience that he has from his father.

It is that experience that Jesus is promising the disciples, and in fact, all of us, that at the core of our being is the Spirit. That source of energy, which we have had all along, but didn't know it because we were afraid to face it, because we didn't have the courage to do what we wanted most, to allow ourselves to be fully known so that we could be fully loved.

And it is in this way, I think, that God loves us like a mother, an unconditional love that we didn't earn and we could never lose. All we have to do is get out of the way. All we have to do is follow Christ, allowing that spirit to emerge in us as the promised advocate, and we will feel a sense of energy, a sense of joy, and know that we are loved because we are lovable, because we are worthy, because we are children of God. Amen.