



Order of Service



13 May 2012
East Calder 11.15am



Worship led by:
Rev Dr André Groenewald
Musicians:
Jean Gilchrist
Praise Band

Gathering of God's People

Words of welcome and announcements.

Good morning! How are you?

It is Mr Peden birthday today. Maybe we can sing for him happy birthday...

Allow me a few announcements please?

EAST CALDER GALA DAY – SATURDAY 9 JUNE

Gala day is less than 4 weeks away and being one of our main outreach events in the village, we would like to make it really count. Therefore, the Social & Community Committee requires your help to make it a memorable day. Please help us with homebaking, volunteers to help!

Worshipping God Together

Call to worship

Minister: Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away.

All: If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love,

Minister: it would be utterly scorned.

MP 600 Sing to God new songs of worship (organ)

Opening prayer and the Lord's Prayer

The Psalmist says: "We will thank you Lord, with all our hearts, because of your constant love and faithfulness"

God of love, you *are* love.

You are the source of all love and we praise you, we worship you, we adore you.

We offer afresh to you all the love of our heart, all of our soul and all of our strength.

As we rejoice in your love for us help us to demonstrate the integrity of our love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

May our love for you be as sincere on Monday morning as it is on Sunday morning. May our offering of heart, soul and mind be as complete in the home and workplace as it is at Communion.

God of love, we celebrate again the wonders of your love and pray that the worship and service we offer may truly be filled with your love.

We ask all of this in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Children's Address: Ann Dunlop

Hallelu, Hallelu – Praise ye the lord (organ)

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: John 15.9-17 (NT page 1083)

Reader: Janice McFarlane

Background to the reading

In the Greek language words did not have meaning but meaning had words.

What do I mean? Well in the Greek language there are several meanings/expressions for love, and each are described by certain words like *philéō* - human love, agape - the love of God towards man and eros - erotic love.

In our reading the love of God towards humankind are expressed by the Greek word agape.

According to the Old Testament keeping to the Law of God would bring much joy and happiness. Now Jesus whom summarises the Law as love, says if they remain in His love, they will have much joy. When Jesus talks of love He refers to the Love in the Trinity – the same love that exists between God the Father and Him is also the love He has for

humankind. And we know the nature of this love. God's so love the world that He sacrificed His only Son so that we can live and die without any fear for death and sin. His love – agape love is sacrificial, merciful and forgiving.

Dying for others was considered heroic in Greco-Roman stories, and friendship to the death was considered a high moral value. But Judaism did not share this general Greek perspective, although it emphasized dying for the law if need be. Although it is unlikely that Jesus is directly influenced by the Greek view of friendship, John's readers would have been familiar with it and so grasped his point quickly.

Jesus then goes on by saying that He regards them as His friends as long as they remain in His love and love one another. He does not regard them as “slaves or servants” but friends. The Greek word for slave “doulos” wants emphasize the classical picture of bondage and limitation. Slaves did not have insight in their masters business. Likewise Jesus makes the point that they are not slaves anymore because they know God the Father through Him. And yes no master would

lay down his life for a slave! And yes they will be freed from the bondage of sin.

When Jesus calls his followers his friends he broke with tradition. The Old Testament only called two people friends of God namely Abraham and Moses. Jesus broke down and broaden the exclusiveness that existed between God and Israel to include all the believers who follow the command of Jesus to love!

JP 91

Lord of the dance (band)

Sermon

The text for the sermon are verse 14 & 17:

¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.”

It seems evident that we do not have the same approach to words and meaning that exists in the Greek language. We only have one word for love and sometimes our understanding of love is quite twisted. I said at a wedding once: The Beatles one sang, “all you need is love” but then they broke up.

We live in a society where people who do not know God philosophize about love. We see it on our televisions, we read about it in the newspapers. It seems as if people think love is only a fleeting emotional spree. It is therefore quite normal so they say - to wake up one day after a marriage of a few years and not FEEL love anymore. It seems as if people think love is a radio that you can turn on or off according to one's mood.

But in our reading Jesus spells out clearly what He means with LOVE. Love is not a fleeting emotional feeling. God is love. And God's love (agape) means responsibility. *Agape* love is sacrificial love, it is a love where I serve the other, over myself. It is a love where I place the other before me, even at great sacrifice to myself. It means an attitude of giving instead of receiving. It means a deliberate choice of sacrifice for the good of others. It is love without expectation. It is love without the need of acknowledgement.

Anyone who wants to be a friend of Jesus needs to obey His command to love – sacrificial love - love with a cost! But we must get it right: Jesus is not the ***friend*** of humankind – He is our Lord and Saviour. He says he regards His followers as His friends ***BUT ONLY*** when and if they love like He loved!

What a responsibility we have? What a challenge?

But if we succeed to love like Jesus showed us - To include rather than to exclude people, to walk the extra mile, to turn the other cheek, we will have joy that exceeds all expectations. And we will be able to bear fruit that lasts.

It seems as if everyone in West Lothian is talking about the new addition of fruit and vegetables up in Morrison's in Livingston. Just imagine if you and I can manage to bear the fruit of God's Holy Spirit namely love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control for people to see. Can you visualise the impact on all the people of West Lothian with our example of bearing fruit?

May we go out of this building this morning and instead of blethering about the weather or other worldly events make a list of actions how we are going to bear the fruit of God's Spirit namely love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control!

I had an interesting talk this week with an atheist. I walked away and thought: If I can love him like Christ did – He will be able to grasp that there is a God who loves and cares about him! May we do just that instead of rational arguments and debates. Let us just love because it

is when we love that we can sing: "Love lifted me, When the waves of sorrow roll, when I am in distress, Jesus takes my hand in His, ever He loves to bless. He will every fear dispel, satisfy every need, all who heed His loving call, find rest indeed!

Amen

Responding to God's word

Our offerings are given for the ministry and mission of the church while we sing "**MP 987: Here is love vast as the ocean**". (Band)

Prayer of thanksgiving: Robert Gardiner

MP 1009 The King of love is my delight (Band)

Benediction receive the blessing of God and go in peace:

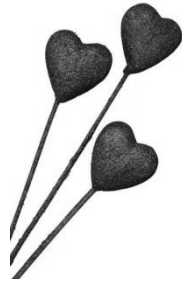
May you see the face of Christ in everyone you meet.

May everyone you meet see the face of Christ in you.

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit go with you, now and for evermore!

Sung Amen (organ)

Please remain standing as The Bible is removed.



Prayer

Make a joyful noise to the Lord.
Praise him with everything you have.
Praise him with your voice, your music
and the things you enjoy.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord.
Praise him with your whole being.
Praise him with everything you stand for
and everything you hold dear.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord.
Praise him in everything you do.
Praise him through your giving, your living
and the ways in which you care.

Amen.

Notes

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You are invited to stay for tea and coffee which are served in the hall.