



36B EASTER 6B - MOTHERS DAY - ONLINE LITURGY

Friends and love

Abstract

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this:
to lay down one's life for one's friends.
John 15:12-13

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NEW TESTAMENT

1 John 5:1–6

5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. ² This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. ³ In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, ⁴ for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

⁶ This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

GOSPEL

John 15:9–17

⁹ “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other. ⁱ

respond

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

36B Easter 6B - Mother's Day - Online Liturgy

Friends and love

SUNDAY, MAY 9, 2021 | EASTER | SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER | YEAR B
MOTHER'S DAY

First Reading	Acts 10:44–48
Psalm	Psalm 98
New Testament	1 John 5:1–6
Gospel	John 15:9–17

Jesus encourages the disciples to keep his commandments and, above all, to love one another as he loved them. He says that those who do this are his friends and he emphasises that this is his choice rather than theirs.

We explore what 'loving one another after the example of Jesus' means in practice. What is the nature of this love (in contrast to popular usage – e.g. in something such as Love Island)? What are the implications that everyone who follows Jesus, whatever our relationship with them might be – good, bad or indifferent – is chosen by him?

This week we explore what Jesus means by friendship.

	Pre-Service
	<p>Introit TIS #147 (AHB 85) – “To God be the glory, great things he has done” <i>V1 & Chorus</i></p>
	<p>Greeting</p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all</p> <p>and also with us</p>
	<p>We Gather</p> <p>Jesus said: ‘No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.’ So, let us join together as friends, Jesus’ friends, to worship and serve the one who, because of his great love, gave his all for us.</p> <p>Acknowledgements</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> Lord Jesus, we come from separate houses,</p>

	<p>from one street and another. We may have come with others, we may have come alone; but we all come as neighbours and friends. We come as different but equal. We come to worship you, our 'Ultimate Friend', and to commit ourselves afresh to one another and to you. Amen.</p>
	<p>We say Sorry</p> <p>Dear Lord, your love is so precious; but we have turned away from you when our lives have been easy – forgive us and help us to turn back to you.</p> <p>You have commanded us to love others; but we have turned away from them when their lives have been difficult – forgive us and help us to be there for them. You have shared with us your ministry of welcome; but we have turned people away – forgive us and help us always to be open to them. For the sake of Jesus, whose life and death, deeds and words have saved us. Amen.</p>
	<p>Words of Assurance</p> <p>God of hope and healing: for choosing us – we thank you. For trusting us – we thank you. For befriending us – we thank you. For empowering us – we thank you. For loving us – we thank you. And for forgiving, redeeming and blessing us – we thank you, in Jesus' name. Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/song TIS #670 (P&W 492) – “Jesus put this song into our hearts” Kendrick</p>
	<p>Welcome</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> Creator God, you have called us to worship you, chosen us to be your friends and invited us to extend that friendship to your people in all the world. May we live as Jesus lived, serve as he served, and love as he loved, to the glory of your name. Amen.</p>

	<p>Readings</p> <p>1 John 5:1–6 John 15:9–17</p> <p><i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord</p> <p>Thanks be to God</p>
	<p>Hymn/Song TIS #703 – “As the deer” Nystrom</p>

Response

Happiness Full Stop

John 15:9-17

so, Happy Mother’s Day to all our mothers and mother-figures.

On this special day,
we would like to thank all of you who shape our lives
and build our families and serve as our safe place.

A police chief received a call from his mother
while he was in the middle of a televised press conference.
He knew his mother wouldn’t call him under those circumstances
unless something was seriously wrong,
so he excused himself from the press conference to answer the phone.

When his mother picked up the phone, she said, “Son, are you chewing gum?”
He said, “Um, yes.”
She said, “Well, it looks awful. Spit it out.”
So, Police Chief Phil Keith spat out his gum
and returned to finish the press conference. ⁱⁱ
Mothers can have amazing the power over our lives
but if you ask most mothers, they’ll say their power is very limited.

I read a true story about a mother who wanted some bedtime limits on her 4-year-old daughter.
So the mother announced firmly,
“Tonight, we’re putting on your PJs, brushing your teeth and reading ONE book . . .”
with the emphasis on just one book.
“Then, she said, “it’s lights out!”
Her little girl snuggled up next to her and said,
“Mummy, we learned in Sunday school about little boys and girls
who don’t have mummies and daddies.”
As the mother’s heart was melting over her little girl’s appreciation,
her daughter leaned closer and whispered,
“Maybe you could go be THEIR mum.”ⁱⁱⁱ
It’s not easy being a Mum and most of us have learned to appreciate the many sacrifices
our mums have made in our behalf.

Jesus told his followers,
“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.
Now remain in my love.”

Jesus' words are the model for us all:
mothers and fathers and grandmothers and grandfathers,
as well as children and siblings and friends.

Because God loves us, we love one another.

Because He forgives us, we forgive one another.

At the centre of the Gospel is the self-giving love of God.

Notice from our text the link between love and happiness.

Jesus says to his disciples,

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you,
and that your joy might be complete."

Notice that love is essential to joy.

A woman named Dona who serves a poor community,
was asked about the eternal rewards of serving the poor.

She said, "I consider it a blessing to help the migrant workers.

This is my joy and my reward.

The eternal reward is in the hands of my Father in heaven."

She wasn't trudging through her ministry while expecting a heavenly reward.

She found joy in serving the needs of God's people today.^{iv}

So, what does it take to be happy? I can't give you a precise answer

but I can say No one can truly be happy who is not

in a proper relationship with God and with other people.

