



'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

John 15: 12-17

Opening Prayer

The Lord be with you: **And also with you.**

Holy Spirit draw us close and minister your grace to us. May we recognise you in our presence as we come before you in worship. **Amen**

Reflection

The Banksy picture above is temporarily hanging in a Southampton Hospital before being auctioned for the NHS. It depicts a young boy choosing a nurse as his new superhero. How moving.

The bible verse above talks of the sacrificial love in laying down one's life for a friend. Our nurses, medics, carers and other frontline staff are risking their lives not for friends but for humanity, this very service carries the heart of the love of God.

The verse is also fitting with VE day commemoration in our mind. I was touched by a report that although there was celebration there was still an overriding sadness, of the loved ones who would not be returning to celebrate, who had made the ultimate sacrifice to win our peace and freedoms. Today we have a common enemy in Covid19 which is hurting all corners of the globe and a very different frontline.

Jesus simplifies the whole gospel message in these words 'Love one another as I have loved you'. We see the depth of that love for us on the cross, in that he died for us while we were yet still sinners, but still he called us friends. As his friends he directs us to be friends to one another, to emulate a life of love and service. Has this call ever been more evident?

The Independent Newspaper reported on a video from a Republican Group in America. The group contrasts "those who sacrifice and those who demand" and people who are "working tirelessly to save lives" with people who "protest, and threaten with words of selfish entitlement".. "The important question (they ask) is, which one are you?"

It is interesting, the different philosophies on what living a good life means. Is it through personal gain and status building? Or is it through the care and love we show one another, even to those unknown to us?

This is a time to choose the greater good. This choice has always been a good one, is always the holy one, and will always will be remembered and blessed.

It is simple, and causes me to smile, as Jesus showed us 'Love wins'.

Worship Songs

Be Still – Lucy Gibson (file attached)

Amazing Love (And Can it Be) – Stuart Townend (with lyrics):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tu2uA6U4Fvg>

Servant King (From Heaven You Came)- with lyrics:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpwfDXcKrNQ>

Prayers

Almighty God,

We thank you that you love us, that you have chosen us and are ever present in our lives.

We pray for our world and its healing, for international cooperation and for peace. For wisdom for all leaders especially as decisions are made on how and when to reopen economies and to resume social activities, may there be no second wave.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all frontline and key workers, for those who are working quietly behind the scenes, for hospitals and care homes, that may they have all the support and equipment they need.

We pray for the unemployed, the vulnerable, the homeless and hungry.

For the mistreated and oppressed.

May they receive support, provision, protection and justice.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God,

We pray, for one another. For our families, friends and neighbours.

For those who have no one to pray for them.

For all who are sick and struggling.

For all who are anxious and fearful.

For those struggling with isolation.

We pray, for the recently departed and their loved ones.

We lift before you those who we have loved and love still.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Lord God,

we pledge ourselves to serve you and all humankind, in the cause of peace, for the relief of want and suffering, and for the praise of your name.

Guide us by your Spirit; give us wisdom; give us courage;
give us hope; and keep us faithful now and always. **Amen.**

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 trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever
and ever. **Amen.**

Blessing

The Holy Trinity of God,
Guide you in truth and love.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with you and those whom you love always. **Amen**

One in heart and one in mind, and empowered by the Spirit,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.