

CALL TO WORSHIP:

‘This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another’ (1 John 4:10-11).

SONGS: THERE IS AN ENDLESS SONG

There is an endless song echoes in my soul;
I hear the music ring.
And though the storms may come
I am holding on; to the rock I cling.

*How can I keep from singing Your praise?
How can I ever say enough,
How amazing is Your love?
How can I keep from shouting Your name?
I know I am loved by the King,
And it makes my heart want to sing.*

I will lift my eyes in the darkest night,
For I know my Saviour lives.
And I will walk with You,
Knowing You see me through,
And sing the songs You give.

*How can I keep from singing Your praise?
How can I ever say enough,
How amazing is Your love?
How can I keep from shouting Your name?
I know I am loved by the King,
And it makes my heart want to sing.*

I can sing in the troubled times,
Sing when I win;
I can sing when I lose my step
And I fall down again.
I can sing 'cause You pick me up,
Sing 'cause You're there;
I can sing 'cause You hear me, Lord,
When I call to You in prayer.

I can sing with my last breath,
Sing for I know
That I'll sing with the angels
And the saints around the throne.

*How can I keep from singing Your praise?
How can I ever say enough,
How amazing is Your love?
How can I keep from shouting Your name?
I know I am loved by the King,
And it makes my heart want to sing.*

WHAT LOVE IS THIS

What love is this that took my place?
Instead of wrath, You poured Your grace on me.
What can I do but simply come and worship You?

I surrender, I surrender, I surrender all to You.

What love is this that comes to save?
Upon the cross You bore my guilt and shame.
To You alone I give my heart and worship You.

I surrender, I surrender, I surrender all to You.

A greater love no man has seen;
It breaks sin's power and sets the prisoner free.
With all I have and all I am, I worship You.

I surrender, I surrender, I surrender all to You.

OPENING PRAYER AND CONFESSION

Loving God, we have come to offer you the praise of our lips and the love in our hearts. We worship and adore you, for you loved us even before we knew you. You gave your Son as a sacrifice for our sin as evidence of your love. Please forgive us all our sins and help us to walk in faith and love all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The Lord declares his pardon and his peace to all who confess their sins. Receive his pardon, and be at peace, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

TIME OF SHARING AND NOTICES, BANNS OF MARRIAGE

- News of David Davies – died Tuesday 30th April. Prayer for Carolyn and family.

- Christian Aid Quiz – Saturday 11 May, 6pm.
- Christian Aid collecting – Friday 17 and Saturday 18 May.
- Church Meeting – Sunday 19 May
- Banns of Marriage

READING: John 21:15-25

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.'

¹⁶ Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.'

¹⁷ The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.'

Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.' ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, 'Follow me!'

²⁰ Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, 'Lord, who is going to betray you?') ²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked, 'Lord, what about him?'

²² Jesus answered, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.' ²³ Because of this, the rumour spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?'

²⁴ This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. ²⁵ Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME: DO YOU LOVE ME?

Questions on the table

Or

Make a card to tell someone you love them or that God loves them

OFFERTORY SONG: OUR GOD IS A GREAT BIG GOD

Our God is a great big God

Our God is a great big God

Our God is a great big God

And he holds us in his hands

(repeat)

He is higher than a skyscraper

He is deeper than a submarine

He is wider than the universe

And beyond my wildest dreams

And he's known me and he's loved me

Since before the world began

How wonderful to be a part

Of God's amazing plan.

Our God is a great big God

Our God is a great big God

Our God is a great big God

And he holds us in his hands

(repeat)

And he holds us in his hands

And he holds us in his hands

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Lord, you have known us and loved us, and in your love you have given us life itself. We now offer you our worship and these gifts, for your glory's sake. **Amen.**

REFLECTION:

What are the priorities of your life? In other words, what's most important to you? You can silently answer this question by thinking about what you give your time to. How you spend your time reveals your priorities. A priority for Christians is to follow Jesus and to do what he wants us to do. In this passage from the end of John's gospel, Jesus sets the priorities for Peter and all who are part of his church. This is Peter, who made the greatest confession of Christ in church history (Matt. 16:16) yet denied Jesus three times (John 18:15-18; 25-27). As Peter disowned Jesus three times, so Jesus asks Peter to confess his love three times, and each time Jesus commissioned Peter with a task to fulfil, a mission to complete. In Middle Eastern cultures to say something three times before witnesses was to solemnise it.

EASTER FAITH (5)
Do you love me? John 21:15-25
5th May 2024



Christ is saying to us through Peter's restoration that the greatest priority in life is our love for him. Peter is the man who had loved the Lord with all his heart and had failed by denying ever knowing Jesus. He needed to be affirmed again in that love so that he could truly be the person God always intended. The highest priority in life is to love the Lord our God. It is the first question for those of us whose profess to follow Jesus and seek to please God.

It's so easy for our priority to be serving Christ rather than loving Christ. The great preacher A.W. Tozer once said, "God wants worshippers before workers; indeed the only acceptable workers are those who have learned the lost art of worship." And the author Roy Hession wrote, "To concentrate on service and activity for God may often actively thwart our attaining of the true goal, God himself." Of course, serving God is necessary. We see that in the commission Peter receives, but the commission comes after the question – do you love me? All fruitful service for God stems from that love. Nothing is more important than loving the Lord.

How do we make our love for Christ our priority? First we must be honest about the level of our love. We should admit when we don't love God as much as we'd like. Secondly, we need to spend time with him. We spend time with those we love. Peter loved Jesus with all his heart, and by verbalising it he not only received restoration but stated for all believers the highest priority in life – loving the Lord. If we love Jesus, even if our love is small, he can use us.

As I finish I want you to imagine standing alone with Jesus, maybe on the shore of Lake Galilee. There is still the chill of the early morning and the water is gentle lapping on the shore; the blue of the sky is reflected on the water. Jesus looks at you and asks, "Do you love me?" What will be your answer?

PRAYER: Risen Lord, we do worship you and we do love you. We ask for your Holy Spirit to make us brave in following you wherever that may lead. In the wisdom of your divine love, make us wise to rest in your love; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord. **Amen.**

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.**

SONG: LOVE DIVINE, ALL LOVES EXCELLING

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down!
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find Thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then Thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee!
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place;
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING

God of life and love, we will follow you this coming week and we promise to show your love to everyone we meet; in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve and share the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen.