



Sunday 14th June 2020

Notes from our Sunday Morning
Pre-recorded Worship

Opening Welcome

Hello and welcome, it's great to have you with us. We've got an amazing service including Mike bringing us the next section of our series, entitled "A Faithful Family".

We wanted to say that its been a really challenging week for many of us as lockdown continues, so do get in touch with us if we can support you in any way, and be assured of our prayers.

You will have also seen in the news is the protests globally against racism. We want to encourage everyone to keep praying for an end to racism. Jesus loves every nationality and ethnicity and has always been against racism. We pray that the Holy Spirit would bring an end to racism, that this would be a turning point. Let's continue to pray and speak out where we can.

Song

Creator God

Verse 1

You put the stars in outer space
You popped the freckles on my face
And all the fish that swim
And all the birds that fly
Were made from your incredible imagination

Chorus

Creator God we're singing to the
Creator God of all the world
Creator God we celebrate You
We celebrate You

Verse 2

You spread the ripples through the sea
You painted stripes on every bee
And all the grass that grows
And all the leaves that fall
Are part of Your amazing plans for this creation

Verse 3

You placed the heat into the sun
You placed a heart in everyone
And all the music played
And all the dancing done
Reminds us that we're made to be creative like

CCLI Song # 5100172

Becky Drake | Nick J. Drake

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Talk

(including Reading)

This talk will explore how we are called to love one another. It good to identify what that actually means in practice. Following Jesus's example of laying down your life lies at the heart of this.

Hi everyone, I'm Ali. I usually go to the 10:30 service with my husband and two smalls - one 5, one 2. Now, I don't know what your experience of lockdown has been - for some of us it's been challenging, isolating, filled with anxiety, and others of us are enjoying it so much! For me, I've certainly felt all of the emotions I can think of over the past 12 weeks. In some ways I can't believe it's been 12 weeks! In others it feels like it's been much longer. I wonder how it's felt for you. Whether your hope is waning, whether your ability to spend time with God is challenged. My prayer this morning is that we would all be able to spend time with God - to worship, to pray and to feel encouraged together despite not physically being able to be together.

So I've got the privilege of sharing with you today about how we can be a cherished family. It's a talk that comes out of our wider vision as a church family to build family, shine brightly and live courageously. So let's dig deeper into the idea of building family this morning. We're looking at the next section of 1 John - chapter 3 verses 11-24.

1 John 3v11-24

11 For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. **12** Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. **13** Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. **14** We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. **15** Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. **17** If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? **18** Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

19 This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: **20** If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. **21** Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God **22** and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. **23** And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. **24** The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Now I don't know about you, but I've seen so much love being poured out during this season of lockdown - from clap for carers on a Thursday night and hot meals provided for NHS staff to the volunteers in the foodbank and those supporting vulnerable neighbours. It has been a season of learning to love one another in a new way, and hasn't it been wonderful?

WHAT WE DO IS COUNTER-CULTURAL

John begins this section of the passage - verses 11-15 - to talk about a love that is counter-cultural. A love that goes against our natural reactions, our human ideas towards those around us.

John was probably speaking to the Christian community at a time when they had been sucked into a culture of unloving behaviour towards those in Ephesus who hated the Christian community. How

often do we see that? Irrespective of whether it's the Christian community on the receiving end - it might be racial hatred, slander against others around us, getting sucked into unkind behaviour or bullying on social media.

John is speaking to a group in a situation that could be very similar to our day to day.

The love we are called to display is counter-cultural. It goes against what our culture may expect of us - a self protective love can be replaced with a sacrificial love - where we put others before ourselves.

DECISIVE ACTION

In verse 14, John talks about us passing from death to life - a crossing over from death to life. This is the part of the passage that describes us making a decision in this.

In the bible, there are plenty of times when 'crossing over' is significant

The decision may be related to a transfer from one place to another, a complete change of heart, a total change in behaviour, a 180 degree turn from one thing to something totally different.