It's hard to really be happy when you live only for yourself.

Jesus served as an example of this truth more than 2,000 years ago.

Even when he knew we would misunderstand him and reject him and fail him,
he still chose to love us to the cross and beyond.

In today's Bible passage, Jesus is trying to share a life-changing truth with us:

love is essential for happiness and joy.

But Christ had another point to make about love:

Love requires sacrifice.

He explained it like this,

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

That's the example of love that Jesus gave us.

Jesus had one priority in life: to restore our relationship with God.

And when we couldn't achieve that restoration through our own good works,

Jesus gave up his life to secure our restoration

through the sacrifice of his perfect, sinless life.

Jesus' cross provided safe passage between sinful humans and a holy, holy, holy God.

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Love requires sacrifice.

We can't continue to define love superficially

once we've seen Jesus' example of loving sacrificially.

And he commands us to love others in the same way that he loves us.

Throughout history, the one driving force that has moved humanity forward
has been the willingness of parents to make almost any sacrifice

to ensure that their children would have a better life.
But today a dramatic change is taking place.

Recent studies show that a sizable proportion of parents
put their own happiness before that of their children.
Think of parents on drugs who ignore their little ones.
And those who go off in search of their own dreams,
leaving their families to fend for themselves.
There are so many families are in crisis today.

How can we, as followers of Jesus Christ,
ignore the model that the Gospel provides for us?

God so loved the world that He gave . . .

Where there is no giving, there is no love.
That is true within the family,
that is true between friends,
and that is true within society.

A society in which everyone is looking out for Number 1 is a society in trouble.

I think Jesus is also telling us in this passage:

Love is the very essence of our faith.

In verse 17 of our text Jesus says: "This is my command: Love each other."

Paul would later write:

"Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains,
and have not love, I am nothing."

That pretty well sums the matter up. If we cannot love others, our faith is a sham.

In the 6th century, a monk named Dorotheos preached a sermon on love to a group of monks
who had become irritated with their religious community.

They each the other men's annoying behaviour.

He asked them to visualize the world as a great circle whose centre is God,
and upon whose circumference lie human lives.

"Can't you see" he said

that there is no way to move toward God without drawing closer to other people,
and no way to approach other people without coming near to God?" ⁽⁸⁾

That is well said, don't you think

If we are having trouble loving other people,
then we need to examine our relationship with Jesus.

He is the source of sacrificial love. He is our example.

As he loved us, so he commands us to love others.

Love is the very essence of Christian faith.

Sometimes the most difficult people to forgive are those closest to us.

But there is Christ, hanging on the cross. And who did he die for?

He died for imperfect people; like you and me.

How tragic if we cannot forgive and accept those who love us,
even as Christ has forgiven and accepted us.

Yes, love and happiness are inseparable.

But love requires sacrifice.

Therefore, we must sacrifice in order to be happy.

Love does not come easy in this imperfect world.

But love is the central commandment that Christ gives to those who would be his disciples.

It is what God made us for,

and how God planned for us to operate in this world.

If you don't know that kind of love,

then please ask Jesus to be Lord of your life today

and discover the love that makes life worth living.

Amen

	<p>Hymn/song P&W #174 – “This is my commandment”</p>
	<p>Offering</p> <p>OFFERTORY SENTENCE: To those whom much has been given, the indwelling love of Christ no less, much can be given in grateful return.</p> <p>OFFERTORY PRAYER: For the wondrous gift of life, we are thankful, our God. Your generous outpouring of grace reminds us of the fruitful life we are called to bear. May these gifts of time and labour, therefore, embody our desire to share and contribute to your coming reign among us. Amen.</p>
	<p>Notices</p>
	<p>Prayers for all people Gracious God, we bring to you in our prayers today those who lay down their lives for others:</p> <p>parents who go without food so that their children don't go hungry; those who give up their jobs to look after those who are ill or elderly or dying; those who give up their freedom and are persecuted because they speak out against corruption; those who give up their lives rather than renounce their faith.</p> <p>And we remember all those who have been killed trying to save the lives of others: those who make the news headlines and those whose names only a few people know. May their love inspire and your love sustain. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.</p>

	<p>Lord's Prayer</p> <p>Lord's Prayer</p> <p>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN ^{vi}</p>
	<p>Hymn/song TIS #491 (SA.34) – “Father welcomes all his children”</p>
	<p>We are sent out</p> <p>Lord Jesus, we rejoice that you have chosen us to be your friends. Help us to be a friend to you by obeying your commands. As we go out into your world, help us to live a life that reflects your love, by being a friend to others. Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace</p>
	<p>Benediction TIS #641 (AHB.401) – “This is my will, my one command”</p>
	<p>Thank you</p>

also good hymns:

Filled with the Spirit's power	TiS.411 AHB.328
Rock of Ages, cleft for me	TiS.222 AHB.157
In Christ there is no east or west	TiS.459 AHB.391
What a friend we have in Jesus	TiS.590 AHB.165

ⁱ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱ From the Knoxville News Sentinel.

ⁱⁱⁱ @Doc's Daily Chuckles, docsdailychuckle-join@freegroups.net to subscribe.

^{iv} Larry Brincefield, <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/fruit-of-the-spirit-is-kindness-or-kinder-and-gentler-christians-larry-brincefield-sermon-on-christian-love-66305?page=1>.

^v Dorotheos of Gaza: Discourses and Sayings, trans. Eric P. Wheeler (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1977), pp. 138-39 (paraphrase). Cited in Roberta C. Bondi, *Memories of God* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995).

^{vi} ^{vi} English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988