

WEEK 5 – WHAT WONDEROUS LOVE

MONDAY – The risen Christ as our guide



John 3: 14-16 (NIV) *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him.” For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

What wondrous love is this O my soul, O my soul... Have you ever pondered while singing this familiar Lenten song, how one could describe God’s love? Do the overused and insufficient words of “super,” “great,” “wonderful,” and “amazing” ring a bit too hollow to describe God’s everlasting love for creation, including for you and me?

Suppose a young son or daughter were to ask his or her parent to describe God’s love so simply that they could understand it. Perhaps the simplest answer would be: “God’s love is a gift that you didn’t ask for, expect, or deserve, but that was freely given just for you

to enjoy.” We all understand the joy of receiving gifts, but the one unmeasurable and indescribable gift that was bestowed on us by God was His son, Jesus, who came to show us once and for all, the true meaning of love!

Jesus didn’t come to blame, punish and persecute us; Jesus came offering love, forgiveness, and redemption through God’s eternal grace. Oh yes, we all have to walk our own Via Dolorosa (the route believed to have been taken by Christ through Jerusalem to Calvary), but, through His death on the cross, we walk that pathway with the risen Christ as our guide.



Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, you’re alive! You were crucified for us and You’ve risen from the dead! You’ve brought us God’s forgiveness and new life and You go ahead to guide and care for us. AMEN

TUESDAY – When I survey the wondrous cross



John 13: 34: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

Born in England in 1674, Isaac Watts began writing poetry when still a boy and eventually turned his attention to composing hymns. In 1707, while thinking about an upcoming communion service, Watts came to the realisation that the reality of the cross changes everything!

Reflecting on his newfound understanding of the meaning of the cross, Watts wrote, “***When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died. My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.***” Humbled, Watts continued, “***Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God! All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.***” Realising that nothing compares with Jesus, he continued: “***Were***

the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small: love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.”

Even after reading Watts' amazing words, it remains hard for us to really understand what Jesus did for us. His actual suffering is beyond our imagination and understanding. Yet, He did it. Jesus died the most brutal death so we could be forgiven and made right with God. All we can do is try to comprehend what Jesus did for us and let it change us from the inside out. What wondrous love this is!

Reflection: Remember that the cross shows how much God loves you! Allow Him to fill your heart with His love. Commit your life to serving Jesus.



Prayer: Merciful Saviour, when I come before the wondrous cross, and survey this scene of immense love and sorrow, I count my highest achievements as nothing compared to the surpassing value of just knowing You. AMEN

WEDNESDAY – For God so loved the world



John 3: 16-17: *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.*

There is no force more powerful than the love our heavenly Father has for us, His children. His love can move mountains, stop the roaring seas, heal broken bones, mend wounded hearts, transform lives and set free those who are held captive by sin and shame.

So great is His love for you and me that He sent His only son to die a horrific death on the cross that we might have redemption for our sins.

God loves you simply because He loves you. You don't have to work for His affection. You don't have to start correcting all your faults before God will pour out His love

over you. The father in the story of the prodigal son ran out to meet his son before anything had ever been set right. He didn't know his son was there to apologise and ask for his forgiveness. In reality, he didn't care. He simply wanted to welcome his son and to love him.

Our heavenly Father feels the same way about you and me. He longs to love us right where we are, as we are. He longs to fill us with His abundant and overflowing love. He longs for us to experience this love and oneness with Him, just as Jesus did when He walked the earth.



Prayer: Father, I come to You just as I am—flawed, overwhelmed, and in need of Your grace. Thank you that I don't have to earn Your love or be perfect to be accepted. AMEN

THURSDAY – What helps you to believe that God loves you?



Psalm 103: 8 *"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."*

While sitting down to write this devotion, I suddenly came to the realisation that it is only two months since Christmas. This led me to think of the connection there must be between Christmas, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. At Christmas, we celebrate the coming of Jesus, our Saviour. Here, the Word became flesh to ultimately bear our sin upon the cross. So, thinking about it, without Christmas, Good Friday is not possible. Then again, without Good Friday, and of course, the resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday, Christmas would be incomplete.

In yesterday's devotion we read one of the most famous verses of Scripture that reveals to us the reason behind both Christmas and the cross. According to John

3: 16 *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.* God the Father sent His Son at Christmas so that one day He would die on the cross because of His love for you and me.

God does not just love the world as a whole, He loves each and every one of us. He sent His Son to earth and then to the Cross because He loves you and me. As Lent is drawing to a close, may we all be embraced by God's love as we remember that He sent His Son out of love for the world as a whole and you and me in particular.

Reflection: What helps you to believe that God really loves you?



Prayer: Lord, may Your love shine through me, allowing me to be a vessel of Your grace and compassion. I pray for the ability to love as You love, unconditionally and without reservation. AMEN

FRIDAY – Why does God love me?



1 John 3: 1 *“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him”.*

We all know that one of the very first words learnt by a toddler is “why”. Every answer seems to be greeted by another “why” until we, often in frustration, end up with the ultimate answer to every 3-year-old’s life’s questions: “Because God loves you.” This response is initially accepted, until one day we are asked “Why does God love me?” Not an easy or straightforward question to try to answer.

Let’s ponder this mystery for a moment: The Creator of our universe, who placed the constellations, who puffs the cumulonimbus clouds, who paints

peacocks, sunsets and rainbows, who knows the end from the beginning and spoke the world into existence — that same God sees us, knows us as individuals and loves us.

So, maybe God loves us simply because He delights to lavish His love on us. In Roman’s 5: 8 we read *But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*. Maybe the point isn’t to try to decipher an intellectual enigma. Maybe the point is just to respond with an open heart that receives and echoes back His love.



Prayer: Heavenly Father, how great is Your love for us! I can’t comprehend it, and I confess that I often take Your love for granted. Would You grow in me the capacity to grasp more of Your love for us in Christ Jesus? I trust You to continue Your good work in me. And God — I love You, too! In Jesus’ Name, AMEN