

Sunday 25th November
Sermon Notes – ‘Where is the Love?’



This is a good question to ask when we look around us at the world in which we live – the images coming out of Yemen, the ‘caravan’ of people at the border between Mexico and the USA and the destruction of Syria.

Read Luke 18:35-19:10

- What were the factors that caused these two people to be on the outside of ‘Life’ i.e. set apart from and excluded from the life of the community?
- Can you identify other occasions when Jesus encountered individuals or groups of people who were on the ‘outside’? What were the reasons for them being separated and set apart?
- What does Jesus do in each case when he comes across a person in need?

Read slowly I John 4:7-21 and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight a particular word, phrase or verse that stands out for you. Go round the group and share what stood out for you?

- How might the Holy Spirit be speaking to you about expressing the love of Jesus more fully in your life? Is there a group of people (or a person) he is putting on your heart to go to and demonstrate His love? What is stopping you?

Martin Buber, the Jewish Philosopher tells us how in civilisations and cultures where there are a lot of *things* we become less available to people to be with them
to understand them
to share with them.

We get caught up with *things*; having *things*, doing *things*, selling and buying *things*. We risk forgetting that the joy and treasure of human beings is to be with other human beings and to celebrate life together, (hence your Life group).

- How can you as a group celebrate Christmas and invite others into your celebrations and avoid being caught up with *things*?

Pray for one another that as a group and individually we may demonstrate the love of Jesus in word and action as we reach out to those who find themselves on the outside and excluded from ‘life in all its fullness’.

Joelle’s testimony

When I was born my parents chose my name because of the verse about the coming of the Holy Spirit in Joel 2:28. I grew up in a Christian family with three siblings. I always remember my parents reading Bible stories and praying with me from when I was little and I loved listening to Christian children’s music CDs and being part of children’s church and youth groups as I got older.

I have also been to Christian camps including Soul Survivor, New Wine, Morfa Bay, Lee Abbey and Purbeck Venture and they have all helped me feel part of the Christian family and understand more about God. From my experience at Soul Survivor I realised that God could do amazing and powerful things and it really impacts my life when I see people being prayed for and getting healing in their life. One example in particular which really impacted me was when I saw a young teenager being prayed for with a lower back problem and bit by bit he was able to gradually bend down to touch his toes and that’s a sign of God’s healing power. Ever since I was little, I have loved to pray for people who need healing.

The reason for me getting baptised is because I want to say that my Christian faith is important to me.

Angelina’s testimony

It’s hard to distinguish a specific moment of personal realisation of my faith since I grew up in a Christian family with faith being a natural part of my childhood. Having said this, one moment that stands out for me is when I went to a Christian camp at the age of ten. I made a commitment to myself and although I’ve felt unsure and had my doubts at times, my baptism today represents this coming to life.

Growing up I’d say that my oldest sister has been the greatest inspiration over the years, as she’s shown such resilience with her personal faith and has inspired me to take my faith deeper. Going to Christian camps nearly every summer has also been a massive input and I’ve been able to be part of

our wider family by engaging with Christians from all around the world. I've been to many churches throughout my life however I felt that I should only be baptised in a church where I felt I had a warm and loving wider family around me to celebrate and support me through my journey. I feel so comfortable in this church and am so excited to take this step in my personal faith knowing that I am in such an inspiring and uplifting environment. I am also so happy to be getting baptised with my older sister as we grow together and share this special moment.

Halle's testimony

Since before I can remember, I have been coming to church. My Nanna would bring me as often as possible and I loved being in TJC (Trinity Junior Church).

When I was old enough, I joined the youth group and I felt like I became part of a family. Going to Soul Survivor in 2015 with everyone was amazing and that was where I first made the decision for myself and gave my life to Jesus. Ever since then I have enjoyed coming to church, helping in the children's work and being part of the worship group.

Over the summer I was part of the Groundbreakers team at New Wine; I can honestly say that it was one of the best weeks of my life. I was encouraged and prayed for by other people on team. Now I feel closer to God more than I've ever been and it's led me to make this commitment by being baptised.

Ella's testimony

I've always been brought up in a Christian family, and cannot name the number of times I've given my life to God (as I seemed to do it at every opportunity when I was younger). I remember the first time, though, was when I sat on the stairs at a Christian camp called Upcott aged eight and just cried because I knew this was real. I felt God within me, and knew this was the way to go. Since then I've had many more experiences, from having a vision of my future at Soul Survivor to literally having scars healed off my face and I know there is no other explanation than God. I've thought about being baptised for a while, but something has stopped me every time. But I

now know this is the time, I'm ready to see what more God can do in my life. I'm ready to see what work He will do through me.

Isaac's testimony

I have always attended church but not always known what it is to be a follower of Christ; going to church has helped me so much to figure out what it means to be a Christian. When I was eight I went to a Christian camp called Upcott in the summer, this assisted me in feeling a connection with Christ. On my fourth year of the camp they took us to a nearby hill for a time of reflection; I sat down and looked at the view ahead of me, at that moment I decided that if God could create such beauty then he was the one I wanted to follow for my eternity, this is when I gave my life to God. I decided to get baptised because I'm sure that Jesus is my king and I want to show that.