

Beloved

March 17–20

We tend not to use fancy language like “beloved” in our everyday speech. Do you remember the last time you may have called someone your beloved? Beloved is a word we might write out in a card or letter, but to use it in everyday conversation? Doubtful. Which is too bad because the word beloved is so particularly expressive and inspiring.

Beloved refers to one who is not just loved, but much loved, one who is precious and adored. When we look upon someone as precious and adored, we are inspired to go out of our way to care for them, bless them, help them, and ensure they know they are loved! When a couple falls in love, each of them are inspired by that love to pour out their energy, time, and attention upon their beloved, and when they do the relationship thrives. If, over time, because of the busyness of life or the habits of familiarity, those gifts of energy, time, and attention are no longer given as abundantly as they once were, relationships can struggle as those involved no longer feel beloved.

When someone is beloved, we love them with our whole life. This is how Jesus loves us, with his whole life; Jesus loved us enough to pay that price. As John 3:16 proclaims, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not die but have eternal life.”* We are beloved of God, and Jesus invites us to love one another like that! This is our highest purpose, our reason for being, to love one another as God loves us. Beloved, let us love one another!

#REthinkILC Lent Photo for this week: Inspired by the word *“BELOVED”*, take a photo and either put it on your social media with #REthinkILC or email it to kelly@immanuel.us by noon on Saturday, March 20.

REnew52 action for this week: BLESS. Dedicate your energy, time, and attention to helping those around you feel beloved.