

a 4-Letter Word

Seek Ye First
SESSION THREE

LOVE (Doreen's Prayer)

O my God, you are here

O my God, we are here

You are where we are always

And always you love us

And we thank you.

Amen

FIRST THOUGHTS

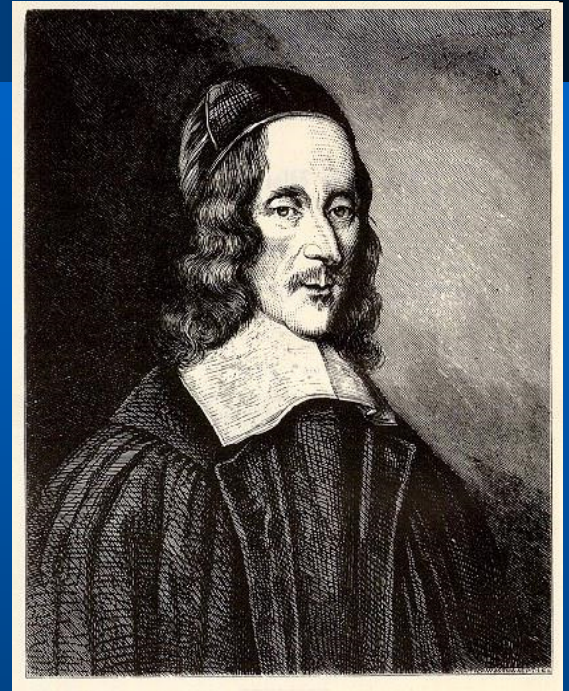
- A priest I knew in the Diocese of Kootenay
- a Buddhist to a Christian - “Why are Christians commanded to love one another?”
- A 400 year-old poem

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Love bade me welcome,
yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-ey'd Love,
observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me,
sweetly questioning
If I lack'd anything.

"A guest," I answer'd,
"worthy to be here";
Love said, "You shall be he."
"I, the unkind, the 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 marr'd 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.



LOVE, THE BEST 4-LETTER WORD OF ALL

- 1 John 4:18-19 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because (God) first loved us.

SONG OF SOLOMON

**Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
a raging flame.
Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.**

Image: THE TOWEL



JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES FEET

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. (He) got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? (I)f I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.



Love

Opposite of Love

THE DARK SIDE (OPPOSITE)

- **1 John 1:8-10** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

PSALM 51

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

FIFTY ONE and a half):

The News Gets Better

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

- **SHOVE TUESDAY**
- **Many folks want to serve God, But only as advisers**
- **People are funny; they want the front of the bus, Middle of the road, And back of the church.**

WE HAVE A CHOICE

- **A minister had one of those signs on the front lawn of the church that allowed for changing the message from time to time or putting up the title of the sermon for the coming week. The message that she put up at the beginning of Lent one year was: “if tired of sin, come in.” A couple days later she happened to look at the sign as she entered the church and someone had written under that message, in bright red lipstick, “if not, call 624-8898.”**

HONESTY (is?) THE BEST POLICY

Prov 28:13 No one who conceals transgressions will prosper, but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.

AURICULAR CONFESSION

Dear friend in Christ, God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, healing the sick and forgiving the sinful; May God, who enlightens every heart, help you to confess your sins and trust in his mercy

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven;

