

The Communal Mosaic of Christ



I'm convinced: Starbucks has the best environment for Bible discussion, spiritual intimacy and prayer. I was sitting there thumbing the straw to my iced Chai (with 10 pumps of Chai because the spicier the better, of course) when my friend walked in. We meet frequently in this setting for mutual encouragement in the faith.

When it was my turn to insert a prayer request, I only mentioned our church in the 'burg – that God would continue to supply the impetus toward genuine companionship within the body. See, we're gaining so much momentum here in the direction of our stated theme – One Another (Jn.13.34-35) – and we don't want that to slow to a trickle. Many have witnessed a spirit of revival going on as various brothers and sisters realize their need for encouragement and intimate their longing for mutual accountability in the faith. People want to be closer, to feel that camaraderie of fellow disciples, to live out spiritual kinship, to enhance and develop their spiritual friendships – *even outside the concrete walls of the Brownsburg Church of Christ.*

I told him how God shared with our church just this past Wednesday study the import of such relationships in John's first letter. It says:

"No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us." (1 John 4.12).

This is my favorite verse in this section, here's why. This is the famous love chapter in John's letter, where he elaborates on God, how his is love and how he first loved us, etc. But right smack-dab in the middle, John comes out of left field with a completely unrelated point and says "By the way, no one has ever seen

God” – or is the verse unrelated? No, it’s related and here’s his point. Before understanding, we have to point out that John has said this before in his gospel, particularly in the first chapter and in the eighteenth verse: *“No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.”* And here he means that no one can or has seen God in all of his splendor – so we don’t know him **until we’ve seen Jesus**. But John is now saying - in 1Jn.4.12 - that God is manifest, not only in Jesus, but **when we love each other!** People don’t know who God is until they see the love between us. That’s John’s point.

That people can experience Christ in profound ways through the embodiment of his spirit in the church, as Christians are loving each other, supporting each other and working together. Because I trust the spirit of Jesus is in my brother or sister, when I get to know them I’ll experience a face of Jesus I’ve not seen in others – and all of these facets of Christ in us come together in the church produce one monolithic “communal mosaic” of Jesus Christ, the Lord (to use a phrase coined by my friend).

This is glorious. And this is what the entire body is for. I hope that you’ll join us at Brownsburg for this reason and continue praying for the growth of love in this body, while also being willing to share the Christ in you with us.