**SINCE WE ARE GREATLY LOVED**

**(Daniel 10:1-11:1)**

 Brennan Manning was a Catholic author and speaker who drank deeply from the well of grace. He once wrote, “God loves you as you are, not as you should be, because we’re never as we should be.”

 Manning also told the story of an elderly, Irish priest who took a walking tour of his rural parish. He came upon an old peasant who was kneeling by the side of the road praying. The priest was rather impressed. He said to the old man, “You must be very close to God.”

 The old man looked up, and with a smile, he replied, “Yes, He’s very fond of me.”

 I am here today to tell you that God is very fond of you. I think of John, the follower of Jesus who wrote five books we have in our NT. John never names himself in his account of the life and ministry of Jesus, but in the gospel that bears his name, more than once, he refers to “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” John refers that way about himself at least 5 times.

 You, too, are the disciple whom Jesus loves.

 These thoughts came to mind as I read Daniel 10. Twice, Daniel is addressed by an angel as “man greatly loved” (vv. 11, 19). The text doesn’t explicitly mention by whom Daniel is loved, but from the context, it is clear that God is One who loved Daniel greatly.

 God didn’t just state His love for Daniel. He demonstrated His love in three ways. I believe God shows His love towards us in these same ways.

1. **SINCE WE ARE GREATLY LOVED, GOD REVEALS HIS TRUTH TO US.**

 There are several ways that God makes known truth to those who are His. Look at v. 1. Cyrus became King in 539 BC. This was three years into Cyrus’ reign. That would make the year 536 BC. Daniel would be in his 80’s. He had been taken captive to Babylon close to 70 years earlier.

1. *God Makes Prophetic Truth Known.*

 Earlier in the Book of Daniel, we saw Daniel interpreting other people’s visions. In this section of the book, Daniel is the one having visions and dreams, and God has used angels (messengers) to convey the meaning of those visions.

 I believe the degree to which we draw close to God determines, to a great extent, how much God will make known to us what He is planning to do. Daniel is one who drew close through fasting and sustained prayer. Look at vv. 2-3. Notice also vv. 10-12, 14.

 Look also at Genesis 18:17. Scripture refers to Abraham as the friend of God. In Isaiah 41:8, God speaks of “Abraham, My friend.” Abraham is also characterized as God’s friend in 2 Chronicles 20:7. We read those same words in James 2:23.

 The truth is that we tell our friends things that we do not tell others. God is no different in that respect.

1. *God Makes Himself Known.*

 Look at Daniel 10:4-9. Daniel is given a vision of the glorious Lord. There are some ways in which this vision closely aligns with the vision John had of Jesus in Revelation 1:12-17. I believe Daniel sees the pre-incarnate Jesus, and John saw the post-resurrection Jesus.

 Rodney sang a song this morning in which he said “there is no wound which heaven cannot heal.” I would add, “there is no problem which a fresh vision of Jesus cannot solve.”

1. *God Makes His Love for Us Known.*

 We looked at the declaration of God’s love for Daniel in vv. 11 & 19. How do you and I know the Jesus loves us. We sang the answer this morning, “Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so.” The Bible tells us the story of Jesus’ death upon the cross, and the cross forever settles the question as to whether Jesus really does love us.

1. *God Makes the Reality of Spiritual War Known.*

 You and I have been caught up in a spiritual conflict. We were born into a world at war. There is an unseen dimension all around us, and war rages in that dimension.

 Look at v. 13.

 A few years ago, before his death, the Supreme Court Justice, Antonin Scalia was interviewed by New York magazine. In the interview, he explained his beliefs about the reality of the Devil. After mentioning his belief in a real heaven and hell he added, “I even believe in the Devil.

You do?, the interviewer asked.

 “Of course! Yeah, he’s a real person . . .”

 Have you seen evidence of the Devil lately?

 “You know, it is curious. In the Gospels, the Devil is doing all sorts of things. He’s making pigs run off cliffs, he’s possessing people and whatnot. And that doesn’t happen very much anymore . . . It’s because he’s smart.”

 So, what’s he doing now?

 “What he’s doing now is getting people not to believe in him or in God. He’s much more successful that way . . . I mean, c’mon, that’s the explanation for why there’s not demonic possession all over the place. That always puzzled me. What happened to the Devil, you know? He used to be all over the place. He used to be all over the New Testament. What happened to him? He got wilier.”

 Isn’t it terribly frightening to believe in the Devil?

 You’re looking at me as though I’m weird. My God! Are you so out of touch with most of America, most of which believes in the Devil? I mean, Jesus Christ believed in the Devil! It’s in the Gospels! You travel in circles that are so, so removed from mainstream America that you are appalled that anybody would believe in the Devil! Most of mankind has believed in the Devil, for all of history. Many more intelligent people than you or me have believed in the Devil.

 The Devil is real. He is an enemy. He means us harm. We are at war with spiritual forces.

1. **SINCE WE ARE GREATLY LOVED, GOD STRENGTHENS US.**

 Look at vv. 18-19 and 11:1. God used an angel in the process of strengthening Daniel. The Bible speaks much of angels. Good angels are mentioned 100 times in the OT, and they show up 160 times in the NT.

 Look at what we are told in Hebrews 1:14.

 Reformation theologian John Calvin once wrote:

 The angels are the dispensers and administrators of the divine beneficence towards us; they regard our safety, undertake our defense, direct our ways, and exercise a constant solicitude that no evil befall us.

 Since God loves us, He does things that make His love known and experienced. One of those expressions of His love is strengthening us when we are weak.

1. **SINCE WE ARE GREATLY LOVED, GOD FIGHTS FOR US.**

 Look at vv. 13, 20-21. We have an enemy who is real, who is evil, who is powerful, and who is cunning. In no sense, however, is He God’s counterpart.

 Our God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Satan is none of those things.

 Who is this Michael whom we find mentioned? Many say he is an archangel. Some, however, contend that Michael is another name for Jesus. I don’t know for certain. I have not done a deep study of who Michael is, but I find that thought intriguing. To me, it makes sense. Jesus is the Commander of heaven’s forces. He is the One who rides upon a white horse, and the angels follow His commands.

 We have a God who fights for us. In every sense, He is our Savior, our Rescuer.

 I believe the blockbuster movie *Titanic* came out in 1997. The movie took a real event and added a fictitious love story to it. The key characters were Rose and Jack. Rose is a privileged girl who is part of high society. Jack is a commoner. Through an odd set of circumstances, they meet and fall in love. Rose survives the tragic sinking of the luxurious ship, but Jack perishes.

 As an older lady, Rose recounts her relationship with Jack. She says, “He saved me in every way that a person could be saved.”

 There were some ways that Jack saved her. Early in the movie he saved her from falling overboard. He saved her from marrying a man that didn’t love her and a man whom she didn’t really love. He may have helped to save her from being another statistic in the Titanic’s great death toll, but Jack didn’t save her in every way.

 Jesus is the only one who can save us in every way. He can not only save our physical lives, He can save our eternal souls, as well.

 Jesus loves us. He has shown and continues to show His love. Let us return His love with ours.