

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

The Revd Heather McIntyre
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Prayer and Reflection

Opening Psalm

95:1-7

O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker!

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Prayer:

Lord we come for guidance for our journey, your word for our minds and the power of the Spirit to give us life. We come to you Lord because you have the words of eternal life,

because you have the word of hope, because you speak words of love that we need to hear. We come to you to give you thanks and praise and worship. Lord, we have come. Fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen

Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends.

Reflection – “He taught me the meaning of love”

(through the eyes of Paul, the apostle)

He taught me the meaning of love, what it really means to say, “I love you.” Slowly, gently, he taught me. Not through words, not through gestures, but through showing me love in action.

I thought I'd understood, that I loved as much as the next person, maybe more. And I did love in my own way, of course I did – my only goal, my single aim, to help my family in Christ, serve them, reach them. And yet, despite all that, I

sometimes wondered if I'd ever loved at all, for deep down, in my heart of hearts, I knew it was all about me – my efforts, my striving, my successes – all for my own satisfaction and even, I fear, my own glory. It's human, I realise that, or so at least we tell ourselves, but is that true? Or does it have to be?

For when I look at Jesus, all he did for me, I see a different truth, a different kind of love; patient, kind, humble; not serving self or seeking gain, but putting others first. A love that knows me as I am, understands my faults, yet still believes in me. A love which, though I turn away, accepts me, even dies for me.

That's what it means, this thing called love. Seeing the worst, believing the best, asking nothing and giving all. I thought I'd understood, all those years ago, but I hadn't, hardly at all. I'm still learning. I've come to realise that I need his help, his love flowing through me, and I'll carry on praying for that, striving for that, for I understand now that without love all else is nothing.

Prayer:

Lord, in the quietness, touch our lives and hold us fast.

Lord, in the stillness, share our hurt and our sense of aloneness.

Lord, in our weakness, be strength for us.

Lord, in our darkness, be our light and our hope.

Lord, in our doubt, be our courage and faith.

Lord, in our need, be our saviour and friend.

Lord, be our source of life and love, our fulfilment and joy.

Lord, be our Lord, here and everywhere.

Blessing

May the Lord bless you and those who live in your neighbourhood with the experience of knowing his mercy and the delight of receiving his grace and his love, today and in the days to come. Amen