



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 28th April 2024

compiled by Dean James (Worship Leader)

Loving God, we come to worship today because we love you, and we want to love you more. We come to worship needing love in our lives: love for our family, our friends, the strangers we meet and those we consider our enemies. In this time of worship, touch our hearts, fill our hearts, open our hearts to your love which passes all understanding. Amen

Song *Martin James Smith (b. 1970)*

Lord, You have my heart
And I will search for Yours
Jesus, take my life and lead me on.

Oh Lord, You have my heart
And I will search for Yours
Let me be to You a sacrifice.

*And I will praise You, Lord
And I will sing of love come down
And as You show Your face
We'll see Your glory here.*

Prayers

Faithful God, we begin today by giving you thanks. Your love endures forever, it never fails. Though there are many ways in which we have failed, we thank you that in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection we see your love, justice and mercy.

You are the God who lifts us up when we are weighed down.

You restore the broken hearted and heal the wounded.

You are the God who provides for your children. Lord our desire is to praise you as long as we live.

We thank you for revealing yourself to us through your word. As we read your word today, we pray that we would hear your voice.

We ask that your Holy Spirit would be at work, opening our ears to hear and our hearts to receive your word. May we be transformed into your likeness. Lord, fill our hearts with love as we respond by bringing praises to you. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Hymn *Robert Walmsley (1831-1905)*

1] Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
Tender and true,
Out of the heart of the Father above,
Streaming to me and to you:
Wonderful love
Dwells in the heart of the Father above.

2] Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
Joyfully came,
Came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
Sharing their sorrow and shame;
Seeking the lost,
Saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

3] Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
Why do they roam,
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
Home, weary wanderers, home!
Wonderful love
Dwells in the heart of the Father above.

4] Come to my heart, O thou wonderful Love,
Come and abide,
Lifting my life till it rises above
Envy and falsehood and pride;
Seeking to be
Lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

1 John 4: 7-21

God's Love and Ours

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 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. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

Hymn *Richard Gillard (b. 1953)*

1] 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.

2] 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.

3] 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.

4] I Will Weep When You Are Weeping;
When You Laugh I'll Laugh With You
I Will Share Your Joy And Sorrow
Till We've Seen This Journey Through.

5] 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.

6] 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.

The Lord's Prayer

Reflection

It all begins with God's love. In case we ever forget this basic, essential fact of our faith, 1 John makes it clear. God is the source and the definition of love. God is love. God loves as the sun shines. Even when the clouds stop us seeing the sun it is still there and God's love for the whole world is just the same. Love expresses who God is. John emphasizes that God's love is passion expressed in action. God made love real and present by sending Jesus to live among us and to die for us. God continues to show us love through Jesus' life-giving presence among us. If ever we should question whether God truly does love us, the gift and witness of the Holy Spirit confirmed it once more: God's love is a truth and is as reliable as the ground we walk on and the air we breathe. Even more than this, God's love does not depend on our initiative or on our worthiness. We don't have to measure up to some standard in order to be lovable. No, God showers love on us whether we deserve it or not. And honestly, who could ever deserve such amazing, immeasurable love?

The more we know God, the more the immense reality of God's love dawns on us. When we open ourselves to the warmth and light of God's presence, we find that even our deepest, darkest secrets and the ugliest parts of ourselves are not beyond God's reach. Nothing in us is so broken or so filthy that God is unwilling, or unable to touch it. God embraces us as we are, loves us as we are, and works in us to make us clean and whole and new. If we allow ourselves to be enfolded by such love, we have no reason to be afraid?

When we come to the point of seeing ourselves as God's loved children, we will start seeing our sisters and brothers as God's loved ones too. If we have come to know God's love, we have seen for ourselves that it is unearned, undeserved, and free.

Although God's love is without conditions, His command to us is to love one another as He has loved us. The whole foundation of 1 John's argument suggests we must love others as God has loved us, there can be no boundaries. God's love, made visible and present in Jesus, is the source for the love we share with others. Jesus ignored the limits that religious communities imposed. He ate and talked with people whom the religious leaders had rejected as sinful, as filthy and despicable. He touched people who were considered untouchable and welcomed people who everyone else had kicked out. His harshest words were reserved not for the impure, but for unloving, self-righteous people who saw some of God's children as beneath their attention and certainly as unworthy of their love.

If Jesus shows us what God's love is like, then there can be no doubt how far our love for others must extend: to every single human being. Such love can never originate with us. It is not our own, weak, limited love that we share with others. We are called to open ourselves to God's love so that God can love others through us. When we love one another, we re-present God to the world. By allowing the love that God has showered on us to overflow to all our sisters and brothers, we make divine love real and visible in the ordinary lives of ordinary people.

God invites us to let Jesus live in us, so that through us Jesus can continue to welcome outcasts and touch untouchables and heal the broken. When God's unimaginable, limitless love comes alive in us, we become the real presence of God in the world. All we can possibly say to such love is thank you Lord, Let me overflow with your love for everyone. In Jesus name.

Hymn *Sebastian Temple (1928-1997)*

1] Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

2] Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, only light
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

3] Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

4] Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all men that we receive
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

5] Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

6] Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all men that we receive
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Prayers of intercession

Loving God, we pray today for those who need love and acceptance in their lives. I pray that You would pour out Your love into their hearts by Your Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Lord, be their love and their life, their friend and their father. May they know how wide and long and high and deep is Your love for them. May we show

your love to all we meet, loving our neighbours as ourselves. May we love as You have loved us; by this all people will know that we are Your disciples.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we come before You on behalf of those who need physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. We lift their names before You, asking for Your mighty touch to bring restoration and wholeness to their bodies, minds, and souls. Lord, we pray for doctors, nurses, and medical professionals involved in their care, that You would grant them wisdom, skill, and compassion. May Your healing power flow through them and bring comfort and relief to those who are suffering. Strengthen the faith of those who are sick and their loved ones, reminding them of Your faithfulness and love.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord God, we pray for those who are living in fear, anxiety, or turmoil in the war-torn areas of our world. We pray that You would fill them with Your peace that surpasses all understanding, guarding their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Lord, be their refuge and strength, their help and hope. Be with all those who work for peace in these areas and with those who bring relief to those who are in need of help.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving heavenly Father, may we have the same mind as Christ Jesus, who did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men; and being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross for us. May we clothe ourselves with humility and love toward one another. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen

Hymn *Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)*

*Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart
Teach me to move in the power of your Spirit
Teach me to walk in the light of your presence
Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.*

*Teach me to love with your heart of compassion
Teach me to trust in the word of your promise
Teach me to hope in the day of your coming
Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart*

1] You wrote the rhythm of life
Created heaven and earth
In You is joy without measure
So, like a child in your
I dance to see your delight
For I was made for your pleasure, pleasure.
Teach me to dance.....

2] Let all my movements express
A heart that loves to say 'yes'
A will that leaps to obey you
Let all my energy blaze
To see the joy in your face
Let my whole being praise you, Praise you.
Teach me to dance.....

Blessing

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 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. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. Amen