



God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. We love because God first loved us. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. 1 John 4:16b, 19, 21

I suggest you read this devotion when you are in a place where you can be quiet and calm your spirit, because you will be asked to spend a few moments in prayer and reflection.

I've been reading though Bishop Michael Curry's new book *Love is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times*. Bishop Curry is the current presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, and the first African American to lead the denomination. This line from the book caught my attention:

“God may be the source of love, but people are often the vessels.”

It's similar to a quote I love from Pope Francis that I used in my Reformation Sunday sermon:

“We disciples of the Lord have another mission as well: that of being channels that transmit the love of Jesus.”

Today, I ask two simple questions. First, who has been a vessel of God's love for you? I would like you to take some time to really think about this. Bring that person to mind. Recall their words and actions at a time that was significant in your life. Think about where you were and what was happening in your life. Context is important. Think about the idea that God was so mindful of you that God intentionally placed someone in your life to transmit the love of Jesus. God knew you needed whatever that person had to offer. Keep that person in your mind long enough to pray for them, thanking God for their presence in your life. If it's possible, reach out to that person today to let them know that you are thankful for their transmission of God's love.

Second, how have you been a vessel of God's love for someone else? Identify a time when God was at work in your heart to reach out to someone in need. Bring that person to mind. Recall what you said or did that became a witness to God's love. What was going on in that person's life? Context is important.

Think about the idea that God was so mindful of that person that God intentionally placed you in their life to transmit the love of Jesus. God knew that person needed whatever you had to offer. Keep that person in your mind long enough to pray for them, thanking God that He used you to help that person. If it's possible, reach out to that person today to see how they are doing and to remind them that God loves them.

Isn't it amazing that God uses human beings to reveal His love? We are both givers and receivers, sometimes the vessel or channel, and other times the receptacle. Either way, God continues to be at work in our lives in ways both simple and complex, but always for the purpose of deepening our connection to Him and to our neighbors.
Pastor Chuck

Let us pray. Lord God, keep our hearts and minds open so that you may continue to use us as vessels and channels that transmit your love to others. And when the time is most crucial, continue to send others into our lives that will keep us tethered to your amazing grace. Amen