

30th August 2020

## ***Hearsall at Home***

Hello, and welcome to Hearsall at Home.

It's great that you are joining us today. May God bless you as we read, sing and listen together.

A written copy of the service is also available as a download on our website, so if you know anyone who would like that, please let us know.

Afterwards you'll find me in my Whereby room: Bring your cup of coffee to [whereby.com/sutcliffechat](https://whereby.com/sutcliffechat) and see who's there. There's still room for more!

So sit down, be still, and prepare yourself to worship God with us.

## Order of Service for 30th August 2020

### ***The strength of love***

#### Call to Worship

#### **Matthew 16: 21 - 26**

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to you!'

Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.'

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?'

We begin to respond to these dramatic words by singing, *I will offer up my life*.

#### Song (WT 195) **I Will Offer Up my Life**

Verse 1

I will offer up my life  
In spirit and truth,  
Pouring out the oil of love  
As my worship to You.  
In surrender I must give my every part,  
Lord, receive the sacrifice  
Of a broken heart.

*Chorus*

*Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring,  
To so faithful a friend, to so loving a King.  
Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung,  
As a praise of Your name  
For the things You have done.  
Oh, my words could not tell, not even in part,  
Of the debt of love that is owed  
By this thankful heart.*

Verse 2

You deserve my every breath,  
For You've paid the great cost,  
Giving up Your life to death,  
Even death on a cross.  
You took all my shame away,  
There defeated my sin,  
Opened up the gates of heaven  
And have beckoned me in.

*Chorus x 2*

Prayers of adoration and confession

Lord God, King of the universe, you sent your Son, Jesus, as the very expression of love in human form, love which would take him from a strange beginning in a stable through to a strange ending on a cross. He showed us the true strength of love, holding on to the good even when it hurt like hell, and winning eternal life by remaining loyal to you, his loving Father. And so he threw open heaven's gate for all who are humble enough to trust in his rescuing power. And, as he prepared to return to his rightful place in glory, he gave us the Holy Spirit, who pours love into the hearts of all your children.

We worship you, Almighty Lord of Love, One God in Three Persons.

### The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be your name,

Your kingdom come, your will be done,

On earth as it is 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 forever. Amen.

Our **Door Ajar** this week comes from our good friend and lovely church organist, John Pettifer.

When Covid19 started, I wrote a few notes as time went by. Here's some of them, which might interest you.

March 27th 2020 - The whole country is in lockdown due to Coronavirus which is very contagious. Most people are in isolation for at least 2 weeks, but Tina has been advised to stay isolated for at least 12 weeks due to her low immune system.

All our steam fair events have been cancelled or postpone; all church services have been stopped.

This is happening the whole world over. People are dying in large numbers.

Apparently, the only way to avoid this is to isolate and only go out to buy food and keep 2 metres apart at all times. It's going to be a long 12 weeks and this is only day 3.

28th March - Appeals have gone out for all retired medical staff to help.

Temporary hospitals are being set up in London and the NEC in Birmingham, to house 8,000 beds. All homeless people are being brought inside to help reduce infection.

24th April - Over 15,000 people have died in hospital and many more in care homes etc.

As Tina is classed as high risk, we are being sent a free food parcel every week which includes potatoes, carrots, soup, tea, coffee, toilet rolls and tinned goods etc.

Our church puts out a Sunday service on the internet and I have been recording some organ music for it at home.

Each Thursday people have been clapping outside their homes for all the support workers and NHS staff. I have played one of my organs outside at the same time.

I have also been into Hearsall to play the organ and record some music for the internet services (it is advisable to play a pipe organ for a time at least once a week to keep the moving parts active)!

As Tina is on a trial cancer drug programme, we have to collect her pills from the hospital in person. We waited outside the hospital in the car and a nurse came out to us and passed the pills through the back window of the car to maintain a safe distance away from us. All her consultations with Haematology are done over the phone.

June - Every one of our events planned this year have now been cancelled. Tina is now starting week 14 in isolation and has been told it will last at least to the end of July.

I am due to have my cataract op on 26th June, so must isolate for 2 weeks before, and have a test to make sure I'm ok and in the clear.

We have had 4 short drives out into the countryside in the car but otherwise stayed at home. Tina is very worried.

I have had my cataract op done on one eye which is ok. I've had a check up and don't need the other one doing yet. Thank you to Nic for being my taxi driver. Just need to get some new glasses.

