



*Jesus continued saying, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

*John 13:34-35*

It is now a week since we watched our national election unfold and we are still watching and still waiting. I saw a poll this morning that showed that 79% of our nation now believes that the outcome of the presidential election shows that the Biden/Harris ticket won. That's all well and good, but you and I both know that we remain a nation deeply divided. We have blue states, red states and purple states and it seems we, as a nation, are left with some lingering anxiety and struggle when it comes to our politics.

But today I want to remind you that we are, all of us are, children of God. It doesn't matter what our political beliefs are. It also doesn't matter what our religious beliefs or no beliefs are. What matters is that those are labels that we have assigned ourselves and each other. As the great Christian theologian, C. S. Lewis stated, "we're not humans having a spiritual experience, we're spiritual beings having a human experience." That is our primary identity, spiritual beings, and consequently our relationship to God and each other as spiritual beings is what really matters. Right?

Jesus knew this truth and so on the last night of his earthly life committed to teach the disciples this truth, not just in words but in body, soul, and mind. Jesus offers them the commandment to "love one another." What is interesting about this is that immediately before Jesus gives the disciples this teaching, his disciple, Judas, had just received a piece of consecrated bread that was part of Jesus' last supper with his friends and followers. Immediately after receiving the bread Judas departed to do his work of betrayal. Still, Jesus told them, "love one another, just as I have loved you, because this will be the way people know that you are my disciples."

Do you know that all major benevolent religions and most people who have no belief in a Deist god but believe in the human spirit, all have some form of this understanding as part of their way of being in the world? For those of us who follow Jesus, the instruction is clear, we are to love one another.

When I think about this teaching and my faith as a follower of Jesus, I can't help but think about those in our country who do not share my labels, religious beliefs or politics. And the question for me becomes, "Then how am I to love, truly love those whom I have labeled as different?" This is the work that is now before us, to look upon others and "see" them, truly see them as children of God, regardless of their various labels, and then to treat them with love. May it be so for all of us.

*Holy One, in these challenging times, remind us that we all belong to you. Help us to see others as Your children, too. Teach us how to love one another and heal the divisions in our homes, our cities, our country and in the world. Amen.*

