



Ripon & Lower Dales Methodist Circuit
With God in the City, Towns, Villages and rural areas

Worship at Home – Sunday 15th August 2021

‘Nothing Without Love’

1 Corinthians 13 – The Gift of Love

13 If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,^[a] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly,^[b] but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Welcome to this week’s worship at home service. The prayers have been sourced and prepared by Worship Leaders, Amanda, Pip and Sharon, and the reflection is from Revd. Gareth. The hymns have been chosen to help us explore the readings and the service theme which is ‘Nothing Without Love.’

Prayer based on 1 Corinthians 13. Let us pray.

Holy God,

You call us “beloved”
And you love us with a fierceness
that is at once unsettling and comforting.
May your Divine love dwell within us
and be enacted through us so that
No matter what language we speak
Love will dance within each word we say;
When you call us to stand up for justice,
Love will be the power that drives our actions;
When we seek knowledge,
Love will compel us beyond idle curiosity
all the way to truth;
When we offer our prayers in faith,
Love for you will fill our hearts with peace;
When we give of ourselves and our possessions,
Love for you and your people will shine above
love for worldly things.
Thank you, God, for the gift of love,
And empower us to walk the path love opens
before us.

Amen

[Joanna / January 31, 2019]

Let us praise Our Loving God!

StF n°36 – There’s a quiet understanding

1. There’s a quiet understanding
when we’re gathered in the Spirit,
it’s a promise that he gives us,
when we gather in his name.
There’s a love we feel in Jesus,
there’s a manna that he feeds us,
it’s a promise that he gives us,
when we gather in his name.
2. And we know when we’re together,
sharing love and understanding,
that our brothers and our sisters
feel the oneness that he brings.
Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jesus,
for the way you love and feed us,
for the many ways you lead us;
thank you, thank you, Lord;
thank you, thank you, Lord.

WE SEEK YOUR KINGDOM (*Sung to Abide with me*)

We seek your kingdom throughout every sphere
We long for heaven's demonstration here,
Jesus, your light shine bright for all to see
Transform, revive and heal society

Before all things, in him all things were made
Inspiring culture, media and trade
May all our work serve your economy
Transform, revive and heal society

Peace, truth and justice reigning everywhere
With us be present in our public square
Fill all who lead with your integrity
Transform, revive and heal society

Forgive us Lord, when we have not engaged
Failing to scribe your heart on history's page
Make us again what we were made to be
Transform, revive and heal society

Faithful to govern ever may we be
Selfless in service, loving constantly
In everything may your authority
Transform, revive and heal society

Music: Tune - Abide with me (Public Domain) – Henry Francis Lyte
Lyrics: Noel Robinson, Andy Flannagan, Rev Graham Hunter

John 15: 9-17 – Love one another

⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

A prayer of Thanksgiving by Bruce Prewer.

We give thanks for the gifts of God's creating and redeeming love, the loving that casts out all fear.

For the love that frees us to ask questions and explore, to frame doubts and investigate new possibilities,
to build theories and then cross-examine them.

For the love that enables us to marvel at our own existence, to ponder and remember,
recognize our own needs and affirm our own knowledge and purpose.

For the love that helps us to communicate with one another, to express trust and respect,
share heartaches and visions,
to convey love and mercy.

For the love that inspires us to warmly encourage those around us,
to affirm and build up, comfort and enlighten.

For the love that liberates us to celebrate the world around us in poetry and song,
to delight in shapes and colours, intricacies and patterns, awesome forces and deep mysteries..

For the love that encourages us to express something of our faith;
for creeds and prayers, hymns and readings,
discussion groups and sermons.
We thank you, God of creative love.

Above all else we thank you
for the love that allows us to admit
that we have no words in which to adequately describe the process of faith in Christ,
the awesome worship of our God,
and the holy wonder of the Spirit.
We thank you for that point where
our love becomes wordless adoration.
Through Christ Jesus,
who is the pure glory of your loving. **Amen!**

A Prayer of Confession *based on 1Corinthians 13*

Love is patient;
for our quick-temperedness:
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Love is kind;
for our indifference towards others:
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Love is not envious;
for our petty jealousies:
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Love is not boastful;
for our pretentiousness:
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Love is not arrogant;
for our opinionated views -
Lord, have mercy:
Christ, have mercy:

Love is not rude;
for our crass behaviour:
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Love does not insist on getting its own way;
for our false sense of our own importance:
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Love is not irritable;
for our resentful behaviour:
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Love does not rejoice in wrong-doing;
for our rejoicing in all the wrong things:
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

May God show us mercy,
forgive us our sins against love
and lead us to life that lasts:
AMEN.

