

Message for Worship – First Friends Church  
Whittier Friends School Sunday  
October 18, 2020

Our theme for today is love. Ephesians 4:2-3 says: “<sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

Verse 2 tells us to treat each other with gentleness, patience, and love, but why is this so important? Verse three gives us the answer: so that we can have unity and peace.

Michelle Lowndes, in her children’s devotional on God’s love says: “God’s love is so different from our love. Many times, we don’t feel love or express love, but God always feels love toward us – for God’s true character is love. God’s love is unconditional, which means God will always love us despite what we do or say. God can never stop loving us. It’s in God’s very nature to love. Even when we say and do wrong things, God still keeps on loving us.”

She goes on to say, “We need to build God’s love into our own lives, so we may love others as God loves us. Let God fill us with love. Ask God to help us love people and see them as God sees them. As we continue to walk our journey in life, let us all choose to respond to those around us with love. The more we love others, the more God’s love grows in us. So let us choose today to love God’s way.”

But what does it mean to “love God’s way”?

Isaac Pennington, an early Quaker, wrote in 1667,  
“Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.”

In the song today, we heard the words from I Corinthians 13 that says we can have great skills and achieve amazing accomplishments in life, but if they are not done with love, they are meaningless.

That verse says love is patient and kind. It is not jealous or proud. It is not disrespectful, selfish, or angry. When we have love, we don't keep track of what others do that is wrong, and we are not happy when bad things happen to others. Love helps us to know the truth and love protects us. With love we can trust, hope, and never give up. Love will always exist.

As humans though, we don't always automatically feel or express love in every situation with every person. Our lives are filled with all sorts of big feelings every day, all day long. We don't always feel patient. Sometimes we don't want to forgive. There are times we do feel selfish. And that is OK. After all, having feelings is part of being human. We are not perfect. It's OK to have all sorts of feelings and to talk about them or to just keep them to ourselves. But it is important to remember that, no matter what we feel, God's love can make it better.

What can we do when it's hard to feel or show love? Quakers believe that "there is the light of God in every person." So when things get difficult, try this: pause, take a deep breath, let go of human feelings for a moment, and let yourself be filled with God's love, and the patience and kindness that comes with it. Stop to remember that God loves each person, no matter what they do or say, and that the goodness of God is in every person. Think about how love helps us have peace.

This may not come easy the first time we try, especially in times of anger or stress, but have faith that it does help and it gets a little easier each time you do try. Keep in mind that it says in Ephesians, to be "Be completely humble, gentle, and patient, bearing with one another in love." And to "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."