

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

By Ken Woodley

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love ... I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete ... This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

—The Gospel of John—

In July of 1967—smack dab in the middle of the “Summer of Love”—the Beatles released “All You Need Is Love” as a single. The song’s author, John Lennon, wasn’t kidding. Not as far as I’m concerned.

If love isn’t all I need, it sure comes close.

Food?

Without love, I’d starve.

Water?

Without love, I’d die of thirst.

Shelter?

Without love, I’d be vulnerable to every tempest.

This four-letter word dominates the Gospel of John as Jesus seeks to counter the obscenity of hate, indifference, intolerance, self-absorption and apathy toward the needs of others.

The kind of love that Jesus is talking about is a love that we can swallow, a love that we can breathe, a love that comes through every pore of our skin, saturates our soul and leaves us joyfully splashing in the wonder of it all.

The love that Jesus is talking about is a love that we can call home. Literally.

We can live there. We can fall asleep at night in this love and wake up inside this love in the morning.

That’s why Jesus tells us to, “*Abide in my love.*”

Don’t just visit. Stay there. Take your shoes off. Put your feet up.

Tell the postal carrier: “This is where I live. Deliver all of my mail here.”

The kind of love that Jesus is talking about is a love that keeps the front door open. The back door, too. And all of the windows.

Nobody is locked out. God, in fact, has removed all locks and thrown away the key.

It's the kind of love that convinced Jesus to lay down his life for us to ensure that the message and meaning of this mind-boggling love would be passed down through the ages to us all. As he said:

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Thankfully, we can follow this teaching without being crucified.

We lay down our life when we put aside our own desires and give ourselves to the needs of someone else.

When we lay our own life down and pick up someone else's life, carrying it as far as we can because they cannot bear their life alone.

And when we do that we may be surprised to discover that the love of God has been guiding both of us toward each other for that very purpose.

That very purpose and even more.

Because only by laying down our own life can we be picked up and carried, as well, by the love of someone else.

In such love is God made vividly manifest. Feeding us. Quenching our deepest thirst. Sheltering us like no roof ever could. In that love is our joy made complete.

The love of God carrying us both.

The love of God bearing us all.

And that really is all we truly need.