Reflection: NOTHING WITHOUT LOVE

If I do not have love, I am nothing and if I do not have love, I gain nothing. Paul's statement here in his first letter to the Corinthians is a bold one and yet when I consider what it means, I am inclined to agree.

Over the last year the phrase 'Nothing without love' as kept coming to mind. I believe relates both to Paul's words, and how God calls us to live.

I've heard it said that 'there has to be more than love', that 'it isn't just about love.' and whilst I appreciate when this has been said, reference might have been being made to Salvation in Christ and Christian living which is fruitful in its discipleship, through taking up the way of the cross in following Jesus. There is no getting away from the fact that without love all this wouldn't be possible. Without love, Christian living becomes empty, it loses its way becoming a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal and no one wants to become one of those.

Let's remember, we love because God first loved us. Don't forget, that God so loved the world that he sent his only Son.

Consider how throughout the Gospels, we read how Jesus had compassion, and compassion comes from a place of love.

Think of Jesus giving himself to be a Sacrifice for all people, love displayed upon the cross for you and for me. If you are still not convinced, let's look to what Jesus said about love.

In verse nine, Jesus speaks of an overflowing of love which comes from the Father. And continues to make clear that the key to remaining in God's love is keep the commandments that Christ Jesus gives. In this pursuit of a life of love we know the joy that comes from God alone. Joy which is experienced in our depth of our inner being and which is our strength from God.

So, what are Jesus' commandments? Put simply, to Love each other as Jesus, as God has loved you. God is love and Jesus talks about what it

means to know His love, love which is the greatest of all love. And what is the greatest love?

Greater love has no one than that which Jesus gives in laying down His life for his friends. And Jesus calls us to be his friends and to know the reality of the greatest love in our lives.

What difference does this make to our relationship with God? Being called friend by Jesus, knowing salvation because of His redeeming love, we are transformed by the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is out of our transforming loving relationship with God that we bear fruit, fruit which is a Christlike character evident to others. Again, it is love which is at the heart of all this as we come full circle to Jesus' commandments to Love God with our all and to love each other.

With all this in mind, I am going to suggest that we do 'nothing without love', speak 'nothing without love', that Christian living is 'nothing without love.'

Love features in so many songs over the years, here are a few and several I have personally never heard of before, but with the wonders of google discovered loads. Here's what I found.

It must have been love *by Roxette 1986*;
I believe in a thing called love *by The Darkness 2002*;
Best of My Love *by The Emotions 1977*;

Endless Love *by Lionel Richie 2014*;
Will you love me tomorrow *by The Shirelies 1960*;
This is love *by will.i.am 2013*;

To know him is to love him *by The Teddy Bears, 1959*;
All you need is love *by The Beatles*;
I will always love you *by Whitney Houston*;
I just called to say I love you *by Stevie Wonder*;

Message of Love *by The Pretenders*;
Best of My Love *by Eagles*;
Chapel of Love *by The Dixie Cups*
Big Love *by Fleetwood Mac*;

I wonder which of the songs you know, and which songs have come to your mind that I've not included. The use of word love in the English language is fully dependant upon its context for

understand it's meaning. I love chocolate and I love my friend mean hugely different things, but this is less of the case with New Testament Greek, with several words for love. The most familiar are the famous four: Eros – Romantic love; Storge – Family love / Parent; Philia – Brotherly love / Friendship and Agape – Is what we tend to use for divine Godly love.

All this, the songs and varying depths of expression speaks to me about how we can see God's fingerprint within the world we live.

And let's not forget the song 'Love changes everything' by Andrew Lloyd Webber. With the lyrics 'How you live and how you die'. How does the God's love change how you live? I'd suggest that love especially changes everything when that love is God's.

So how do we love God with our all and love each other. Well, the ways are many.

One of the ways is through how we care pastorally for others. I want to touch on this briefly, yet I want to be clear on how valuable the ministry of our pastoral visitors is to the life of the church and wider community in which we love and serve the Lord.

