

Traditional Home service Sunday 20th June

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father: give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you.

We are not worthy to be called your children.

We turn to you again.

Have mercy on us, bring us back to yourself as those who once were dead but now have life through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.

Open our lips, Lord:

and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*Eternal Father, Strong to Save*)

READINGS - Psalm 103

Luke 15:11-32

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

HYMN 2 (*Be still and know that I am God*)

CONCLUSION

The Lord bless you and watch over you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

1 Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm does bind the restless wave,
Who bids the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

2 O Savior, whose almighty word
The winds and waves submissive heard,
Who walked upon the foaming deep,
And calm amid the rage did sleep;
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

3 O Holy Spirit, who did brood
Upon the waters dark and rude,
And bid their angry tumult cease,
And give for wild confusion peace;
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

4 O Trinity of love and pow'r,
Your children shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire, and foe,
Protect them where-so-e'er they go;
Thus, evermore shall rise to Thee
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God.

I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee.

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust.

Sermon Notes - Adrian Morton
Luke 15:11-32 The Father loves you...

I want to talk about the father's Heart the morning.

Its a message that throughout my Christian life has impacted me greatly.

Even now, whenever I'm at a conference or other meeting and a Father's heart message is given, the message usually undoes me completely.

The message will get past my defences and pierce my heart.

And if the context of the meeting welcomes Holy Spirit ministry, I will invariably encounter afresh, I experience the love of the Father.

And it is always a renewal for me.

So I stop worrying about those things that I shouldn't be worrying about - whether I'm a good enough vicar; or is the church growing..

I have a renewed softness towards those who oppose me or are critical of me.

I get a new sense of Hope of what can be possible with a God where all things are possible.

So the Father's heart message has become foundational for me in my walk as a Christian.

And I believe its a foundational message.

Simply put the message is this:

God has a heart towards you and I as a perfect Father would do.

And He is the perfect father...

The problem we have is that we project our views of our own earthly Fathers onto God the Father.

So we have this distortion that we are seeing God through because of that.

<My own father is retired RAF. He's a Yorkshireman.

And whilst I know he loves me in his way. There was never really any affection shown.

Even now, he'll shake my hand when he greets me.

Or if he's really animated and warm, he'll shake it extra vigourously!

Whenever I did something well, he would try and get me to do better.

And I know it was because he wanted the best for me, but I tended to grow up always thinking that what I did was never good enough.. I could always do better...

But you know, all of us grow up with imperfect Father's.

Some, I know will have had a really difficult relationship with their Father.

So many of us, probably all of us, will have a distorted view that we are seeing God through.

And that will need to be dealt with, including having wounds healed.

To begin with though we need to bring it back and understand the Father's heart from a biblical perspective.

To get the right focus on the Father's heart... Because did you know our ultimate destination is the Father.

In John 14:1-6, which is a favourite passage for funerals... Jesus says,

Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you. ... You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

The emphasis from this passage is usually the Jesus is the gateway to heaven. But He is the gateway to the Father.

That is where we are heading...

Many of us are looking forward to being with loved ones, our cats, dogs etc...

Yet for a lot of people the father being our destination is scary...
Dials up our Father fears...

Many have grown up unsure whether we can ever please him.
Or whether we can trust him..

Or will he just find fault with me, will he criticise me...

So we need to understand the Father's heart from a biblical perspective.

How many of us think that the Father really loves Jesus...

Well He said at Jesus's baptism, "this is my beloved son whom I love, with Him I am well pleased."

Jesus's ministry was just beginning...

The thing that propelled Jesus through ministry is that He knew He was loved by the Father.

It says in John 17:24 - "The Father loved Jesus before the creation of the world"

Jesus didn't do what he did because he just thought it was just the right thing to do

He loved the father...
The trinity is a relationship of love.

I don't think may of us find it hard to believe that the Father loves Jesus.

But here's the thing:

The Father loves you as much as He loves Jesus...

John 17:23 - *"I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me*

and have loved them even as you have loved me."

Because we are 'in Christ'... we are identified with Christ.

The Father has the same love for you as He has for Jesus.

What is the Father like?

Well, it says in Hebrews that Jesus is the exact representation of the Father

Look at what Jesus was like.

When he touched the leper, healed the sick, forgave the sinful woman...

The Father's heart is manifested through Jesus.

Luke 15 is a parable of the loving Father

We know the story... the youngest son says, in effect, I wish Father you were dead so give me my inheritance.

He goes off and squanders his money, ends up in a foreign country feeding the pigs. Not a great job for a Jewish boy.

He eventually comes to his senses and sets off for home.
Saying maybe my Father will treat me like a hired man.

It says, while he was still along way off, the Father sees him, has compassion for him, runs to him, throws his arms around him and kisses him.

Bring a robe, put a ring on his finger, lets have a feast and celebrate..

The older brother hears the commotion of the party and is less than pleased.

I heard someone speak on this and they said, aren't you glad that the younger son was met by the Father and not by the older brother.

The older brother was treating him as he deserved...

This parable is showing us what the Father is really like.

How many of us can relate to the wasteful son...

So glad there is another chance.

How many have a streak of the older brother within us?

I'm sure many of us.

Which one was right?

None of them - both of them misunderstood the heart of the Father.

Simplicity of the Gospel... John 3:16.. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Whoever believes...

Just believe.. the Father runs to you, forgives you, throws a party for you...

No other good news like this...

Doesn't matter whether you are rich, poor, clever or not, socially connected or not...

Just believe...

The plan to redeem the earth wasn't just a strategy..

The Father and Son didn't just meet up ... this is the plan... lets get it up on the white board...

It wasn't just a good idea.

It was because the Father loved you and I...

When you know someone loves you, it strengthens you in my inner being...

We know that in the natural..

Love is a very sustaining thing...

It is the primary motivator in all of life...

It is what took Jesus to the cross.

So on this Father's Day as we are thankful for our own father's.

As some of us remember and grieve our lost father's.

Know that our heavenly father loves you with an everlasting love.

Amen.