



On this Fathers' Day we think especially of Matthew Tully and Heidi

Pentecost 14

6 September 2020

The commandments are summed up in this word
You shall love your neighbour as yourself.
Love does no wrong to a neighbour;
therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13:9-10

Love spread like flowers across the earth, fears which mingle with ours as we struggle in a time of isolation, care which lies in wait for our toughest moments so that compassion can be there ahead of us embracing us in our need:

this is the Holy God whom we would worship together even in our separateness.

As we ask you to make yourself known among us now, O God, come Jesus the Christ, come to us.

Come in spirit and in truth that we may know and share your fulness of love and life here and in the everyday world to which we shall soon return.

Amen

Hymn 650

*Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant too.*

*We are pilgrims on a journey
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.*

*I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.*

*I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I will laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.*

*When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.*

*Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant too.*

Confession and Assurance

Even as we ask for your presence, O God, we know that your holiness will confront us in our humanness. Our awareness of you will bring us with acute awareness of ourselves and the reality of who we are and with clarity in unvarnished truth. Yet as we feel the inescapable reality of that truth, we also know the reality of your love for us, for we come to you in the fellowship of Christ himself.

In the silence of our hearts we own who we really are. Embrace us with your compassion, O God.

Forgive us in our human frailty, Lord Jesus Christ

Often, we have failed to trust you with our lives; we fear that you will be a harsh and unforgiving God.

We keep silence before you, pretending to ourselves that we have no need of your mercy. Embrace us with your compassion, O God.

Forgive us in our human frailty, Lord Jesus Christ.

We have portrayed you to others as a God of judgement, trying to divert attention from our inadequacies and failings and threatening them for not accepting our interpretation of what God requires rather than simply bearing witness to your compassion and love for all.

Embrace us with your compassion, O God.

Forgive us in our human frailty, Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes. God is faithful to us and to all who seek him. His love is unconditional love in and through the risen Christ who pleads our cause. The gift of a new beginning always awaits us for we are resurrection people.

In our journeying together in faith we celebrate true community. For in our humanness our resurrection lives are enlarged: the promise comes from the risen Christ himself:

"I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything [you] ask, it will be done for [you] by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

Matthew 18:19-20

Thanks be to you, O God.

Amen.

Exodus 12:1-14

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbour shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

"This day shall be for you a Memorial Day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

In this is the word of the Lord.

Hymn 125

*The God of Abraham praise
who reigns enthroned above,
ancient of everlasting days,
and God of love:
the Lord, the great I AM
by earth and heaven confessed!
We bow and bless the sacred name
for ever blessed.*

*The God who reigns on high
the great archangels sing,
and 'Holy, holy, holy' cry,
'almighty King!'
who was and is the same
and evermore shall be,
the Lord, our Father,
great I AM eternally.*

*The whole triumphant host
gives thanks to God on high:
'Hail, Father, Son and Spirit blest!'
they ever cry.
Hail, Abraham's God and ours!
With heaven our songs we raise:
all might and majesty are yours,
and endless praise.*

Gospel Matthew 18:15-20

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Romans 13:8-14

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

O Lord, may your word live in us
and bear much fruit to your glory.

Reflection

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Moses called upon the people of Israel to leave Egypt the call was very definitely a call to cut all the ties with their life as slaves of the Egyptians and to 'put on' new being

In this manner you shall eat ..with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand

So they were to become a nomadic community committed only to following the call to be the people of God, the great I AM.

"This day shall be for you a Memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

Thus they were to see themselves and to know themselves. This was to be their true being for evermore acknowledging only *the Lord, our Father, great I AM eternally* (to use the words of the classic hymn).

When we commit and enact our faith in Jesus the risen Christ we acknowledge that we are putting behind us an old way of life and taking on a new one, for we are 'putting on' the Lord Jesus Christ. This is to be seen when we **love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. " If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my**

Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

If we had been able to worship together today we would have been gathering for Holy Communion. We would have been incorporating Christ in us and us in him through the sacramental action of sharing his broken body and his blood through the symbols of bread and wine,

"for where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

*Hail, Abraham's God and ours!
With heaven our songs we raise:
all might and majesty are yours,
and endless praise.*

Yes. we are heirs of the promise and fulfilment of the ancient legacy passed on through such as Moses and his forbears long ago. We are the ongoing community of faith in and through the Christian church in our time and place. Ours is the awesome privilege and responsibility to 'put on' and be the risen Christ. For

"if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

Hymn 434

*The love of Christ has gathered us as one:
rejoice in him with joy which he imparts;
let us revere and love the living God,
and love each other with unfeigning hearts.*

*And so, when we are gathered here as one,
let quarrels die, and envious rancour cease;
be our resolve all bitterness to shun,
and in our midst be Christ, his love and peace.*

*O lead us, Master, by your saving grace,
to where the blessed glory in your sight;
there let us see and love you, face to face,
gathered once more in everlasting light.*

Prayers for Ourselves and Others and Lord's Prayer

We come in faith and we come in hope, O God, for you are the source of all community, the centre of all things and the spreader of harmony and justice in all the earth.

May our lives sing your songs of hope.

May our souls be touched by all that touches you and our minds quicken with delight as we know the new possibilities which you give to us each day.

As we look around us and, within our communal lives, see that all are in need of your healing and wisdom as we strive to live together in the way of love which is your will for us: hear now our prayers for your empowering that we may be different and make a difference:

Inspire in us and all people a deeper commitment to human community, O God.

May all life be valued in all our eyes. May we hold it as infinitely precious and sacred and cherish all that you have brought into being.

May we always respect and honour the life journeys of others as of inestimable value and importance.

May we be agents of freedom for those who live imprisoned by need or oppression or disability or disadvantage of any kind, especially when this is caused by us and others.

This we pray in the light of the promise of Christ himself,

***“if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask,
it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.***

***For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I
among them.”***

And so we pray in the words that Christ himself taught us

*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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen*

Benediction

Go back, then, to the everyday world in peace,
trusting in the love of God the Father
and in the embracing love of Christ for all
known in the ongoing energy and vitality of the Holy Spirit.

*The whole triumphant host
gives thanks to God on high:
'Hail, Father, Son and Spirit blest!
they ever cry.
Hail, Abraham's God and ours!
With heaven our songs we raise:
all might and majesty are yours,
and endless praise.*

Reverend Graeme Kerr