

What It Means To Be A Christian by Joseph Ratzinger
An Advent Series: Part Three – ABOVE ALL, LOVE

Journal Questions:

1. What struck you most about the podcast episode?
2. Do you not just love, but *prefer* God?
3. Who has loved you without calculation?
4. What struck you most about this sermon?
5. What does it mean to be a Christian?

Quote to ponder:

Ultimately, faith means nothing other than admitting that we have this kind of shortfall; it means opening our hand and accepting a gift. In its simplest and innermost form, faith is nothing but reaching that point in love at which we recognize that we, too, need to be given something. Faith is thus that stage in love which really distinguishes it as love; it consists in overcoming the complacency and self-satisfaction of the person who says, "I have done everything, I don't need any further help." ~Page 74-75

For extra fun: "Love" by George Herbert

Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back

Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack

From my first entrance in,

Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,

If I lacked any thing.

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:

Love said, You shall be he.

*I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?*

*Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?
My dear, then I will serve.
You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat.*

Relevant Scripture parable: Miracle of the Feeding of the 5,000

When Jesus heard of it, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. The crowds heard of this and followed him on foot from their towns. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, “This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.” [Jesus] said to them, “There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.” But they said to him, “Five loaves and two fish are all we have here.” Then he said, “Bring them here to me,” and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children. (Matthew 14:13-21)