

Traditional Home service Sunday 31st Oct

OPENING PRAYER

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: help us so to hear them, to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word, we may embrace and for ever hold fast the hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you. We are not worthy to be called your children. We turn to you again. Have mercy on us, bring us back to yourself as those who once were dead but now have life through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*O for a thousand tongues*)

READINGS - Deuteronomy 6.1-9
Hebrews 9.11-14
Mark 12.28-34

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

HYMN 2 (*Tell out, my soul*)

CONCLUSION

The Lord bless you and watch over you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!

2 My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread thro' all the earth abroad
the honours of your name.

3 Jesus! the name that charms our
fears,
that bids our sorrows cease,
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life and health and peace.

4 He breaks the power of cancelled
sin,
he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean;
his blood availed for me.

5 To God all glory, praise, and love
be now and ever given
by saints below and saints above,
the Church in earth and heaven

1 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of
the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit
voice;
Tender to me the promise of His
Word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart
rejoice.

2 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of
His name!
Make known His might, the deeds His
arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the
same;
His holy Name, the Lord, the mighty
One.

3 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of
His might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory
by;
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are
put to flight;
The hungry fed, the humble lifted
high.

4 Tell out, my soul, the glories of His
Word!
Firm is His promise, and His mercy
sure.
Tell out my soul, the greatness of the
Lord
To children's children and
forevermore!

Sermon - Adrian Morton
Mark 12:28-34 Foundation is Love

Love is foundational for us as Christians.

"The world does not understand theology or dogma, but it understands love and sympathy."
D L Moody

In our reading a teacher of the law asks Jesus which of all the commandments is the most important?

Jesus then explains what the two most important commandments are:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"

The man agrees, and Jesus interestingly tells him,

"You are not far from the kingdom of God."

He wasn't quite there yet..

He needed to believe in the One sent from heaven - Jesus himself!

I want to look at these 2 commandments this morning...

How do we love the Lord you God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

Well, Jesus said in John's Gospel, if you love me you'll obey my commandments.

So it's like a circular argument.

What's the most important commandment - Love the Lord your God.
How do you Love God - obey his commandments...

Jesus though said this in John 6:

"The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

For me that's a key component of loving God - to believe in the one has sent.

To believe that Jesus died and was raised again.

To be a follower of Him.

To have His purposes, seeking the Kingdom of God, as a defining purpose in your life.

To have the ways and values of the Kingdom influence how you live.

It also says this in 1 John 4:

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

I think if we are going to love God, we need to first understand His love for us.

Apart from the book of Revelation, where there is all sorts of voices from heaven speaking, I think there is only 3 places in the New Testament where we read of God's audible voice being heard.

One is at Jesus' baptism.

Where it says:

"A voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'."

One is in John's Gospel

Where Jesus says: "Father, glorify Your name " and it says, 'Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.'"

And in that account Jesus tells the people that the voice was not for His benefit but for the people's.

And the third time is in the transfiguration story...

where it says: 'a voice from the cloud said (again), "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'. Listen to him!"

When God spoke audibly, I don't think it was ever for Jesus' benefit.

It was always for those around who would hear it.

Jesus' relationship with His Father was such that he knew.
He knew He was loved.
He knew His Father was well pleased with Him.

The voice was for our benefit.

Its isignificant that out of the 3 times God's voice is audible.
Two of those occasions kind of say the same thing.

"This is my Son, whom I love."

The Father wants us to know that Love is foundational.

The Father loves us with the same love as he loved Jesus.

To know we are loved, ridiculously loved, by the creator, is the right source for our inner security.

Gods love is a foundation for our hearts.
Its a strength for our hearts.
Its a shield around our hearts.

And whilst we can and should read about it. so we read the Scriptures which tell the story of Jesus.

In other words we can understand with our minds his love for us.

We also need to experience that Love in our hearts.

<Talk about the Alpha away day coming up....

The most important work of the Holy Spirit, is to bring an experience of the love of God.

It is the supreme work of the Spirit, to pour God's love into our hearts. (Romans 5:5)

To give us an experience of God's love.

<Talk about visiting elderly person who didn't know God loved her after 40+ years of church attendance...>

<Illustration of cruise liner & banquets>

If we go through our Christian life, yes having a head knowledge of God's love, but never experiencing His love, then its like being on the cruise liner but not enjoying what's really on offer.

And actually, its more than simply enjoying what's on offer.

I don't think we can love God, with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.. UNLESS we are experiencing His love that has been poured into our hearts.

Knowing God's love for us is so foundational for a healthy Christian life.

Because loving God becomes a response to His love for us.

Loving others becomes a response to His love for us.

That is ultimately what as Christians we should be known for.

That we are a people who love well.

It should start with those closest around us. That we learn to love our children, our spouses.

Its all well and good that we attend a Sunday service, we come to prayer meetings, we are involved in other ways...

But if we then go out with our friends and we moan about our spouses or our children...

Well, we are not very far in our Christian faith...

And as we learn to love those who are close to us, then we widen our reach, our sphere of influence, if you like.

And we love those within the church family. Our adopted brothers and sisters.

Scripture says the love we have for one another will be the primary way the world will know about God.

Not that we love those in our close family. Even the world can do that well.

But we love those in our wider church family.
That's the biggest and best witness we can give.

The love we have for one another...
And as we are learning to do that well...
And that has its challenges doesn't it...!
You're a strange lot!

But as we are learning to do that well...
our sphere of influence should widen as we learn to love those in our wider community.

Our neighbours... the parish council, those working in our shops...

In his book Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis wrote, "Do not waste your time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbour act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less."

God's story with His people has always been about Love.

From His first call to Abraham, where He said to him... "I will bless you so you can be a blessings to others."

That was always the plan for His people.

As His people lived in the security of God's love for them, they would be in turn be a blessing to the nations around them.

Where are we this morning?

Do you know the extent of God's love for you....

Are you someone who doesn't find it naturally easy to be loving towards others?

Pray that the Lord's love overwhelms you!
Pray for more compassion...
Amen!