***1 John 4:9-11 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.***

This morning, we have been blessed with children in a Christmas play, a beautiful duet, and the lighting of the candles of Peace and Love. This Season we are overflowing with the Love of Christ! God extended an unconditional, agape love toward us. Likewise, we are to extend, as close as we can, unconditional agape love toward one another and to all those around. We never know who God is calling and who will be His next child. We seek to see as God sees, beyond to surface, into the soul.

 Verse 9 starts *In this the love of God was manifested toward us.* In the first Advent, the love of God was manifested toward us, made readily apparent to us, in the person of Jesus Christ. He came as a Babe in a manger, and we believe that He will come again as Conquering King. The Bible promised His first Advent and it happened. The Bible promises His second Advent and we look to the sky, patiently waiting, for His imminent return. It could be any day… maybe today. Blessed is the servant that Jesus finds waiting and watching.

Verse 9 finishes*that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.*This is reminiscent of John 3:16 which says - *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* It is through Jesus we achieve everlasting life, but we also seek to live through Him in this world now! We pattern our lives and our love after Him, as we shine a light into this sin darkened world. We seek to love and serve others, as we have been loved and served by the Savior. Blessed is the servant that Jesus finds waiting, serving, and watching when He appears.

Verse 10 starts *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us****.*** I want us to notice something here. This is present tense. In this **IS** love. God loved us and His love for us is an eternal thing. It is ever present and now. It is not past tense or future tense, but very present. This reminds us of Romans 5:8 which says **-** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* God demonstrates – present tense. It is happening now. God did for us in this present what only Christ could do 2000 years ago. We were on His mind as He was on the Cross. He loves us and gives His peace to us.

Verse 10 ends *and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* My sin separates me from God. Your sin separates you from God. Romans 3:23 tells us that *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*. Anyone that believes he or she has not sinned needs only read 1 John 1:8 to have that cleared up - *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* We are all sinners, and we all need a Savior. That is Jesus. He is our Propitiation. To propitiate means to appease or regain the good favor. Jesus appeased God by His willing sacrifice of Himself. He reconciled us with God. As fully man and fully God, Jesus was uniquely qualified to take the wrath of God, appease the wrath of God, and, by His sacrifice, reconcile man to God. Propitiation built the bridge between God and mankind, and opened everlasting life with God to all that believe. In order to believe in the work of Jesus, we must understand the divide between God and man caused by sin. We must understand that only by the blood of Jesus does the wrath we deserve become the love, mercy, grace, and peace we do not deserve. Jesus paid what He did not owe that we may receive what we do not deserve. That, my friends, is our ultimate Christmas gift. It doesn’t get any better than that.

Verse 11 *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* If God loved us, while we were yet still sinners, as Romans 5:8 says and He loved us enough to give His only begotten Son, as John 3:16 says, to bridge the unbridgeable divide created by Adam as Romans 5:17 says, doesn’t this seem a small thing to give back to God – that we love one another? Sure it does. We love one another and we look out for one another. We learn to control our tongue and use it for building up one another and not tearing down one another. We help without being asked and we do without being told. God didn’t wait… Jesus didn’t wait… neither will we wait to do good when it is with our power to do so, as Proverbs 3:27 instructs.

This week, let’s really demonstrate the Love that God demonstrates to us daily. Let’s see with God’s eyes. Bows and ribbons are well and good. Food and friends are nice. But Jesus calls us to live a truly changed and transformed life. We are to look different, live different, and most of all love different than the world around us. All the while, we wait for our Savior, believing He may come at any moment. Blessed is the servant Jesus finds watching, serving, loving, and doing on the day that He returns.