

Service for personal use – 1st May 2022.

Call to Worship.

When Jesus asked, Simon Peter, “Do you love more than these”, Peter answered, “Yes Lord you know I love you”. Let us make the same positive answer and let us come together to worship God in Christ.

Hymn. “This joyful Eastertide, what need is there for grieving” 213 H&P.

Opening Prayer.

O God, our loving Heavenly Father, we want to acknowledge again that You are the great God of wonders, yet only a prayer away. We want to thank You for the many presents of Your promises we have in Christ. As a result of this may we continue to love you and serve you.

We come to You realizing that there are sometimes things in our lives which are wrong, so if that is the case, please forgive and renew us. We pray in Christ’s name. Amen.

Responsive Reading 848 A, H&P. Psalm 40.

Hymn. “Now the green blade rises from the buried grain”. H&P.

Bible Reading, John 21 vs 1 – 19.

Message.

This week I want to share with you the incident when Jesus says to Peter, “Do you love me more than these”, John 21 vs 15. This question is asked 3 times by Jesus and Peter gives the same reply, “Yes Lord, you know I love you”. When Jesus says, “Do you love me more than these”, what does he mean? Without going into too much detail, he clearly means “these nets”, in other words, do you love me more than fishing, are you at last going to give yourselves solely to God’s work.

The first point I want to make to you is “The true test is the test of love”. It is the test for serving Christ, “if you love me says Jesus, then feed my sheep”, John 21 vs 16. It is the test of discipleship, “If you love me says Jesus, then the world will know that you are my disciples” John 13 vs 35. It is the test for using gifts of the Holy Spirit, this is clearly stated in 1 Corinthians 13. It is the test for persecution, see 1 Corinthians 13 vs 3.

The second point I want to make is, we having an understanding Christ. In ancient Greek there are four words for the meaning of love as opposed to our one word.

There is the love of a parent, love of a friend, sexual love and love of God. So with this in mind the conversation between Jesus and Peter runs like this, Jesus says to Peter, “Do you love me in a God like way” and Peter replies, I like you as a

friend". Jesus asks Peter the same question a second time with same response. Then Jesus does something extraordinary, the third time Jesus asks Peter, "Do you like me as a friend" and Peter replies, "Yes Lord you know I like you". Even though Peter could only say, "Lord I like you", Jesus still said "Feed my sheep". This shows we have an understanding Christ. I wonder how our churches would respond if a person wanted to become a member, train to be a Worship Leader or Local Preacher, or train for the ministry and that person could only say, "I like Jesus". If we are honest, I think we would be a little suspicious. Yet Jesus still said to Peter, "Feed my sheep", we have a understanding Christ who knows our faults, failures and sins and loves us just the same – the understanding Christ.

The third point I want to make is, the honesty of Peter, "I don't love you, but I like you". Later on he could say he loved Christ, see 1 Peter 1 vs 8, but here we see the pure virtue of honesty. It is so easy to put on a pretense of spirituality, we know how to dot the i's and cross the t's. of the faith, we know what is expected of us. It is so easy to sing the hymn "As the deer pants for the water so my soul longs after you", but do we mean it?. I met a church member many years ago who would not put anything on the collection plate until he had heard the sermon, if the message was OK, he would contribute, otherwise he would not. You would be correct in saying he was mean, but at least he was honest. There will be some whom if they are honest can only say, "Jesus I only like you", but lets be honest about it and pray for the time when we can truly say, "Jesus I love you. You are the person who loves me and gave yourself for me. Amen.

Hymn Breathe on me breath of God. 280 H&P.

Prayers of intercession.

Loving God, We praise you for this season of celebration, this day of praise, this day of thanksgiving, but we want also to pray for our world, we want to pray for a positive change in all those places where there is human need.... for the poor.... for the homeless and for the sick and the hungry.... We pray also for those who we know who are in need....

We pray for the victims of war, for refugees, for divided communities.... for the sorrowful, the fearful and those troubled in heart and mind....

Lastly, we pray for ourselves that our needs might met so that we might be able to deal with the needs of other people.

Living God, we trust You to answer our prayers, according to Your will and the richness of Your love for us in Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

Hymn "Christ is alive, let Christians sing" 190 H&P.

We say the "Grace". Amen.