

John 15:12-17 Love One Another  
Christmas Eve 2017

This morning we spoke of God's great love for us. For God so loved the world, that he gave . . . Tonight, for a few minutes let us think about our love for one another. In the Gospel of John, where we have read about how because God loved, God gave, we also read this commandment, "As I have loved you, love one another."

One of the great traditions of Christmas is the giving of gifts. This tradition is meant to inspire us to a life of generosity, and also to give us a concrete experience in which we are delighted beyond words with the gifts we receive, as well as the joy we see on another's face when they open their presents. God gave, because God loves. We give, because we love.

There are degradations:

We tend to be too greedy, the season becomes a sad demonstration of our selfishness instead of our love.

We tend towards excess. We get too much and it is like eating a whole pie, filled up with sugar. Sooner or later we begin to be sick.

The whole enterprise of giving can fail to inspire us as it should because of high expectations; or perhaps we

lose touch with the master gift that is at the heart of it all.

Maybe that is the reason we like to celebrate the giving and receiving of gifts with young children before they know better; that helps us re-create the childhood experiences before *we* knew better.

But tonight we set the degradations aside in the glory of this moment. We are here now, and our presence is a gift, not only the gift of our lives back to God, but to each other as we share this moment. Like the birth of the Christ child itself, our presence is a gift given in love.

The appropriate response to a gift is gratitude, of course, not the "forced because it is good manners" kind, but the genuine article that wells up spontaneously out of the heart set free, delighted beyond words.

For these few minutes tonight in the darkness of this room with the decorations and the music and the candles, and as you go home to be with your family and friends, may the "real thing" gratitude spring up in you as you contemplate this great gift that God has given to us, and that by our presence, and by our service, and most of all by our love, we have given to each other.

[Back](#)

[Home](#)