

1 John 3:1-7

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins; and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

Luke 24:36-48

Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see, for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you---that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

"Soul Matters"

**See what love the Father has given us,  
that we should be called children of God;  
and that is what we are.**

1 John 3:1a

In her reflection, on Ephesians 4:6, "There is one God and Creator of all, who is over all, who works through all, and is within all", Rev. Molly Baskette wrote in 'Fingerprints of God': 'Life has been messy lately. A tragic death, rampant illness, and tensions at work made every day a circus of struggle. I prayed fervently for God to make things a little easier. Come, Lord Jesus: resurrect the dead, heal the sick, and make the church on earth as it is in heaven! God, apparently having better things to do, did not answer these prayers immediately. Taking matters into my own hands, I juggled harder, danced faster, and tried to square the messy unfinished circle of life by taking my neat freak to new levels at home, the only space it seemed I could control. Then lent arrived, with its hard but rewarding spiritual disciplines. My 11-year-old daughter and I committed to meditate together daily. Every morning, as I write this, we pull kitchen chairs out from the table, point them toward the east-facing windows in our home, and sit side by side to watch the sun rise while we meditate for three minutes. Meditation helps her with the anxiety that feels like a ubiquitous feature of life for young people of this generation, and helps me push back against the false inner voice that insists I must stay in constant motion to prevent the world from falling further apart. Together, we inhale through our noses, and imagine God saying "I love you." On the exhale, we reply back, silently "I love you, God." It sounds lovely. But, of course, my monkey mind goes crazy the second I sit down. I mentally order the day, write emails in my head, stave off the deeper feelings of despair with my calm efficiency. Staring out the window rather than wonder that the sun is coming up for the galillionth time in bold defiance against the grief, trauma and entropy of modern life, all I can do is notice the fingerprints on the glass I have not cleaned since my two-year-old nephew visited last month. I make a mental note to wash the window as soon as we're done. My mini-me daughter

notices them too. When our meditation ends, she says, “Do you see those fingerprints on the window? It’s like they’re saying: God is in the sun, and God is in the fingerprints. Because they belong to someone we love, who God made.’

(April 11, 2018 UCC Daily Devotional)

The Reverend ended her reflection with the prayer: ‘God, You have left messy fingerprints all over this world. You are in the sun shining, and the smears on the glass. Whatever we are going through, fire, earthquake, flood of emotion: may we see You in both sun, shadow, and smear. Amen.’ (ibid)

### **The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Jesus.** (1 John 3:1b)

In Mark 12:14 the gospel writer Mark recorded the time when the Pharisees and Sadducees asked Jesus a question in order to trap him: ‘Teacher, is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?’ In his reflection on this verse, Rev. Matthew Laney wrote: ‘Obviously, the answer was, ‘NO WAY!’ What could be more objectionable to the children of Israel than paying for their oppression by a brutal foreign overlord with pretensions to divinity? Saying that in public would be treason. Condoning Caesar’s tax would be blasphemy. Clever trick. So Jesus asked them for a coin (significant they had one of those idolatrous, God-mocking coins and Jesus did not). The coin clearly belonged to Caesar since it bore Caesar’s name and image. “Give to Caesar what belongs to him” Jesus said, “and give to God what belongs to God.” What, then, belongs to God? That which bears God’s image and name. That’s us, of course! We are God’s ‘coins,’ God’s currency in the world. In addition to being a political statement against Rome, it was a statement of empowerment for the Jewish people. In effect, Jesus said, “no one owns you, but God.” And who doesn’t need to hear that in a world awash in brands (I’m wearing half a dozen right now) and graven images vying for a piece of us, if not full ownership? Reciting “I belong to God” as our daily mantra might be as important in our time as in the days of Jesus. Idolatry never goes out of style.’ Rev. Laney ended with this prayer: Lord, I give myself to you. May my day and my life be well spent.’ (UCC Daily Devotional, March 27, 2018)

**What we do know is this: when He is revealed, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as he is. And all who have this hope in Him purify themselves, just as He is pure.** (1 John 1:2-3)

The psalmist in psalm 135 prayed: ‘The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; they have eyes, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear, and there is no breath in their mouths. Those who make them and all who trust them shall become like them.’ Reflecting, Rev. Caldwell wrote: “Papa?” I hear my seven-year-old calling curiously from upstairs, where we’re supposed to be playing Legos. I had told him I’d be right back, and I meant it when I said it, but I glance at the clock on my phone and realize that that was like fifteen minutes ago. I’ve been hiding in the bathroom all this time, scrolling through Facebook. I’m hiding in the bathroom because, you see, I am a Good Parent and I know that Bad Parents stare at their screens all day, while their children watch them watching their screens, and so learn from their parents Bad Examples. Therefore, to set a Good Example, I hide in the bathroom to stare at my screen so my son won’t see me do it. Instead, he will simply wonder why I’ve ditched him, Because, as I said, I am a Good Parent. The Bible’s full of warnings against worshiping idols, but psalm 135 names the scariest of all the reasons: you become like what you worship. Worshipers of statues, the psalmist says, become silent, unhearing, unseeing. By just about any definition of ‘idol,’ my phone is one, and by just about any definition or ‘worship,’ I am one of its most devoted worshipers. If the psalmist is right, then I am in very real danger, alone here in the bathroom of becoming like this sleek little god in my hand; with nothing to say, flashy with no beauty, outraged with no action, funny with no compassion, promising with no fulfillment. Id without superego. Form without substance. All heat and no light. “Papa, what are you doing?” he yells from upstairs. And because even I can sometimes manage to hear the word of the living God in the voice of the prophet, I dash my idol against the stones (aka, put it in airplane mode) and head upstairs to try to be present, aware, loving, deep, and real, like the One whom I’d actually rather be worshiping.’ Ending, the Reverend prayed, “Come, Holy Spirit, save me from becoming click bait.” Amen. (UCCDD 4/11/18)