August - Tina has been told she can go out but must maintain social distancing. Her first outing was a walk (in her case ride) around the Memorial park with some of you Hearsall friends - even doing this, she was worried but glad she did it.

August 1<sup>st</sup> - We were notified by letter that shielding had been paused. This was a sudden thing! If we worked (which I don't) we could go back, as long as the workplace was COVID safe. Social distancing must be adhered to. As we are both retired, it didn't mean much of a change.

We could have members of our family come and see us, as long as we stayed in the garden or any outside area.

We went away in our motorhome for 3 nights to Stratford Race Course. We really enjoyed it, apart from the extreme heat. It was in the nineties Fahrenheit which was too hot for me!! Although I stayed in the shade I caught the sun and looked like an overcooked lobster, and only Sudafed would take the pain away. I wore a cowboy hat and used factor 50 sun bloc!! But the sun still got through. I was glad to get home to a cool shower and bed with the windows open and the fan on full!!

I'm glad we went, as all the other people on the site were very friendly and kept their distance. It was just the weather that was against us. I would certainly go there again when it's cooler.

During lockdown, when we were still getting food parcels, or as we called them, 'Boris Boxes', they kept putting Readybrek in them. Now I hate Readybrek, but Sarah Lewis loves it. So we would go and see her after virtual church on a Sunday and we would swap it for some Semi Skimmed Milk, which Sarah doesn't drink! so we combined a drive out with a visit to another shielding person and swapping food!

I have a couple of hospital appointments with the Max Fax team, to have two teeth out, which have been causing me problems since before lockdown. My next Haematology consultation is also face to face, and not on the phone. I can't say I'm looking forward to visiting the hospital, but the letters assure me that things are as safe as they can make them. Masks must be worn and they operate a one-way system in the hospital. So I shall have to see how it works out!

Thanks John, and may God bless you and Tina.

Our next hymn... well I don't think it needs any introduction really... Enjoy!

### Hymn (BPW 62) **How Great Thou Art**

1. O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the works thy hand hath made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed;

CHORUS

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

2. When through the woods and forest glades I wander  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze;

CHORUS

3. And when I think that God his son not sparing,  
Sent him to die - I scarce can take it in,  
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin:

CHORUS

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
And take me home - what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then shall I bow in humble adoration  
And there proclaim, my God, how great thou art!

CHORUS

### Offering

Lord open our eyes to your numerous gifts and open our hearts to your unstinting love. We give to you our own gifts of time and money to church, charities and others, and ask you to bless our humble offerings.

Our prayers this week are led by our deacon, Sarah Lewis.

Lord, I bring our worries and concerns about those who are finding it that extra bit tough coping with the virus – perhaps through poverty, because of a disability or health condition, their age, nationality ... the list is endless.

As we look across your wondrous world, we struggle to cope with pictures of

countries who scarcely have a health care system in normal times, leave alone one equipped to cope with the current pandemic. Lord, we know as well, in many of these countries, even where they might be known, good hygiene issues and social distancing are just not possible due to the overcrowding and lack of sanitation. Lord, please be with each and every one struggling to survive in these conditions.

In the wider world also, Father, we ask for your wisdom to call on presidents who are almost using the pandemic for their own gain; with false claims, by ignoring evidence all around them or by prioritising other issues which are key to their success. Lord, use your power and guidance to help them see the error of their ways and to put their country first.

Lord, near our homes, we know that people are struggling financially during the pandemic. We pray for those who have lost their job or are going through a period of uncertainty. Help them to see a way forward and never to lose hope. We know that families are struggling often to put food on their table and that food banks are frequently running low on supplies, unable to cope with the demand. Lord, guide us to look at how we live and what we can afford to give away. Lord, let us appreciate every meal that we eat and to share the good fortune we may have.

Lord, the pandemic has reopened many inequalities. Disabled people, who have long fought for equality and to prove their place in daily living, society and the workplace, have frequently found themselves in need of special care and attention. Help them and society to see them as before, on an equal par with their non-disabled counterparts, and help older people who may feel devalued by the pandemic. How often have we heard on the news about deaths almost justified by a person's age or underlying health condition? We pray for all feeling vulnerable and ask for you to guide society towards tolerance and understanding.

We pray that you will be with the younger people who may now be opposing the restrictions. Guide them and help them understand that it is not just to save their granny but to protect their future.