And whose sin is put away

The Lord has put away all your sins

Thanks be to God

EFFECTIVE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

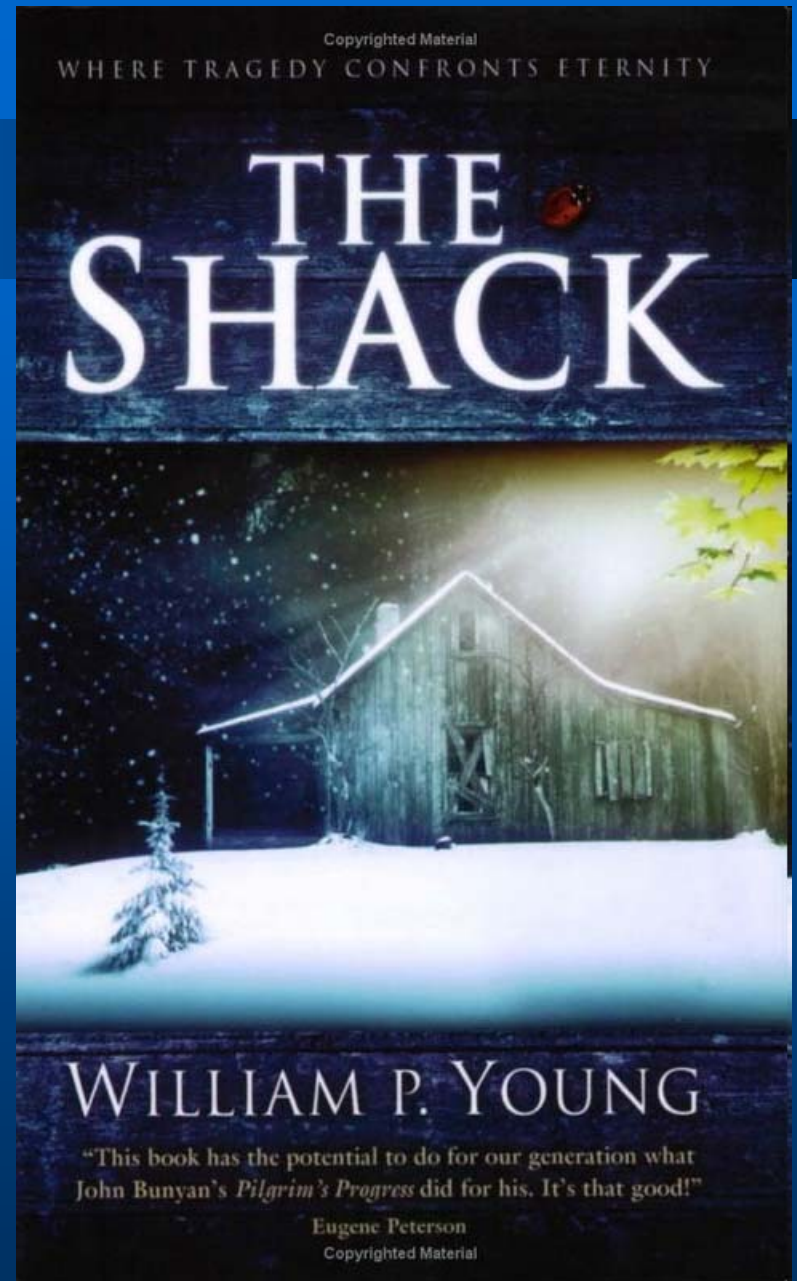
- **Ephesians 1:7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace
- **A new understanding of Jewish Temple practice**

MY MOTHER USED TO SAY ...

- Hebrews 10:12-17 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins . . . he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us . . . I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.'

THE SHACK

Forgive
And
Forget?



“Forgiveness is not about forgetting, Mack. It is about letting go of another person’s throat.”

“But I thought you forget our sins?”

“Mack, I am God. I forget nothing. I know everything. So forgetting for me is the choice to limit myself. Son, ...because of Jesus, there is now no law demanding that I bring your sins back to mind. They are gone when it comes to you and me, and they run no interference in our relationship.”

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

More from THE SHACK

“Forgiveness does not establish relationship. In Jesus, I have forgiven all humans for their sins against me, but only some choose relationship. Mackenzie, don’t you see that forgiveness is an incredible power—a power you share with us, a power Jesus gives to all whom he indwells so that reconciliation can grow?”

REPRISE (Doreen's Prayer)

O my God, you are here

O my God, we are here

You are where we are always

And always you love us

And we thank you.

Amen

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- When you hear “Doreen’s Prayer” what comes to mind?
- Which is easier, to forgive? or to forget?
- The Poem “Love Bade Me Welcome” contained the God-image “quick-eye’d love.” Have you other names for God?