

## SERMON ALL SOULS 2014

“True prayer is an overflowing of love” (NT Wright) and we pray for those who have died, not because we doubt God’s love and care for them, but because we still love them and want to talk to God our Father about them. We need to find the peace, consolation and gradual assuaging of grief that comes from leaving those we love in the safe and sure mercies of the loving Creator and Redeemer.

Christian or not we suffer as others do, from loss and grief. Sometimes we wonder why life is so hard. And yet we know that God is with us through it all, that he will give us the strength to keep going on, that he will always listen even when we are angry with him or in deep pain. Ultimately we trust him, as the poem “Footsteps” says so eloquently when we can’t see him he is holding us up.

We are here today not to indulge in grief, but to acknowledge it, not to deny it, but to bring it into the light and comfort of God’s love. Ann Lewin writes: “Healing is not achieved without some cost. It may not mean the end of pain .... healing is not going back to what one was before, it is a growing on to a new stage of being, through many deaths and resurrections being set free.”

This is a time when we don’t have to pretend that everything is alright, when we can say it hurts still, it’s lonely, I miss them. And yet we also celebrate all they meant to us, we deal with everything that needs to be dealt with; anger, forgiveness, guilt, pain before God, who loves us and knows us, knows our thoughts and fears, knows the number of hairs on our head because he made us with love.

We can thank God and praise him, that through his grace and mercy, we can look forward to the salvation promised us by Christ’s death on the cross.

And so, today, as we celebrate all the saints in heaven this morning, we come together this afternoon, quietly, more privately, to celebrate those that we have known personally, those we have loved, who have been part of us.

