

# HAEBEA Home Worship: No.63 – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

## 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – Revd Blair Kirkby

**Opening Quotations** - "What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like." *St Augustine from "Confessions"*

"Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, we will have discovered fire." *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*

**Opening Prayer** – Lord of Love I come to you now with much about me that is not very loveable, from the shadows into your radiance. Search me, try me, consume all my darkness. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, who died for me, forgive me for all that is past, and grant that I may serve you in newness of life. And tell me again so as to make me believe that I am both made clean by your love and called to share it with others. Amen.

### Bible Reading - John 15:9-17

<sup>9</sup>"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup>I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup>My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup>I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup>You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit-fruit that will last-and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. <sup>17</sup>This is my command: Love each other.



*A new commandment I give you:  
love one another as I have loved you*

**A Meditation** Our text this week reminds us that love is a Christian imperative. Our Lord does not, in this text, *invite* us to love or *suggest* that loving others might be a good idea if ever we should like to try it out some time, but instead he *commands* that we must love. Elsewhere he hints, asks questions, and tells stories, but here he uses the strongest language possible. What's more, the standard he sets by which we are to measure out our love is almost unbearably high. He says that we are to love each other "*as he has loved us.*" Presumably, this means going to the cross for others, loving people when it's hard to, turning the other cheek, praying for our persecutors, forgiving our debtors, seeing the best in our adversaries and doing all kinds of other seemingly ridiculous things, like dying for our friends. Indeed, in verse 13 he says greater love has no one than the one who will do just that. His command to love is a difficult one to bear, but it is the only commandment he gives to us in his whole ministry, and he seems to mean that we should take it seriously.

Of course, loving others does not mean that we should never disagree with them, or stand up to them, or indeed oppose them with all the strength that we can muster. In fact, when matters of Christian principal are at stake our faith may require us to do quite a lot of disagreeing, standing up, and opposing, but always with love in our hearts for those whom we oppose, and with their ultimate well-being, rather than their ultimate destruction, in mind.

The last thing that should be said is that loving others in our lives, even the difficult others in our lives, is somehow the great joy of life. "I have told you these things," says Jesus, "so that my joy may be in you and your joy maybe complete," as if to suggest that his kind of joy requires a complete commitment to love even in the hardest of circumstances, and that those who refuse to make this commitment will always be without a precious measure of joy. "He who loves most," says the old proverb, "lives best," to which we might add, "he who loves most, is also the most joyful".

### **Thomas a Kempis on love from "Imitation of Christ" written between 1420 and 1427**

"Love is a mighty power, a great and complete good; Love alone lightens every burden, and makes the rough places smooth. It bears every hardship as though it were nothing, and renders all bitterness sweet and acceptable. The love of Jesus is noble, and inspires us to great deeds; it moves us always to desire perfection. Love aspires to high things, and is held back by nothing base. Love longs to be free, a stranger to every worldly desire, lest its inner vision become dimmed, and lest worldly self-interest hinder it or ill-fortune cast it down. Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth; for love is born of God, and can rest only in God above all created things.

Love flies, runs, leaps for joy; it is free and unrestrained. Love gives all for all, resting in One who is highest above all things, from whom every good flows and proceeds. Love does not regard the gifts, but turns to the Giver of all good gifts. Love knows no limits, but ardently transcends all bounds. Love feels no burden, takes no account of toil, attempts things beyond its strength; love sees nothing as impossible, for it feels able to achieve all things. Love therefore does great things; it is strange and effective; while he who lacks love faints and fails."

### **Hymn [Prayer Of St Francis \( With Lyrics by Sebastian Temple\) - YouTube](#)**

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

Make me a channel of your peace  
It isn't pardoning that we are pardoned  
In giving to all men let we receive  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life

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

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

Oh, master grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand  
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Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope  
Where there is darkness, only light  
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### **The Blessing**

Lord, bless me this day with that love that makes life worth living,  
and with that joy that makes life worth celebrating,  
that I might always share both with others,  
and never tire of the sharing.  
Amen.