It is an indicator that something huge has changed.

Crossing over from a state of negativity / hatred to love for each other - is a big change, it's a big moment to cross over from a cultural, negative, unhelpful attitude to the attitude Jesus demonstrated to us, and even more than that - the attitude he commands us to.

Comparison of the two different attitudes: lies to truth, hate to love, violence to peace.

It may even be that your 180 degree turn needs to be turning from being the one who usually offers support to being the one whom others around you need to lay their lives down for - that may be your cross over moment. Accepting others' help can sometimes be difficult when we're used to self sufficiency, self provision.

The most stark moment of cross over John reminds us of is God sending his Son to become human and die for our freedom. The biggest cost, life to death and then resurrected to eternal life. That is the ultimate cross over! Nothing we are ever called to sacrifice even comes close to the sacrifice of sending your own Son to die.

When we make the decision to believe Jesus' teachings and follow him, that is a moment when we cross over.

IDENTITY

Throughout this book, John is saying remember **who you are** and remember **whose you are**. Tim's sermon from 2 weeks ago goes into that - remember who you are and remember whose you are.

Do you know your identity? Do you know where you came from? Do you remember who you belong to?

It's so important that you are rooted in that and then the natural response is love, because you've already crossed over into that state of mind.

In this, particularly at the moment, our thought lives are key. Are we condemning ourselves or are we honestly holding on to God's promises for us? Are we believing what God says about us or the culture of the day?

Love sets us apart from the culture of the day - criticising one another, arguing in an unconstructive fashion.

The second section of the passage - verses 16-18 - John talks about how and why we do that.

One of our well loved nurses contracted coronavirus 10 weeks or so ago. He ended up on intensive care, ventilated. The nurses caring for him knew him, adored him - he's such a kind, generous colleague. 2 weeks ago, he walked out of intensive care to a step down ward and the entire hospital lined the corridors to wave him out. The joy, the delight for everyone that he had walked out of there was wonderful. I tell this story knowing that there are so many stories that haven't ended in this way, but with grief, an ending far too soon, a love that wasn't supposed to end.

But I also tell the story to give us hope - the nurses caring for him in intensive care laid down their own lives for him. They gladly treated him, risked contracting coronavirus and passing it on to their own

households, in a bid to send him back to his family. They are genuinely laying down their lives for their patients.

I work for the NHS as a midwife at the moment - in a role with fairly low levels of patient contact.

Suddenly laying down your life for someone else has become a genuine thing, in a way we haven't seen or likely had to do before. It's actually become something that has invaded our world and become a necessity. I don't know about you - but when we face laying down our lives for others, I think we usually act in a self protective way, a way that says I'll lay my life down - oh but not my whole life. I'll risk this and this, oh but not to the point of it actually costing me my life.

At no point am I suggesting recklessness with our own lives or putting ourselves in harm's way for others - but I am suggesting that we are wise about how we think about helping others around us. That might mean laying aside our pride, overflowing in kindness to others against what they might expect, standing up against injustice, supporting someone vulnerable.

When it comes to it, now is the time when this genuinely matters. We have ample opportunity to be generous, caring and put aside ourselves. While still being sensible, staying home, keeping ourselves and our households safe, we can fulfil our calling to love in action. Loving those around us with a sacrificial love.

Jesus demonstrated to us what it really means to lay our lives down for others. He came to our world, lived among us and then died for us. He sacrificially died in our place - the true meaning of laying down our lives for others.

The sacrifice that we've seen and potentially been the ones to show towards our communities at the moment has reminded me of the sacrifice Jesus made for us.

We love because he loves us

What type of love are we talking about?

Eros / Agape love - what does that look like?

OBEDIENCE

The final section then talks about the why. We hear in this passage how we are a family characterised by loving others well. Why are we called to be a family characterised by love? God commands us to. That is his expectation of how we treat one another. Irrespective of their relationship towards us, not related to what they offer us or how they can serve us. We are loving those members of society so well who are helping us, saving our sick, still collecting our bins, teaching our children. That is so wonderful. That level of appreciation for our servants is wonderful. But John is saying that includes everyone...

