God is love. This simple statement affects everything. Whether you know it or not, whether you believe it or not, God is love.

Humans talk about God all the time. We think deeply about who God might be. We try to prove or disprove God’s existence. People invent images to depict how they conceive of God. We pray to God. We curse using God’s name. We ask God to bless each other. We ask God to bless our nation and our people. We assign God a place — heaven.

Humans talk about love all the time. Parents love children. Spouses love each other. Friends love one another in a special way. Siblings love. People love their pets, their sports teams and their favorite food. But love is more than just something we think or feel. Love is a mysterious emotion, which we do not often understand, that nevertheless affects the way we live.

God is love. This brief statement slams these two ideas together. Near the end of the Bible, there is a little book called First John. The fourth chapter of 1 John says “God is love” and provides some explanations for what this might mean for our lives.

Strikingly, 1 John says that if anyone does not love, he does not know God, since God is love. We see this played out in our world today. Hate and anger rule much of our society and our interactions. Many people live daily ignoring love. When people refuse to love, that shows a lack of knowing God, since God is love.

We were created in the image of God, in the image of love. Thus, we were made to love. But each and every one of us fails to love perfectly all the time. We fail to live perfectly loving lives. We love ourselves more than anyone else, and that is not really love at all. The Bible calls this failure to live according to God’s love “sin.” And we are all guilty of sin.

But 1 John says more: “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). God is love. Though we have failed to love, He never fails to love. God’s greatest act of love is His Son Jesus Christ. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. And Jesus died because of our lack of love. Jesus willingly died in the place of sinners, sinners like me. And sinners like you. And Jesus rose from the dead on the third day.

God is love, and that love is effected and given through Jesus Christ. Trust in that love, believe in Jesus.

The churches of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) proclaim and teach this love of God for all. I invite you this Lent to come hear about God’s love for you in Jesus Christ.

In Christ Jesus,

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

President

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod