

THE WORD FOR TODAY

1 JOHN 3, 16-24: “This is how we know what love is”

This passage is from John’s First Letter to the young churches which had grown up in Asia Minor in the 50-60 years since the Resurrection of Jesus. John had lived a long life and had done a lot of thinking about Jesus and just what his faith in him meant to him. Now he was writing to Christians who were surrounded by false teachers and temptations to assure them that what they believed in was true. He wanted to encourage them to live out their faith in their daily lives and above all to live lives of love—love for God and for all his people.

It’s a good theme for people emerging from the Covid Crisis, which has affected people’s physical and mental health and caused widespread financial hardship. “Be kind to others” has been a plea alongside all the injunctions to keep to the rules. We’re reminded that having the vaccine is to benefit others as well as ourselves. These words of John remind us that to love each other is part of the call to be followers of Jesus, who sets us a wonderful example to follow.



Follow the words of this short Bible passage on seven panels around the church. The first is just round the corner on the north wall of this little building and the others are on the east wall of the church (right as you look from here) for panels 2, 3 & 4, and on the west wall (5, 6 and 7). The translation of the Bible used is the New International Version, and you can look it up on the internet under Bible Gateway.

**“This is how we know what love is:
Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.”**

1

It's staggering, isn't it? The fact that Jesus died on the cross for us. We don't deserve such self-sacrifice. We can know ourselves forgiven, and loved as children of God for ever, because Jesus was prepared to give his life. Why did he do such a thing? For love.

This is the depth of love we have to try to show in our lives.



***Lord, your love for me fills me with awe.
Help me to find something of that depth of love within me.
May it grow to fill my life.***

Now walk to the right of the church building to find panels 2 and 3



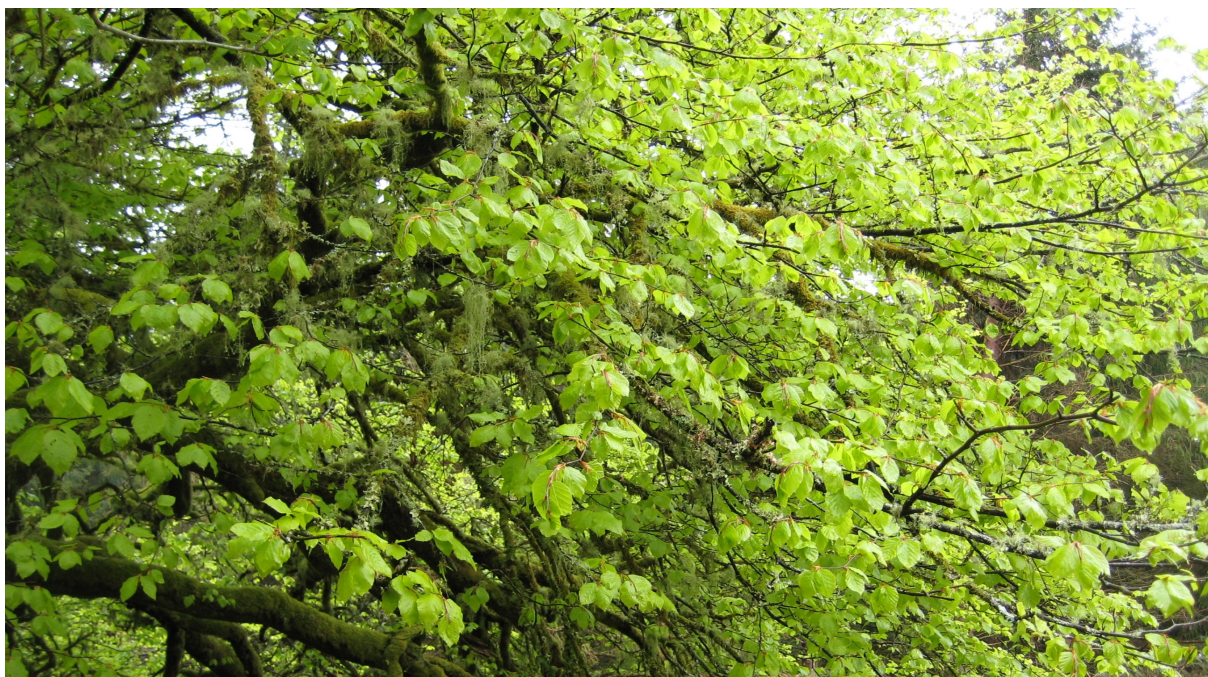
THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“And we ought to lay down our lives
for our brothers. If anyone has
material possessions and sees his
brother in need but has no pity on him, how
can the love of God be in him?”**

2

“Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.” We sing those words in Isaac Watts’ beautiful hymn “When I survey the wondrous cross” Such undeserved grace, freely given, surely demands a response.

We may not ever be required to lay down our lives for others, but we are surrounded by human need for love. Love which can be expressed in giving, or in listening, in companionship, in prayer. Can we sacrifice some of our money, or our time, to show that love?



*Lord, thank you for the example you set before me.
Help me to be aware of the needs of others
and to be prepared to give of myself to help them.*



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”

3



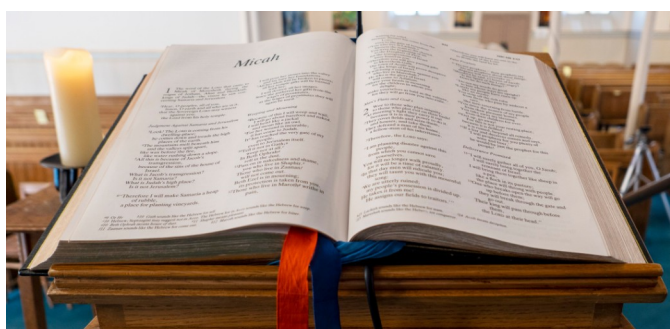
There are some rhododendron bushes in the garden in front of the Kirk Centre which have been putting on a great show this Spring. I have stood and soaked in their beauty.

Nothing in a flower book can compare with the impact of the real thing at its very best.

Christians can talk about their faith and following Jesus, but nothing compares with a life which demonstrates love in all its dealings with others. Such a life is a genuine expression of God's love, and is something which people who see it will delight in.

***Lord, let me never be afraid to reach out to others in love.
Help me to radiate love in my life,
and so to give people a glimpse of your Kingdom.***

Now walk round the back of the church, where panel 4 is on the back door.



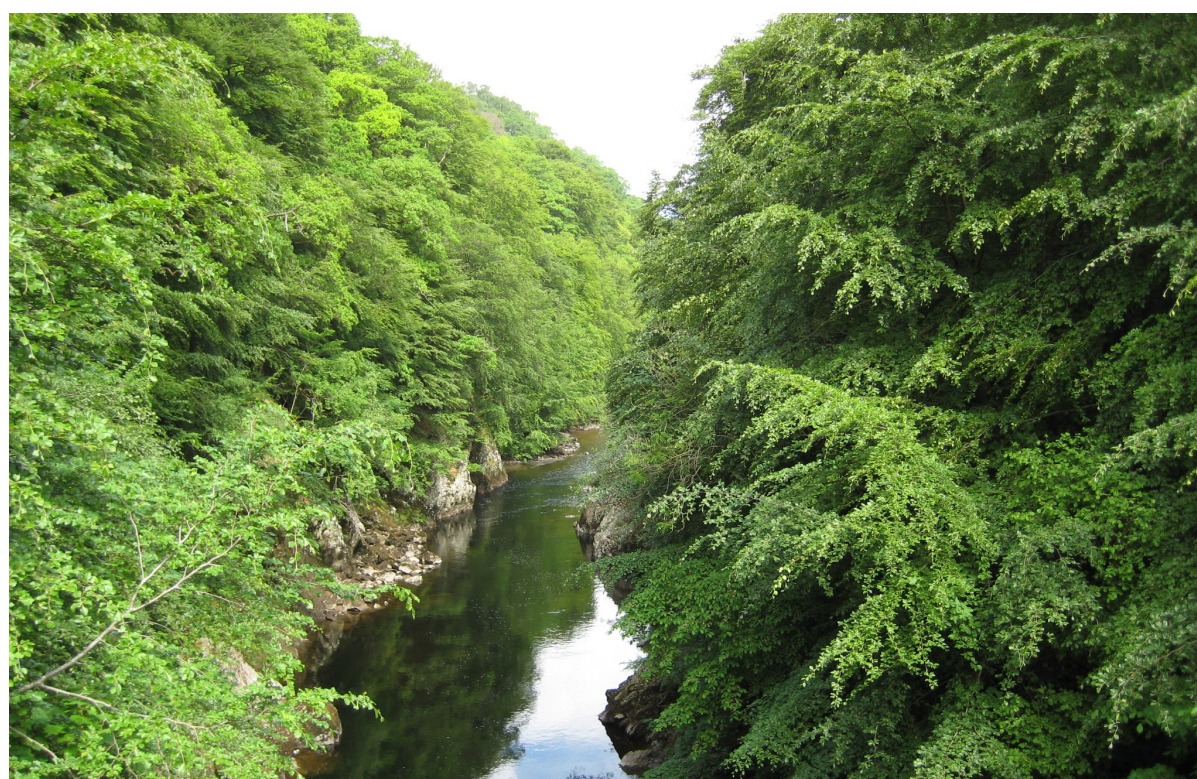
THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“This then is how we know that we
belong to the truth, and how we set our
hearts at rest in his presence
whenever our hearts condemn us.
For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows
everything.”**

4

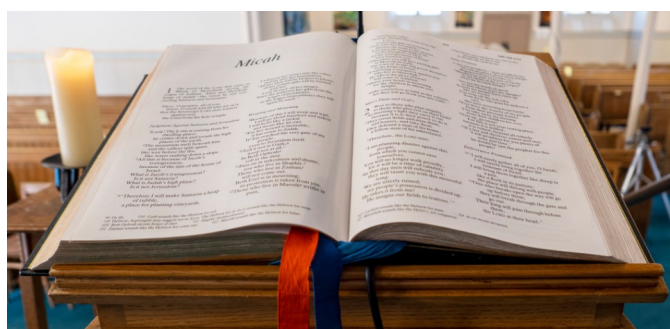
Have you got a conscience? Sometimes it just won't keep quiet. It nags away, casting doubt on whether we're doing the right thing or doing more harm than good or not doing enough. We get downhearted. We're not having the effect we want—there must be something wrong with the love we're trying to pass on.

