

Sunday 17th May 2020

**Welcome:** Although we are in our own homes, we are worshipping together because we are united in Jesus and the same Holy Spirit is with each of us in our homes brining us together in Spirit as family. Let's spend a moment to offer all of ourselves to Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit to fill us anew.

**Worship:** [Never Gonna Let You Go](#)

[I Could Sing Of Your Love Forever](#)

**Word:**

<sup>11</sup> For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. <sup>12</sup> We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup> Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters,<sup>[d]</sup> that the world hates you. <sup>14</sup> We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup> All who hate a brother or sister<sup>[e]</sup> are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. <sup>16</sup> We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. <sup>17</sup> How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister<sup>[f]</sup> in need and yet refuses help?

<sup>18</sup> Little children let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. <sup>19</sup> And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him <sup>20</sup> whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; <sup>22</sup> and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

<sup>23</sup> And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup> All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

*1 John 3:11-24 (NRSVA)*

During this time of lockdown, we have often seen the best in human beings.

Colonel (Captain) Tom Moore



Clap for Carers



Every Thursday people go out to show their appreciation of the wonderful work that carers are doing in the fight against this virus. Of course, this is shown in other ways.

Keyworkers



We enjoy talking about the amazing work that key workers are doing and praising their bravery and dedication to ensuring people get well, the nation is fed, our loved ones are cared for and people's physical, mental and spiritual needs are taken care of.

These examples could be called expressions of love, but let's look at what God tells us about love and how as followers we can experience it, but also how we can express it to others as shown in 1 John 3:11-24

### God loves us...

We know from the very beginning that God loves us and that He yearns for a relationship with us individually. When sin entered the world, God asked Adam in **Genesis 3:9**, "where are you?" A question that He continues to ask people today. He wants a friendship with us and not just in the easy times but the difficult times. God expresses His love in the gift of Jesus. So that when He might ask the question "Where are you?". We might answer *'following you Jesus.'*

## Hiding our feelings...

### 1 John 3:12

<sup>12</sup> 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.

In we **1 John 3:12** see a contrast of attitude between Cain and Jesus to help us in understanding our attitude towards other people. When Cain murdered Abel (yes extreme behaviour) it wasn't to do with parental unfairness. It was to do with His 'sinfulness'. Rather than Cain acknowledging his sin he turned his shame into anger which welled up into his heart, ultimately expressed in the extreme act of murder. In this very act we know that Cain did not know God. God might ask, "Where are you Cain?" We might find God asking where we are, when we bury things inside, trying to hide our feelings about other people from

## Love is easy... Is it?

We can see how easy it is to love people when we are either moved or are passionate about what they are doing, especially in the present situation. There is a deep sense of admiration for Tom and frontline workers so much so that people express this on a Thursday evening and that's great. Yet God also calls us to love the people who don't follow our passions or move us or inspire us or are easy to get on with. The people we struggle with might generate emotions of irritation, anger, frustration, shame the list is endless. It is these emotions that can lead us all in different directions. In the case of Cain, he committed an extreme act. For us it could be just how we behave towards that person. Maybe we snap at them, avoid them, become argumentative, act self-righteously or even show aggression. A challenging question God may ask us is "Where are you?"

## The love Cain didn't have...

In 1 John 4:8, John reminds us that 'God is *agape*', 'God is love'. This ultimate expression of love was on a cross. Romans 5:8 (NRSVA), '*But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.*' This was an act of love. V18 that to love (agape) is an action and it is this love that we walk in. This active love changes our relationship with God, but also the nature of the relationships we have with others. Love in this case is more than a feeling or emotion it's an action in response to the question, "Where are you?". We can then respond, 'Following you Jesus.'

## Finally, God's promise...

God promises 'us' who know Jesus that the reactions and responses of Cain will be replaced by the reactions and responses of Christ as we learn to be more like Jesus.



- Acknowledge to God the negative emotions we might have towards someone. Start by praying for that person.
- Then ask Holy Spirit to speak to us about this situation
- Open our hearts and minds to receive more of God's love for us so we can then express that love in all our relationships.

## PRAYER AND RESPONSES:

Together we are going to read a prayer from the Church of England, that has been written with the current situation in mind.

Thank you Lord that you have not called us to be people of fear

**but you enable us to be people of courage.**

not people who only protect our own safety:

**but people who protect our neighbours' safety.**

not people of greed:

**but people of generosity.**

Thank You Father that we are your people,

**called to give and love, wherever we are, whatever it costs**

For as long as it takes

**wherever you call us.**

## Prayers for the week

What do you want to thank God for from last week

What and who do you want to pray about for the coming week(s)

Please use prayer any prayer points from the message

Note down any prayer points to continue during the week

Note down anything you believe God has spoken to you during this time together.

**Worship:** [One Thing remains \(Your Love Never Fails\)](#)

*"The Lord bless you and keep you,  
the Lord make his face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you  
May the Lord turn His face towards you  
And give you His peace"*