Lord, we pray you will guide the scientists and indeed social politicians as they look into the increased death rate amongst black, Asian and minority ethnic people in our own country. Lord, help us all to look at whether we acknowledge that black lives matter, in the way we live our lives.

Loving Lord, I ask you to be with us all as we face our own struggles to live with the pandemic. Guide us in all of our decisions and in the way we live our lives.

Amen

And we thank Sarah for those prayers.

This week's Bible readings come from Exodus and from Romans. I chose these 2 or 3 weeks ago from the lectionary. When I came to prepare, I only commented on the Romans passage. Please reflect on the mysterious story of Exodus in your own way.

### Bible Readings

#### **Exodus 3: 1 - 15**

##### Moses and the Burning Bush

**3** Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. <sup>3</sup> So Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight – why the bush does not burn up.'

<sup>4</sup> When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, 'Moses! Moses!'

And Moses said, 'Here I am.'

<sup>5</sup> 'Do not come any closer,' God said. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.' <sup>6</sup> Then he said, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. <sup>8</sup> So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey – the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. <sup>9</sup> And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen

the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. <sup>10</sup> So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.'

<sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'

<sup>12</sup> And God said, 'I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.'

<sup>13</sup> Moses said to God, 'Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?" Then what shall I tell them?'

<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: "I AM has sent me to you."'

<sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, 'Say to the Israelites, "The LORD, the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob – has sent me to you."

'This is my name for ever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.

## **Romans 12: 9 - 21**

### Love in Action

<sup>9</sup> Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. <sup>11</sup> Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practise hospitality.

<sup>4</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

<sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with

everyone. <sup>19</sup> Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.'

<sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The love of God is that marvellous blend of gentleness and power, as our next song explores...

### Hymn (WT 291) **Meekness and Majesty**

#### Verse 1

Meekness and majesty,  
Manhood and Deity,  
In perfect harmony,  
The Man who is God.  
Lord of eternity  
Dwells in humanity,  
Kneels in humility  
And washes our feet.

#### CHORUS

*O what a mystery,  
Meekness and majesty.  
Bow down and worship,  
For this is your God,  
This is your God.*

#### Verse 2

Father's pure radiance,  
Perfect in innocence,  
Yet learns obedience  
To death on a cross.  
Suffering to give us life,  
Conquering through sacrifice,  
And as they crucify  
Prays: 'Father forgive.'

CHORUS

O what a mystery,  
Meekness and majesty.  
Bow down and worship,  
For this is your God,  
This is your God.

Verse 3

Wisdom unsearchable,  
God the invisible,  
Love indestructible  
In frailty appears.  
Lord of infinity,  
Stooping so tenderly,  
Lifts our humanity  
To the heights of His throne.

CHORUS

And now O Lord, take the words I have prepared and open all our hearts and minds to your message for us, personally, today. Amen.

Sermon

### ***The Strength of Love***

Last week in Romans 12 we reflected on the gift of our bodies as living sacrifices to God. As we read on in Romans 12, we heard about how that sacrifice was to be expressed in the everyday life of the young Christian church in 1st century Rome.

We considered the gifts of ourselves as gifts of **love**. Today we explore how love is not a soft option, but is an exacting and transformative moral choice.

This is a morning when you might appreciate having the text in front of you; you can open your bible at Romans 12 or look at the worship materials on the church website.

Begin with verse 9. These first four words of the NIV translation are *Love must be sincere*. The remainder of the reading is largely a list of instructions on how to love

with sincerity. There are more than 20 individual instructions given.

Before we look at some of those we can examine this headline phrase: **Love must be sincere.**

The Greek word Paul selects for love is *agape*. It was a word that expressed respect and a desire for the good of the other, but it wasn't frequently used in classical Greek literature. In its noun and verb forms it is used 250 times in the New Testament.

Greek famously has three other words for love: words for the affection between friends; the bond between family members; and the passion of romance. Whilst these three words *are* sometimes used to explore ideas of Christian love, by far the predominant word-choice is *agape*. It was borrowed from classical Greek and was used to describe *an unflinching and practical resolve to bring about what is best for the person being loved.*

That's why with *agape* we can love even our enemies. We wish for their ultimate good - even if, for a time, they might have to endure just punishment, we still want them to go on to become better people. *Agape* love is a deliberate, working out of what measures would best enable the person we love to thrive.