Fear not! God can bring us reassurance and set our hearts at rest. He knows our inmost thoughts. He knows our intentions. He sees all our effort.



***Lord, I need you to keep me on the right track.
Thank you for knowing me through and through.
Thank you for the peace that gives me.***

Now walk along the back of the church and turn left to find panels 5, 6 and 7



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.”

5

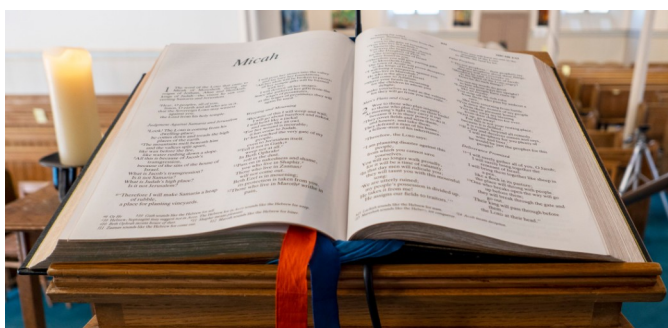
Reassured that we are on the right track, that we are doing the right thing, we can boldly pray. As we emerge from this Covid crisis there are many very difficult problems to be solved. There are also some things it would be good to continue. One of the good things has been the number of people volunteering for all sorts of projects. Some of them national like helping with vaccines and test and trace, and many of them local in communities—our church is part of this. Prayer is a powerful way of giving support to all as we move forward—there is a bench on your left set aside just for this purpose, but you can pray at any time and in any place!



Lord, thank you for listening to my prayers.

Be with us all to guide us as we move forward from this crisis.

May the love which has been shown to neighbours continue and grow.



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“And this is his command: to believe
in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,
and to love one another as he
commanded us.”**

6

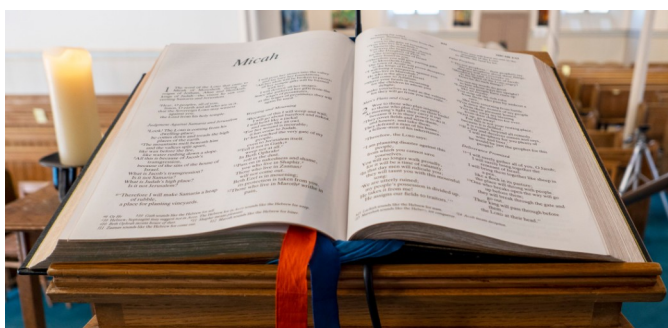


Christianity is all about faith and love. Jesus said the two most important things were to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves. They go together—you can't have one without the other.

As we seek to get closer to God, what we learn from him should help to guide us in the way we live our lives.

***Lord, keep me close to you and deepen my faith.
Teach me how to live a life of love.***

Panel no. 7 is on the church wall behind the cairn on the right



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us. We know it by the Spirit he gave us.”

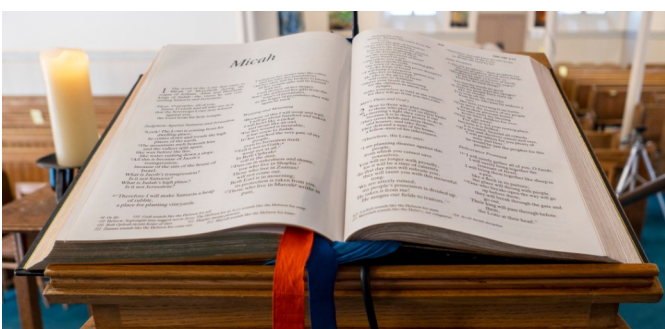
7

It's not always easy to keep our faith in Jesus strong and unshakable whatever life may throw at us. It's not always easy to love one another—sometimes our selfish tendencies take over, and, let's face it, everybody isn't all that lovable. But we are promised that if we try to obey we will have major help in all our daily living from the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. However difficult the path ahead, we have a companion who will not fail.



***Lord, thank you for living with me in the Holy Spirit.
Help me to follow Jesus more closely every day.***

If you would like to know more about Christianity there are many opportunities within our church life here. Contact John Young, by telephone on 664 3067 or by email on JYoung@churchofscotland.org.uk for details or information.



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