

A moral code to live by

Grace changes your life and your lifestyle. We are not meant to be "killjoys" with a list of "do's and don'ts" but see the love of God in the way He gives wise laws to live by. Consequently we have family values, speak the truth, demonstrate integrity and honesty

A wonderful life to enjoy

The incredible statement of 1 Timothy 6:17 resonates in our hearts "*the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy*" Think about it -the bread we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, the health we enjoy and so much more Shout "*Praise God from whom all blessings flow*" because "*hereby we perceive the love of God*"

2. RECOGNISE SOMETHING - we have a mighty Saviour.

Jesus is not just a figure of history or a moral example, nor even a prophet promising a future kingdom. Jesus is the One who meets the deepest need of the heart. We are born to live, He was born to die so that we might be redeemed and be able to live with Him in eternity Jesus never sinned, never blushed with shame, never needed to seek forgiveness It really is quite extraordinary because He wanted us to know God's love He submitted Himself to the cross. He took our sin and shame and from the cross a cry was torn from His lips "*It is finished*". And it is - so that you can know God loves you

The strains of a hymn "*Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly*" echoed from the church doors as a man casually passed by. He had lived so carelessly and came in through the doors with the question. "Does Jesus love me? Is he the lover of my soul?" It all had a strange, mesmerising effect on his heart and careless way of living. He surrendered his heart and life to Christ. Is such a story true - yes - a similar moment happened to me when I was preaching in North Wales just to mention one incident. Reader and listener: is Jesus the lover of your soul ?

3.REMEMBER SOMETHING - we have a glorious commission

Walk our talk, show we love Him. We are to especially do things for each other. Self sacrificing love must be a hallmark of the church. Do not ever forget you are a brother/sister in the family of God. A costly love has been shown **to us** so a costly love must be seen **in us**. Do you recall Peter meeting Jesus and the threefold challenge "*Do you love Me ?*" He is still asking the same question with the application "*Then go and serve Me !*"

DPS

ROCHFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Welcome to

CHURCH AT HOME

Sunday 30th May 2021

REMEMBERING ANOTHER 3:16

Read through this outline and join with everyone else at 11 am

HYMN 988

How deep the Father's love for us
How vast beyond all measure,
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss -
The Father turns His face away,
As wounds which mar the chosen one
Bring many sons to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross
My sin upon His shoulders;
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life -
I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything,
No gifts, no power, no wisdom;
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,
His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward,
I cannot give an answer,
But this I know with all my heart,
His wounds have paid my ransom.

(It would be good if you said this prayer out aloud)

O God our gracious, glorious Heavenly Father
You create and bless us by your power,
Redeem us by Your love, guide and strengthen
us by your Holy Spirit. So we worship You afresh today.
Help us Lord through the lives we lead to
discover again the joy of knowing You and serving You.
AMEN *(You may like to say the Lord's prayer also).*

BIBLE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

REMEMBERING ANOTHER 3:16

**"This how we know what love is; Jesus laid down His life
for us and we ought to lay down our life for our brothers"
1 JOHN 3:16**

One of the features of life before and during the pandemic has been the notion of self preservation as we look after No 1 first and foremost in terms of our physical well being - no matter what. So fear has gripped so many and we have created through lockdown a seriously troubled world. Open your Bible and read John 3:16 again. It begins with God's eternal love and concludes with man's eternal life. Without the first (God's love), the second (life) is impossible. D.L.Moody that wonderful evangelist of the last century would constantly say in his preaching:

*When God loves ... He loves everybody
When God gives.... He gives everything
When God saves .. He saves for every minute of time into eternity*

Paul wrote to the Ephesians and urged them "*grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ AND to know this love that surpasses knowledge*" (Ephesians 3:18) God's love that has such possibilities, it brings hope, and help for people no matter who or what they are. It is a love that reaches higher than the highest mountain or the farthest star - for it is a love that brings heaven down to us.

God's love always reaches DOWN

Isaiah 38:19 "In Your love You kept me from the pit of destruction .. put all my sins behind your back" It is the story of Hezekiah - God reaching down. Down into the difficult place. Down into the slums and the ghettos. Down into the lives of men and women who have messed up their lives.

Down to the respectable and self satisfied. Down to the ordinary man in the street. Down to you and to me.

God's love always reaches IN *"His love perfected IN us" 1 John 4:12*

Reaching into our hearts and soul to renew, to enrich, to cleanse, to heal, to restore. To do something in us that brings strength, courage, kindness, compassion and forgiveness.

God's love always reaches OUT *John 3:16 "loves the world "*

Time and time again my travels overseas would make me appreciate and marvel at how in the four corners of the earth you discover He is there and how in love He solves problems, lifts burdens, forgives sins. That the prayers we pray, the care we show as a church ensures God's love blesses people all around the world. There is nothing to stay its power. It reaches through the darkness, the trials, suffering,, sorrow and even death to bring eternal life.

We declare "*God is love*" (1 John 4:8) because it defines Him - notice NOT "*love is God*" So back to our text for the week "*we come to know the love of God because He laid down His life for us*" The cross is the supreme, unforgettable, amazing, incredible demonstration of His love. Do you realise something - without His love this world would be just another dark planet hurtling through space without hope. There would be nothing to live for, no purpose for our existence. Every death would be a moment of total despair and utter misery. We would be living in a world where all our prayers would be useless cries to the sky and lost in the vastness of the universe. BUT "*God is love*" and we do know "*the love of God*"

Please ! please ! don't take all this for granted.

1. REALISE SOMETHING - we are a blessed people.

There are so many ways in which God has shown us acts of love - such as:

A Christian home to live in.

We hear dreadful stories about what some homes are like but I lived in a home where we talked about Jesus and His love. It was sometimes hard and strict (I thought) - they kept me from doing things that others saw as alright. But my father and mother prayed, took us together as children and family to worship. They challenged me to know there was a heaven to gain and a hell to avoid. Life was not easy at times but God's love embraced us. **PS.** If you never knew a Christian home - **establish one.**