*Agape* love comes **from God**. As he sends sun and rain on the good and bad alike, so he loves everyone **universally**, and seeks for what is good for them. *Agape* love is **sacrificial** and is quintessentially seen in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Christian writers and teachers of last century often drew a distinction between *agape* love and the other loves seen in the areas of sexuality, friendship or family. I don't think we need draw such sharp boundaries. Yes, a romantic lover will not be selfless in her passion for her beloved, but she can also want what is best for him. A mother may have a natural instinct to care for her infant, but that does not invalidate her love or make it less significant than pure *agape* love.

But our reading is about *agape* love. And Paul says it must be **sincere**. The word for sincere is *anupokritos* - meaning, *not like a hypocrite*, not a like play actor. *Agape* love must be unfeigned, unselfish, not strategic, non-judgmental in spirit, and inclusive of all we encounter.

**Love must be sincere** is our headline... The twenty-odd instructions on how to apply *agape* love then begin. The Roman church must *hate what is evil*. Note that

they hate **what** is evil, not those **who** are evil. And here, evil is not defined. Maybe we could take it to be anything which is not agape love!

The flip side is this: *Cling to what is good*. The very lives of the Christians are to embrace wholesome ways inextricably. Paul assumes his readers will just know what is good.

His church are to be *devoted to each other in love*. Paul uses the word *adelphoi* meaning brothers and sisters in 21st century English. The word *love* here is not agape but a form of philo - the word for warm affection between friends. So, if agape is a deliberate choice stemming from the intellect, Paul is still encouraging the Roman church to develop sincere feelings of warmth and affection for one another. They are to *show one another honour* too - the Greek has the idea of **eagerness** in honour. Paul's Roman church of agape love are to be eager to point out what is good and noble in the other members of the fellowship.

They are not to be lacking in zeal, but are to keep their spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Perhaps we could think of Paul telling his listeners to be **enthusiastic** in their spiritual lives, keen to worship God - to be fervent believers, for they are serving the Lord himself.

These Christians get three quick instructions next: *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer*. There is to be a key note of **joy** about them - they are, after all, receiving the gift of life eternal. And therefore they must be *patient in affliction*. Keeping their eyes fixed on that joy. The Greek for *patient* is *hupomene* and its associated verb means *enduring*. It's used of the ability of a plant to survive in harsh circumstances. In later Greek and Jewish literature, it was used to describe 'spiritual staying power' - even to the point of dying for one's God.

So this agape love gave the believers of Rome **tenacity**. This *patience in affliction* is not a passive and weak resignation to the evils of society, but a daring and creative resolve to hold firm to the faith even when times were hard. William Barclay wrote about this patient endurance in these terms: *It is not the patience which can sit down and bow its head and let things descend upon it and passively endure till the storm is past... It is the spirit that can bear things, not simply with resignation, but with blazing hope; it is not the spirit that sits statically enduring in the one place, but the spirit which bears things because it knows that these things are leading to a goal*

*of glory; it is not the patience which grimly waits for the end, but the patience which radiantly hopes for the dawn...*

The Romans are also told to be *faithful in prayer* because prayer was their connection with God himself, a way of expressing devotion and faith, and a way of sharing in love for each other.

Paul calls his Roman Christians to show agape love also by *sharing with the Lord's people who are in need* and by *practising hospitality*. Again - agape love is about feeding the hungry and including the excluded. It's very practical.

I love the Greek word for *hospitality* used here: *philoxenian* - meaning affectionate and friendly love of the stranger. You'll have heard of xenophobia - the fear of the stranger. This is the very opposite! Paul expects his church to love the stranger with acts of practical care.

Verse 14 express agape in this dramatic and powerful way: *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse*. This is a spiritual conjuring trick. It comes from resting in the loving grace of God, knowing that the believer has done nothing to earn God's agape love. And that God loves them even though they often forget him and even hurt him. Well Paul expects the Romans to be so steeped in receiving God's agape love that they even give blessings to people who curse them or persecute them.

Next a matching pair of instructions: Those with agape love are to... *Rejoice with those who rejoice; and mourn with those who mourn*. So the Romans are told to be attuned to each other's concerns and to share each other's joys and sorrows.

They are told to *Live in harmony with one another*, according to the NIV text, though the Greek says *have the same attitude as each other*. I guess Paul's talking about a shared outlook.

The Roman church should not be proud - perhaps a better translation might be, *do not be arrogant*. They should be willing to mix with people of low status - slaves, for example.

