

Good Friday Reflection

Love Is...

Love is of God, and God is love, and we love because God first loved us.

Perfect love drives out all fear.

And on Good Friday there are plenty of fears to go around.

And in our world today fear is in abundance.

Love is the one who walks through those fears, ours now, theirs then, perhaps even his own on some level, to a Roman execution yard.

And offers no resistance.

And makes no reply.

Only issues a call for us all to love one another beyond fear.

In doing so he shows us the heart of God's love.

What it's like.

What love is and what it does.

It gives. God gives. For us. It protects, it trusts, does not envy or boast, is not proud or rude or self seeking. Is not easily angered. Keeps no record of wrongs.

Quite the opposite in fact.

Love is bold and courageous, patient and kind, it always hopes and perseveres and trusts.

We love when we put ourselves on the line for others.

In harm's way as it were.

Maybe there'll be derision or scorn, maybe injury, maybe reputational damage, for the sake of our loving.

Who knows? But that's the risk of love. It's no fair weather friend if it's authentic.

Love is the child in the schoolyard who stands alongside the bullied not the bullier. Says no to the mob. Yes to the lonely and put upon.

Love is the visitor in the hospital, at the bedside, bringing a presence which comforts. 'You are not alone.', they say. 'We are with you.' Even in this lonely place.

Love is the soldier on the battlefield risking his life to rescue his friend.
Love is the knowing smile held between them while bullets zing by, or main, or even kill.

Love is the father, or mother, standing at the corner post, pacing up and down the boundary fence, anxiously watching the horizon as the sun sets in the west, hoping that this will be the day when the prodigal son or daughter returns.

Love is the tears of joy when they do.
And the tears of sorrow when they don't.

Love is the grace shared before meals. The meal itself. The laughter of friends, companions. The talk of serious and insignificant things that pass the time.

Love is the stranger in the street stopping to help someone across the road, the people in their cars who wait patiently for them to cross without beeping their horn or furrowing their brow.

Love is long obedience in the same direction... sticking in relationships through thick and thin. Perhaps through especially hard things, addiction, maybe illness or even death.

'I've got your back.', 'I'm here come what may.'

Love is the rejoicing when fears or frailties are conquered.
It's the view from the top of the hill. The grand vista.

Love is seeing what I have as ours not mine, a gift of God and belonging to God always.

The home which may be a shelter for others. The food which may feed others. The warmth which may wash over my neighbour and form a deeper and more lasting relationship.

Love is the sea which keeps lapping at the shore, day in, day out, never tiring of coming back in one more time.

Love is the changing of the 1000th nappy, the packing and repacking of toys, and the final embrace before bed that night.

Love is the nun whose prayers gather the whole world, but whose language of the heart is heard only by God.

Over and over she prays, for people she has never met and never will, yet there is a holding in grace. A willingness, a faithfulness, a commitment.

Love is the refugee family searching for safety, and the communities which offer it.

It's the prayer, 'forgive them for they know not what they do.'
How often are we the 'they' in that context?

Love is, 'remember me when you come into your kingdom', and 'today you will be with me in paradise', and 'feed my sheep'.

Love is God's search for us, even when we think it's our search for him.
The giving of his Son, even for those who will remain different or hostile.

It's the choirs of angels and of humans singing to the Lord in the same key.
Human music making to God has many different melodies in this regard.

Love is the conversation on the Community Transport Bus, or the ecstatic smiles at Dream Cricket, or the transporting of groceries to Anglicare, or tending the church gardens, or teaching music, or reading to someone.

Love is doing the paperwork, even when it's a battle to concentrate.
Even when you'd prefer to be somewhere else.

Love is the little promptings of the HS to ring someone you haven't heard from in a while, or to remain calm in the face of provocation.

Love is seeing yourself as God sees you, made in his image, of worth and dignity and respect.

It's the call to conform to the way of Christ. To take on his mantle.

Love is mending, healing in whatever circumstance, and being prepared to be an advocate for others when necessary.

Love is tenderness and compassion in action.

Love is meeting a woman at the well, or speaking with a frightened Pharisee by night, hearing the distressed call of friends, and bringing new life.

Love is Paul pacing back and forward impatiently dictating letters to his scribe which will implore those early Christians to be one in Christ.

Love is the remembering of the saints, and what they have given us, and will continue to in the witness of their lives and faith.

Perhaps even the hope that we too may be counted in their number.
Witnesses in our own measure, with our own unique hue, our own unique gifts, when the saints go marching in.

Love is attentiveness to the still small voice in the ordinary things of life. Seeing and being in nature, God's good creation, cherishing it for the gift it is.

Being in families with all their idiosyncrasies. Walking with friends.

Treating the waitress like a human being not a servant.

Listening that extra couple of minutes when you really need to go. Then love is understanding when someone's a couple of minutes late.

Today, Good Friday, we see the heart of the divine love.

Love is three crosses, and the bowed head of a crucified Jew, and the cry, 'It is finished.'
The heart of God in the giving of Jesus.
All love flows and is a part and takes its form from this eternal love.

'Wide, wide as the ocean', as the old children's song used to say, 'high as the heavens above. Deep, deep, as the deepest sea, is my saviour's love.'

Love is within you, if you'll see it, if you'll tend it like a flower, if you'll let it grow.
Jesus is dying to show you.

There's no obstacle. It's really there. All you need to do is believe. Trust. 'Your faith has healed you.', Jesus said on more than one occasion.

Love does heal. It binds up wounds and forgives and starts things afresh.
Thank goodness.

We love, because God first loved us. Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in them.

Perhaps we could say whoever lives in Jesus...

... for in Jesus, his death, and his resurrection, God is love, **all the time**, and all the time, **God is love.**

Amen.