

By Michael Brown

In today's Gospel lesson the evangelist is starting his writing describing his understanding of the consciousness that came into the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus's earthly ministry had such a profound effect on his disciples that years afterward they wrote down their remembrances of his teachings and spread them throughout the world. They saw in him the very creative force that formed the universe and called it into existence. They saw in him the spark of creative divinity that had come into the world to live and die among us and to teach us a better way of life.

Jesus came into a world fraught with injustice. A world that in too many ways had turned from righteousness and fairness and justice towards oppression and abuse of the other for personal gain. He came into a community that had been given the laws of righteousness and a special relationship with the creator God, yet had repeatedly turned away from God, or else like so many of the Pharisees and Sadducees, had become so caught up in the minutia of the law that they had lost sight of the true purpose and meaning of the law.

In his teachings Jesus brought into focus the very heart of the law, the central point upon which all of the other laws of righteousness hang, the greatest of the commandments. Love God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself. On the night before he died he gave to his disciples a new commandment. To love one another as God loves us. To love one another with the sacrificial love that the creator God has for us and creation. To love one another with a transformative love that will change this world into the world it was intended to be. A love for the other and for creation that will bring about the Kingdom of God. This was the good news that the Word of God, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, brought into the world in order to save it. It is up to us, as his disciples alive today, to continue that work and spread that good news of salvation to all.