

# The Love That God Left Us!

## Rev. Dr. Jessica Lugo

1 John 4:7-21

Advent allows us to take a pause from our daily concerns and take time to reflect on what we will soon celebrate... Christmas during this "Time of Waiting." It is also a time provided by God to His people to think about what the arrival of Jesus means for you and me, and what His soon coming means for your life and mine, *in that watchful wait for His return...*

Without fear of being wrong, we can agree that we live in times filled with tension, violence, and evil, where many hearts have been invaded by hopelessness, doubt, lack of love, and sadly, indifference. In this gloomy context, God's LOVE is introduced. The love as God's universal command that belongs to God (v1). A love that should confront us and serve as a filter for our daily actions. His love that is **LEGACY** to us as an instrument to live by. The love that God left us is an invaluable demonstration from our Lord of what humanity means to Him. This is why the words of 1 John today remind us of the importance of remaining in love, even and despite the times, and even and despite people. We do not love because we are loved, but we love because GOD loved us first (v10). This beautiful Word that we revisit on this 3rd Sunday of Advent reminds us that when we know God, we can not only experience that pure, true, and transcendent love, but if we strive for it, we can aspire to love as HE loved us.

Christ summarized our responsibility to this, which is to love God with all our being and to love our neighbor as ourselves... *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"* Jesus said to him, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."* (Matt. 22:34-40). From the Old Testament to the New Testament, God's word is clear: above all, love must prevail. **I AM NOT SAYING IT IS EASY, BUT I AM SAYING IT IS MANDATORY.** This Advent season is an opportunity to reflect on how our love barometer is doing... not thinking about how much I love that loved one (that's easy to measure), but about how much I have been able to exemplify God's love in that person who is complicated, different, or difficult to love. The one who does not think like me, the one who does not dress like me, the one who does not smell like me, the one who does not love like me! To make real in us what v15 says: "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God's love remains in him, and he in God."



SERIE  
*Advent*  
2024

**LOVE**

  
**AETH**  
Association for Hispanic  
Theological Education

**#WeAreAETH**

LOVE

An **AGAPE** love does not respond to social postulates or human emotions, but to a conscious, objective, and pure decision as the goal of life. Living the love that God left us should move us toward reconciliation, transformation, unity... What better time than this Christmas season to pick up the phone and call that loved one, that friend, that person with whom you haven't spoken in a while... or send a text, a Messenger, a WhatsApp, whatever it takes! This is precisely what this Advent season is about – stopping and reflecting on how we can be different... living the love that God left us means showing empathy, being a helping hand that moves in favor of the needy, living the love that God left us means presence, it means companionship, it means **TESTIMONY**. For each believer's effort to love is the most appropriate response to **REPROCCATE** the love that God has for all His creatures... and which defines our identity as HIS people. May we, in this Advent season, exemplify the love that God left us.

---

*Pastor, Educator and Administrator - Rev. Dr. Jessica Lugo Meléndez is an ordained minister with the American Baptist Churches. She teaches History of Christianity, New Testament, Evangelism, and Business Administration at various institutions, with a passion for educating emerging leaders. In January 2024, she became the Executive Director of the Association for Hispanic Theological Education (AETH), leading efforts to strengthen theological education for Hispanics.*



SERIE  
*Advent*  
2024

**LOVE**



**#WeAreAETH**