

Greenway's Benefice Weekly Devotional (No. 28)

Sunday 27th September 2020

Bible Readings:

1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13

John 15: 9-7

Authentic Love

"May the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow more and more, and become as great as our love for you" (1 Thessalonians 3:12)

This is Paul writing to the Christian church at Thessalonica, telling them of his love for them and how encouraged he is to hear of their continued faith and love for each other.

In the early Church, the believers' love for one another was so authentic and so obvious that those outside the Church took notice and were amazed by the loving kindness they showed to others. The love of these Christians was so clearly demonstrated in actions and sincerity that outsiders had to consider the source of that love - which was and is Jesus Christ.

In John 15 Jesus said "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

The core of the Christian message is love. God loved us so much that he sent Jesus, his only Son to be among us.

Jesus gave everything for us, even death upon the cross so that we may know forgiveness and a way back to God.

Pause for thought.... Can we really take this in? Can we really understand the depth of love that God has for us through Jesus? Are we abiding or remaining in that love?

The temptation is to think that it is easier to remember God's love in times of blessing than in times of hardship, but in reality are we most likely to forget about him in times of blessing?

God goes on loving us through all the trials of life, good and bad, joy and sorrow, sickness and health, loss of employment, loss of loved ones.

We love because God has loved us first. We can show love to others because love has been shown to us. A child will not understand the word 'love' if they have never been loved. So if we can really grasp that God loves us, then this enables us to love others.

However our love must not be conditioned by the way others respond.

True, authentic unconditional love as shown to us by Jesus is a challenge and we have to accept the reality that God loves others in the same way.

Pope Francis writes:

“God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward “.

Let us reflect on these words and pray and rest in the love of God:

Father, for you indeed are our Father, we thank you for your steadfast and unwavering love. We thank you for Jesus and the total sacrificial and unconditional love he had for all. Help us to show that same authentic love to others, never counting the cost or seeking reward.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Blessings,

Judith