The tax collectors as well as the intensive care nurses. The bailiffs as well as the refuse collectors. Those in government that we disagree with as well as our children's teachers. Those we might consider challenging as well as those we don't. Jesus' no.1 command to us is to love one another. We love because he demonstrated that love to us. "The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them". His command is to believe in Jesus, and to love one another as he loves us. He who sacrificed his life for our lives - who laid down his life for each one of us.

OUTREACH / APPLICATION

We are called here to love in both actions and truth. What does sacrificial love look like in action? How can we truly love our neighbour and lay down our lives for them at the moment? Do we ever struggle to love our neighbour?

Developing an attitude of gratitude (excuse the cheesiness) flows out of us and enables us to express appreciation to those around us. Supporting the vulnerable in our community. Donating to a foodbank or charity offering support to others at the moment. Communicating well with each other -

in a time when we don't have body language / facial expressions / intimations of tone voice. How can we make sure our emails, text messages, video calls are filled with salt and light - that they reflect Jesus, that we are honouring and loving each other well in this lockdown season. Let's ensure our reactions / conversations are seasoned with salt and light.

I don't know about you, but - although I've really been missing meeting together as a family, i've been loving online church, Mike's video reflections and the daily reflections from those in our church family - it's been a great lockdown highlight for me.

When we follow Jesus' ways of love, forgiveness, grace, mercy towards others, we challenge unkind / anger / hateful behaviour. We have the opportunity to stand against that behaviour just by acting in the opposite way in response.

Jesus also known as the truth - we need to love in HIM.

What can we do to cherish one another? To truly lay our lives down for one another?

Let's not be hurrying through life to the point that we don't give time to relationship, to love, to cherishing those around us. We could easily get sucked into screens, into all the things we need to achieve in this time, but let's also take time to be together. That might take effort if we live alone - accessing others, reaching out to those we know, to make sure they are doing ok in this time of isolation.

Song

Raise a Hallelujah

Verse 1

I raise a hallelujah in the presence of my enemies
I raise a hallelujah louder than the unbelief
I raise a hallelujah my weapon is a melody
I raise a hallelujah Heaven comes to fight for me

Chorus

I'm gonna sing in the middle of the storm
Louder and louder you're gonna hear my praises roar
Up from the ashes hope will arise
Death is defeated the King is alive

Verse 2

I raise a hallelujah with everything inside of me
I raise a hallelujah I will watch the darkness flee
I raise a hallelujah in the middle of the mystery
I raise a hallelujah fear you lost your hold on me

Bridge

Sing a little louder (Sing a little louder)
Sing a little louder (Sing a little louder)
Sing a little louder (Sing a little louder)
Sing a little louder (Sing a little louder)

Bridge

Sing a little louder in the presence of my enemies
Sing a little louder louder than the unbelief
Sing a little louder my weapon is a melody
Sing a little louder Heaven comes to fight for me
(REPEAT)

Sing a little louder

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Song

Yes and Amen

Verse 1

Father of kindness You have poured out grace
You brought me out of darkness
You have filled me with peace
Giver of mercy You're my help in time of need
Lord I can't help but sing

Chorus 1

Faithful You are
Faithful forever You will be
Faithful You are
All Your promises are Yes and Amen
All Your promises are Yes and Amen

Verse 2

Beautiful Saviour You have brought me near
You pulled me from the ashes
You have broken ev'ry curse
Blessed Redeemer You have set this captive free
Lord I can't help but sing

Chorus 2

Faithful You are
Faithful forever You will be
Faithful You are yes You are
All Your promises are Yes and Amen

Bridge

I will rest in Your promises
My confidence is Your faithfulness
(REPEAT)

Ending

All Your promises are Yes and Amen
All Your promises are Yes and Amen

CCLI Song # 7048885

Chris McClarney | Nate Moore | Tony Brown

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Song

Hear our Cry O King of Heaven (Hope and Glory)