They should not be *conceited*, says the NIV - *they should not be wise in their own eyes* is the Greek idea. One of the hallmarks of agape love comes next - *not*

*repaying evil for evil.* Jesus taught that his followers should have agape love even for their enemies. So the Roman church has to resist that natural human tendency for giving as good as you get, responding to evil with evil.

The Romans are told to *do what is right in the eyes of everyone.* This seems a tall order. The Greek has this idea of *thinking **ahead** what is good in the eyes of others.* In other words, carefully consider how not to provoke unnecessary misunderstanding or opposition. Give some careful thought as to how your actions might look to other people.

The next instruction is delightfully pragmatic: *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* This line recognises that it may not be possible to live at peace with everyone. But: **as far as it depends on you,** live at peace...

Then the core message of agape love is reiterated to these first century Christians: *Do not take revenge...* Leave all that *eye-for-an-eye* stuff to God.

Then Paul backs this up with this quotations from Deuteronomy 32 and then Proverbs 25:

*'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.'*

Well these are burning coals of shame! If a person is oppressing them, they show them how decent humans should behave, and so the inhumanity of their enemy becomes apparent to all.

And the last instruction summarises them all:

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.* If people are behaving badly, Christians should not be crushed by that, but instead work out how to use goodness to put them right. That's a creative and imaginative endeavour.

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Well Paul's listeners would have been a mixed fellowship of Gentiles and Jews, with the Jews recently returning to Rome after being exiled. Maybe the Gentiles had grown a bit cocky during the Jews' absence. Furthermore, state intolerance of new religious groups was a reality and state-sponsored persecution could occur. Maybe

Paul's sketch of how to be with each other and with the world around them was quite a challenge for them.

*Love is patient and kind* wrote Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. Our reflections today remind us that this does not mean that a person of Christian love is a doormat or an inconsequential nobody. The love a Christian knows in their heart is a spring of hope for everyone lost; a solid commitment to right when everyone else is doing wrong; and a joyful expression of indefatigable hope in the darkest of days. Agape love has been a pillar of our justice and medical systems; it bears witness that all human life is precious; and it leads to liberation for all who are oppressed. Agape love adds steel to the Christian character; it calls ordinary people to be steadfast and selfless; and it is the bedrock of salvation.

As Paul says earlier in this letter: God demonstrates his agape love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Agape love always begins with God. We are called to align ourselves with its revolutionary power.

You might want to look through Romans chapter 12 in the coming days. Ponder which verses, phrases or words jump out at you and take you into a different zone, and then pray through those words, and pray that God will enable you to be a bearer, a transmitter, a sign of the wonderful revolutionary power that is agape love.

You might like to ponder a sticky situation you might be in right now. What would agape love do in your circumstances? Can you feel that love from God? Can you show it to the others involved?

The cross is the source of grace and the measure of love. It's the very definition of agape love. Let's conclude our worship by lifting it high!

### Hymn (BPW 575) **Lift High the Cross**

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim,  
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

Verse 1

Come, Christians, follow where our Saviour trod,  
Our King victorious, Christ, the Son of God.

*CHORUS*

Verse 2

All new born servants of the crucified  
Bear on their brow the seal of Christ who died.

*CHORUS*

Verse 3  
Led on their way by this triumphant sign,  
The hosts of God in conquering ranks combine.

*CHORUS*

Verse 4  
O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,  
Your death has brought us life eternally.

*CHORUS*

Verse 5  
So shall our song of triumph ever be:  
Praise to the Crucified for victory.

*CHORUS* Amen

May God bless you in the coming week. Let's say the words of the grace and sing  
our familiar blessing together.

### The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;  
The love of God;  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
Be with us all  
Now and always. Amen.

### Sung Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you  
Wherever he may send you.  
May he guide you through the wilderness,  
Protect you through the storm.  
May he bring you home rejoicing  
At the wonders he has shown you.  
May he bring you home rejoicing  
Once again into our doors.

## **Bible Study questions 30 8 20**

*Agape love is an unflinching and practical resolve to bring about what is best for the person being loved.* David Sutcliffe

1. Did you understand David's exploration of Agape love? Ask any questions or make any comments.
2. Share examples of people who show agape love.
3. How can we show agape love for one another in our fellowship?
4. How can we show agape love for the world around us?
5. How do you personally feel about sharing agape love?