

Sermon Mothering Sunday 2016

Apart from a chance to break our Lenten disciplines and feast and lots of flowers, Mothering Sunday is about love. But for many of us, for one reason or another, we need to relate this to the perfect love of God.

Mothers are human and fallible, not everyone has a good experience of mothering from their earthly mother and not everyone has children to be a mother to. However, hopefully we can all receive nurture from others and give nurture to others.

Many people contribute to a person's development, especially their spiritual development and we also honour those people today. However the one thing that we can all experience in equal measure is God's love. He loves us all unconditionally and completely and equally.

He comforts us and shelters us under his wings, he knew us before we were born and knows the number of hairs on our heads. His love is

abundant and he wants the very best for us and for us to be the very best we can be.

We hear of two Mothers today, both of whom will suffer the painful side of having children, both of them giving up their child for their destined life with God. Loving anyone gives us the potential for the pain of separation however that happens. This is what God has suffered with so many of his children since the early days of creation. We were destined to live in a close relationship with God, being loved and loving. But often choose not to.

In the letter to the Colossians Paul offers us a strategy to help us live for God day by day. He suggests that we should imitate Christ's compassionate, forgiving attitude, we should let love guide our life, we should let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, we should always be thankful, keep God's word with us at all times and we should live as Christ's representatives. All of this is bound together by love. Love holds everything in place.

In our final song we will ask God to “Hold me close, let your love surround me”. Love, that greatest gift of all to us from God, to God from us and from us to others. God’s love has the power to change lives, for us to acknowledge our weaknesses, to be forgiven and then, importantly, forgive others. When we have been forgiven so much how can we not forgive others? God’s love is so powerful, powerful beyond our imaginings and can achieve so much. It can soothe hurts, bandage wounds and heal us and our relationships.

Jesus demonstrated to us how to love God and each other, but love is a real Trinitarian work and we need the Holy Spirit to open our eyes, our hearts and our minds to God in our lives. To enable us to rest in his presence, to be held close, to be carried by our loving Father when we are weak. This love so powerful that it can make us giant-slayerers, it can help us to move mountains, heal the sick and set the prisoners free.

Love given freely and at great cost needs to be freely given to others, in an ideal family this lesson is learnt and we are helped to continue this concept to the whole of creation, the family of God. We are to love our neighbours as ourselves, difficult, as sometimes we don’t love ourselves very much. Thankfully God loves us more than we can ever know and help us to love ourselves and see him in each other.

Our God’s love is reliable, active, powerful and seeks us out, it is eternal love. It is the love of a father, mother, brother and sister, it is perfect love. The love that will bring us closer and closer to God so that we can fly like eagles and dance with joy in the power of his love, if we choose him, meet with him and give our lives to him.