Verse 1

Hear our cry O King of heaven
Jesus hope to every heart
We are lost without Your glory
We are lost without You God

Verse 2

Be the fire that burns within us
Flames of love that purify
Send Your power and Your salvation
Let us see Your Kingdom come

Chorus

('Cause) Only You can move the mountains
Only You can heal our land
Christ alone our hope and glory
Christ alone in You we stand

Verse 3

Turn Your eyes and show us mercy
How we need Your Father's love
Lead us home and out of darkness
With Your gospel burning bright

Bridge

We believe our God is mighty
We believe our God is here
We believe our King is coming
Christ alone in You we stand

Praise the Lord our God is mighty
Praise the Lord our God is here
Praise the Lord our King is coming
Christ alone in You we stand

CCLI Song # 7043793

Martin Smith | Nick Herbert | Tim Hughes

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Intercessions by Bec and Hannah Clift

Dear Lord,

Thank you for everyone in our church family. Please be with those who may be finding this time particularly difficult, those who are unwell, those living on their own, those who are key workers, those living on their own, those who have recently been bereaved, or divorced or separated and those who are caring for family members at home. Father, will you bring comfort to all who are sad, lonely, anxious or fearful. Thank you for all we have seen in the tremendous human response to this time of crisis, the love and care shown to others, which is so uplifting.

In light of the movement Black Lives Matter and the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor we pray for hope, change and justice. I pray that we will all recognise that we have a part to play in changing attitudes towards those in society who are discriminated against because of the colour of their skin, or their cultural background or their gender or sexuality.

Lord, help us to listen better to each other and that different voices and perspectives will be in our conversations. We are sorry that we don't always get it right, but we pray that we can all help to bring about change for equality and an end to racism.

We pray that the pandemic ends and we can continue to carefully move out of lockdown. We pray for those who are feeling anxious at the prospect of moving out of the security of their home, for those who have or are returning to the workplace and for children who are already at school or returning to school soon.

We remember our young people who have faced much change with the cancellation of exams and big question marks over their next steps, whether that be going to university or starting new jobs.

Loving Father, we thank you that you are with us and that in all times of change and uncertainty, one thing is certain: You are the same yesterday, today and forever.

Amen

Family News

If you are struggling or would like some prayer, we are here to help and support you. Please let us know by contacting 01483 455333 or office@st-saviours.org.uk.

As we've said this morning, we've been in this strange time as a country, globally and also personally. As a church too, we've been journeying through the pandemic and we're keen to really touch base with the whole church family. We want to see how you're doing, get your perspective on the future and few issues. Examples of these are how you're feeling about regathering (when we can!), ideas for the future and that kind of thing. So, we've put together a really simple survey and we would love every member of the church family to fill that in, if you could. If you have internet access, the link to do that is st-saviours.org.uk/survey. If you don't have access, please do contact the office on the telephone number above and we'd be happy to arrange getting a copy to you!

Song

Before the Throne of God Above

Verse 1

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong a perfect plea
A great High Priest whose name is Love
Who ever lives and pleads for me

Verse 2

My name is graven on His hands
My name is written on His heart
I know that while in heaven He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart

Verse 3

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin

Verse 4

Because the sinless Saviour died
My sinful soul is counted free
For God the Just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me

Verse 5

Behold Him there the risen Lamb
My perfect spotless Righteousness
The great unchangeable I AM
The King of glory and of grace

Verse 6

One with Himself I cannot die
My soul is purchased by His blood
My life is hid with Christ on high
With Christ my Saviour and my God

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Close & Blessing

Father, we Thank You for everything we've heard and read, Thank You for bringing your word to us and that we can worship you freely in our homes. We pray you'd bless us as we go about this week, we pray that you'd be in our conversations and decisions, and that you'd keep us safe. And may we know your blessing; the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In your name, Jesus. Amen