



John 15:9-17

9 Jesus said to his disciples: 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. 12 This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. 13 A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends, if you do what I command you. 15 I shall not call you servants any more, because a servant does not know his master's business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. 16 You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; and then the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name. 17 What I command you is to love one another.'

Other readings: Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48 Psalm 97 (98) 1 John 4:7-10

This Sunday's gospel continues from the previous Sunday, when we heard Jesus describe himself as the true vine. We are listening to the farewell teaching of Jesus to his friends on the night before he died. There are several major themes here.

Jesus speaks of the love that the Father has for him. This same love he bestows on his disciples. If they are to remain in this bond of love they will keep his commandments, just as he keeps the commandments of the Father. Through discipleship they are bound not only to Jesus but also to the Father.

This belonging to the Son and to the Father is the cause of great joy, a joy shared by the Son and the disciples. Jesus foresees that the joy of the resurrection, the joy of seeing his triumph over sin and death, will abide with the disciples.

The love of which Jesus speaks is not simply love of God and love of neighbour, as in the other gospels, but love which imitates the love Jesus has shown, a love ready to lay down one's life for others, the love of the Good Shepherd defending his sheep.

The disciples are no longer considered servants, but friends. They are to know what Jesus has learnt from the Father. Being drawn closer to Christ means an increasing closeness to the Father. Jesus the master chooses his disciples. We are chosen and commissioned to go out and bear fruit. The image of the true vine and the branches bearing fruit, with which this chapter of the gospel began, returns.

Does the love I show really reflect the self-giving love of Christ?

Have I really accepted that Jesus has chosen and commissioned me for a specific work?

We pray for those who see love as self-centred.

We pray for generosity and courage in our response to Christ.