

Remaining

✠ in knowledge (vv.13-16a)

✠ in love (vv.16b-21)

In the name of God’s Love and Light, whom we know as Jesus, dear family of God:

Don’t you just love the scientific studies to see if there are differences between men and women? Maybe you’d like them to just pay you. Your report would save millions in tax payer dollars. Recently the question was whether women worry more than men. Didn’t they already answered that? Male brain scans show light here or there, but a woman’s brain scan is lit from ear to ear. Thank our dear Creator who said in the beginning: *“It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”* (Genesis 2:18 NIV84) *“God is my helper”* (Psalm 54:4 ESV) through His gift of women and mothers.

On this 7th SUNDAY OF EASTER we celebrate God’s gift of love on Mother’s Day. Mother love so much higher than Hollywood can reach, so much deeper than the best of novels. We rest secure because God’s love is **Remaining**. And God wants us **Remaining** with Him, growing...

✠ in knowledge (vv.13-16a)

Is worry is restricted to age or gender? Even little kids can have trouble sleeping. Teenagers may be sleep deprived at night challenging, but in the morning? Middle age responsibilities can pile on worries. So the Preacher says, *“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth”* because age comes *“when men rise up at the sound of birds, but their songs grow faint.”* (Ecclesiastes 12:1,4 NIV84) To save us from a meaningless life God wraps His gift of Love **in knowledge**.

There is one thing that every human being needs to know. This **knowledge** can make all the difference between good health or poor health, physically and mentally. Some try to ignore it, medicate it, drown it out with drugs and music. But unless your soul is safe **in knowledge** with your Creator, you’re sitting on a ticking time bomb. And hell is fanning the fuse. Not where God wants you to be.

So how do you know whether your relationship with God is secure? Human relationships are tough enough to understand. But in His Holy Book of Books God’s people asked: *“Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?”* (Isaiah 33:14 NIV84) Unless God helps us out here, there’s no way to reconcile. The LORD God describes Himself as the One who forgives sin and does not forgive sin. (Exodus 34:6f) This **knowledge** must be revealed.

One of Jesus’ closest disciples answers in his elder years: *“This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵If anyone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God. ¹⁶We also have come to know and trust the love that God has for us.”* (EHV ¹)

See what’s done? God put His ring on your finger with a huge diamond no mine on earth could produce. His engagement ring is everything God has already done by sending us the Gift of His only begotten Son. Who but God could have known that all those Old Testament promises and foreshadowing sacrifices would circle round the centuries until they all came to completion on the hill called Golgotha on the cross of God’s own Son? When God takes you by the hand and leads you there to kneel and confess your sins, you are far more safe and secure **in knowledge** than your mind can ever grasp. Remember how

¹ EHV ~ *Evangelical Heritage Version*, the Wartburg Project. Northwestern Pub. House, © 2017. Order: 800-662-6022.

sad Jesus' disciples were until He took them – men and women – to see the empty tomb? Remember how much love it took for Jesus to keep teaching and revealing His resurrected, glorified body those forty days until His glorious ascension? How could we be more secure **in knowledge** than to enjoy His power as Ruler of the universe and Judge of the world at God's right hand? Look what God has done. His story in history is yours. God's ring is on your finger by faith.

But God's engagement ring is coupled with His wedding ring – all God is still doing in us. His dear Holy Spirit keeps us confessing our sins. That's such a miracle all by itself. To admit to God that you are a wretched sinner who deserves only His wrath and punishment? You must already know the rest of the story to admit that. Other religions can only try to appease God by justifying themselves in their prayers. But God's ring on your finger of faith keeps you safe **in knowledge**. You trust the love of God that already took your sins away. You see the smiling face of God in Jesus' Easter joy – your Lord and Savior, Brother and Best Friend. The Lover of your soul keeps you **Remaining...**

✠ in love (vv.16b-21)

“God is love. Whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. ¹⁷In this way his love has been brought to its goal among us, so that we may have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are just like Jesus. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but complete love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who continues to be afraid has not been brought to the goal in love.”

So what if you had a husband who did not believe in God or accept His Son Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? Would you be afraid? Angry? Upset? Worried? Struggling just to be nice when he was not? What if on top of that your only son was so grossly immoral that even his friends were embarrassed? How do you cope when you're a mother with husband and son estranged from God?

Again, the dear Holy Spirit answers with power and conviction through John, the disciple Jesus loved: *“We love because he first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, “I love God,” but hates his brother, he is a liar. For how can anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, love God, whom he has not seen? ²¹This then is the command we have from him: The one who loves God should also love his brother.”* What a miracle if you could see your son and husband first needing to be brothers in Christ!

See, God keeps giving us opportunities to shine **in love** like Jesus. Some lights of mother's love shine so brightly that time cannot dim their beauty. There was a mother in ancient times named Monica. Her Christian girlfriends were jealous. “Why, when your husband is a nonbeliever, does he treat you so kindly? But our husbands are Christians, yet they treat us poorly.” Monica answered honestly without fear. “You treat your husbands with disrespect. You constantly criticize them. When my husband is out of sorts, I give him space. I respect him even when he does not deserve it. And God has now blessed my husband with faith.” She won him without words by the reverence of her life. (1 Peter 3:1-6)

But God wanted to give more evidence of faith in Monica. What God keeps doing in us keeps us **Remaining in love** for the Great Day. Monica's unmarried, immoral son tried to ditch her on his way to Italy. Left her praying in a church while he boarded a ship with his son. Monica was stubborn **in love** for her son. She took another ship, intercepted his, and like it or not, got him to listen to a famous preacher named Ambrose of Milan. God was crumbling his stubborn defenses. Then one day he was in a garden and heard a child's voice say, “Take and read.” He picked up a Bible opened to these words: *“Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”* (Romans 13:13f NIV84) Monica's son became a pastor and one of the most famous Church Father's, known today as Augustine.

Want more evidence of God **Remaining in love** in your life? Can't do better than Proverbs 31:10-31. How blessed to be surrounded by such noble women, truly appreciated by brothers in Christ. Amen.

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