You might have heard it said that someone might have had several pastoral visits for different members of the church, yet if the Ordained Minister hasn't visited, it is said that the church hasn't visited.

This is of course not true. But it is devaluing and disempowering towards those who have call upon their life to exercise a ministry of pastoral care.

Over the last 18 months I have been so encouraged by the great number of people who have stepped up the pace of their ministry, providing pastoral care to an even greater number of people and doing it in new and creative ways. I want to thank each person who has been making phone calls, who has been printing and circulating newsletters and worship at home materials and those who have been

making pastoral visits and shopping to help and show love and care.

I thank you and celebrate your ministry which is so valued and such an important part of the life of the church.

In a couple of weeks, we see the start of the new Methodist Church year and whilst we don't know what the new year will bring, we know who we can trust and who holds our future.

I hope and pray that we will see a year filled with acts of love, doing 'nothing without love'; a year when we are compelled to speak 'nothing without love', that we are motivated in our Christian living by being in the love of God.

So 'nothing without love,' wouldn't it amazing to see the greatest commandments come to life and for lives to be transformed; for the love of God to rule our hearts, minds, strength and to know the love of God dwell deeply within our souls.

May we, therefore, remember without the love of God we are nothing, nothing without love.

Amen.

StF n°663 – I, the Lord of sea and sky

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

chorus

Here I am, Lord?

Is it I, Lord?

I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord,

if you lead me.

I will hold your people in my heart.

2. I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain;
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

chorus

3. I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts are satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Daniel L. Schutte (*b. 1947*) Words & Music © OCP Publications

Prayers of intercession – 3 voices

Voice 1

Lord Jesus Christ, you gave yourself without counting the cost, offering even your own life for the life of the world.

Voice 2

So now we pray for all those who seek to love you in return, however hesitant, partial, or imperfect their love might be. Inspire them through your love.

Voice 3

We pray for those new in their faith, still learning more of you, still uncertain perhaps of their commitment, still discovering more of your love. Keep their love always growing.

Voice 1

We pray for those established in their faith, facing the daily risk of growing complacent, stale, settled into a comfortable routine. Make their love ever fresh.

Voice 2

We pray for those whose faith has crumbled, no longer holding the trust they once held, no longer feeling you close by their sides, no longer seeking to follow Christ. Renew their love.

StF n°615 Let love be real, in giving and receiving

Voice 3

We pray for those who have never had faith; those consistently unmoved by the message of the Gospel, those who resist its challenge despite themselves, and those who wilfully go against your will. Kindle a love for you in their hearts.

Voice 1

We pray for those whose faith is costly, those who sacrifice time, money, energy, security, health and even life itself, in the service of others. Reward their love.

Voice 2

And we pray for those who need something to put their faith in – the poor, the hungry, and the homeless, the sick, the suffering, the bereaved, all those broken by the tragedies and crises of life. May they experience the fullness of your love.

Voice 3

Lord, we pray for our church. We want to be a strong and vital church in our community. We want to be used by you to make a difference in the lives of others. The need for hope, acceptance, love and compassion is great, and you are the answer to those needs. Help us to show others the way to you through our activities and mission, and most of all through our lives and example. Equip us to watch over each other with love.

Voice 1

Lord Jesus Christ, your love is for all, whoever they may be. May it reach out then into every heart in every place, and may we be a part of that, learning to love you as you love us. **Amen**

1. Let love be real, in giving and receiving, without the need to manage and to own; a haven free from posing and pretending, where every weakness may be safely known. Give me your hand, along the desert pathway, give me your love wherever we may go.

*As God loves us, so let us love each other:
with no demands,
just open hands and space to grow.*

2. Let love be real, not grasping or confining, that strange embrace that holds yet sets us free; that helps us face the risk of truly living, and makes is brave to be what we might be. Give me your strength when all my words are weakness; give me your love in spite of all you know.

3. Let love be real, with no manipulation, no secret wish to harness or control; let us accept each other's incompleteness, and share the joy of learning to be whole. Give me your hope through dreams and disappointments; give me your trust when all my failing show.

Michael Forster (b. 1946) Words © 1995, Kevin Mayhew Ltd.

GRACE

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and evermore. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen

'Nothing Without Love'