Advent 2016 – Love

Ephesians 4:2 *Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love*.

Why did the Christ come to this earth at that time of ignorance, war, and lost people who were off track with their connection to God? Why are we here, amidst the same sort of circumstances, where there is such a prevalence of war, hunger, hatred, turmoil, judgment, and ego-centeredness?

The answer is Love; the answer is always love of some kind, whether it is through service, caring, patience, non-judgment, empathy … whatever we are looking for, it seems it is always related to Love in some manner.

Love is the most powerful healing we have available to us. It can bring about wholeness from incompleteness, balance from imbalance, and ease from disease. Love can elevate emotions to levels of peace and joy. When we access the energy that is Love, we open our minds and hearts to all of God’s plans, goodness, guidance, and the unlimited creative pull of the Universe.

This is why we are here, this is why the baby Jesus was born to us, and why we celebrate the rebirth of the Christ in our hearts – Love. Maintaining and expressing Love on a daily basis, moment by moment, is the most difficult and demanding task we have as we walk this earth in these bodies.

We are love; it cannot leave us and has never left us. When we know Love, we understand that we are connected to the Oneness of God, to all of Creation. We know our value and worth, who we are and how we fit in. That is the power of Love and the gift that the Christ brings us.

Christ tells us to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as our self. So we are to love God in every conceivable fashion, and love our neighbors – anyone not us – and our self.

This is important, we are told to love our self ... and I read into it that we are to love our self the same way as we love each other and God – with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Yes, we are to love our self despite how many errors we make, hurts we cause, and no matter how many times we don’t live up to our expectations.

To love our self is to stop judging our thoughts, words, and behaviors. To love our self is to know that it is a given that we aren’t perfect, we are still learning, and we aren’t done yet. We are improving, and as we grow more willing, we will implement more and more of what the Christ is whispering into our hearts. Until we can see our own worth and accept our self, we cannot fully love or accept the full worth of anyone else. So to love our neighbor in the way that God wants, we have to love our self first.

Part of loving our self is being true to who we are and not what our mother or father or friends think we should be. Loving our self is releasing the need to please someone else to earn their love. Love empowers us to be all that we are intended to be. We give away our power when we stop listening to the inner Christ and listen to all the voices ‘out there’ that are telling us about our value, and worth, and what we should be doing and how to do it.

We give away our power and spiritual identity when we allow others to control us and dictate our thoughts and actions. When we allow someone to make us angry or feel guilt, we have given them power over us. It’s not that those emotions are bad, but they are indicators that something needs to be addressed, and it is usually that we need to love ourselves more and we need to be more discerning.

Sometimes we need to discern what we are doing and why. Are we trying to please everyone else and deny what our heart is telling us? Is it really true what the voice of our ego is telling us, or is that illusion?

Part of loving our self is forgiving and moving on – forgiving ourselves and forgiving others. It is taking responsibility for our part in a situation, forgiving our mistakes and learning from our errors.

Part of moving on is deciding that we can live in love or in fear, hope or despair, peace or discord, joy or sorrow. All the attributes that Christ came to teach are interconnected. We must choose our direction, and the best source for guidance is from moving within and getting in touch with our inner being through the Christ. Sitting still and focusing on our breath for 20 minutes, or that stillness between breaths, can do a lot in helping us find our way to self-love.

Loving each other is an extension of how we feel about ourselves. To love someone is to allow them to be who they are intended by God to be. To love someone else is to know that they have their own path, their own lessons, and their own guidance to follow. They are going to make mistakes, just like us. They are going to take missteps, just like I do.

We cannot control anyone; we can’t change who they are or change the way they think, believe, or act. You know how frustrating it is when someone tries to change some aspect of you, well don’t you think that others feel the same way when they are being controlled.

Our command to follow is to love them, forgive them, accept them where they are and know that just like us they are on a path toward God. It’s not that they are doing things to us; they are trying to do things that fulfill themselves. Sometimes that hurts. People are doing the best they can with where they are in their thinking and spiritual attunement. I like the expression, “If we knew better, we’d do better.”

If we have the spiritual insight to recognize that someone is taking ‘the low road’, then we have the choice to take ‘the high road’. It is just that some folks don’t see any path other than the one they are on – it’s not a low road or a high road – their souls cannot yet differentiate between them.

Can I tell you that forgiveness is on the higher path because forgiveness is an expression of Love. When we can release a wrong doing, a fault, or a mistake by forgiving someone who has hurt us, no matter the pain, we are expressing Love at a high level.

Accepting others is a key to loving them. To love someone is to accept them even though they don’t behave like we do, think like we do, speak like we do, or believe like we do. Acceptance lifts us up. Accepting the situations we face in life and adapting to them with love in our hearts raises us above those situations. We find hope, peace, joy and love in those elevated states.

Part of loving others is being forgiving, accepting, and being humble and friendly. Loving others is building bridges not digging trenches. It is cooperating, and not imposing our thoughts and ideas and judgment.

This is why the Christ came: to teach us all of these lessons, and to show us that love toward God is the highest path of all. We start with the love of self and pulling our love out of the depths of the ego. Then we move upward even further to loving others. Finally, we raise the level of our loving to the highest heights, to that of God.

I used to think, “Well, I love God a lot. I love nature, and the life in the mountains, seas, and forests. I love my family, my friends, and all the people who are good to me. It’s just that I don’t care too much for myself sometimes and all of these other hurtful idiots running around.

We judge God as easy to love. It’s easy to love Nature and kitties and rippling streams. Really there is no demand. We can open our eyes to the beauty of the earth and close our ears to the whispers from God, and we are happy.

But when we open our hearts to God, and those whispers find their way in, we start to realize how off track we are. We are supposed to love all the hurtful idiots in the world too, and recognize that we are among them. Everyone deserves the love from everyone else, because we are all Children of God, just at different life perspectives.

For in Luke 6:35 we are told: *But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked*.

That is why we celebrate Christmas, because it took a baby to claim our minds and hearts; it took the Christ to claim our souls and bring us back to a path of Peace, Joy, and Love; it took God to help us realize who we truly are: a Child of God, another baby laying in the manger of God’s loving arms.

If we don’t see you before, have a joyous, peace-filled, love-filled, Christ-filled Christmas.

Let us pray….