



Mid-week Bible Study - week commencing 26/04/21

Real love... Choices, Commitment, Compassion

Prepared by Mervyn

Let's imagine the definition of love found in 1 Corinthians 13 as a filter or a sieve. Now let's put our lives and relationships through this sieve!

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.



How did you get on? Which aspects flow easily through your life and which ones get stuck?

Do I keep a record of wrongs? Am I self seeking? And how about the collection of "always"?

I find "rejoicing with the truth" a slightly tricky one, because sometimes the truth can be really painful. However, if painful truth causes us to run to God, then that is something to rejoice about.

"Rejoicing with the truth" also reminds me of the end of a "Miss Marple" or "Poirot" mystery when every motive and attitude of all the characters is revealed. All deception is removed and everyone knows where they are.

I think real love is demonstrated by **choices, commitment and compassion**. You can see these aspects clearly in the old testament story of Ruth, when Ruth decides to stay with her mother-in-law. Here are some verses from Ruth chapter 1

15"Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." 16But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. 17Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." 18When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

Have you ever experienced loyalty like that, or seen it in other people?

Kathryn mentioned the song by Don Francisco, "Love is not a feeling it's an act of your will" in this week's service. This is a song about marriage, but some of the concepts can be applied to other relationships too. The lyrics can be found on page 2, they are quite beefy, so it's good to know that we are still covered by God's grace when we fall short.

There are times when we need to remove ourselves from relationships / friendships because they have become toxic or even dangerous, and we need to leave that person in God's hands and maybe seek healing and recovery for ourselves.

However, In our disposable society, do you feel that we have a more dis-posable attitude to relationships and are less committed to love as described in 1 Corinthians 13?

So you say you can't take it
The price is too high
Your feelings have gone
It seems your river's run dry

You never imagined
It could turn out so rough
You give and give and give
And still it's never enough

Your emotions have vanished
That once held a thrill
You wonder if love
Could be alive in you still

But the ring on your finger
Was put there to stay
You'll never forget
The words you promised that day

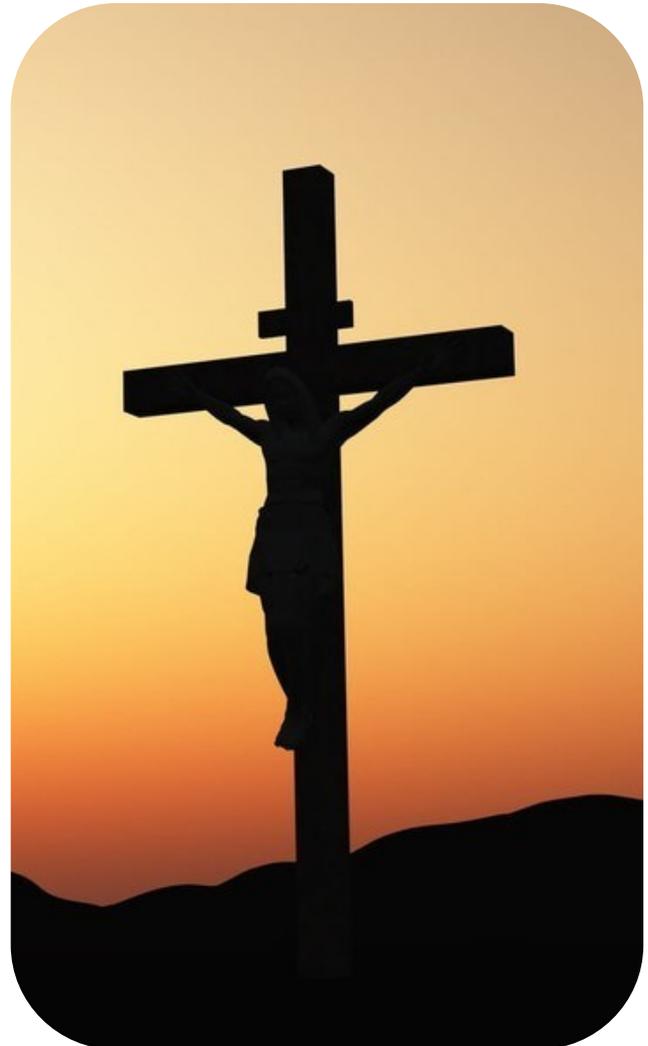
Chorus

*Jesus didn't die for you
Because it was fun
He hung there for love
Because it had to be done
And in spite of the anguish
His work was fulfilled
Cause love is not a feelin'
It's an act of your will
Love is not a feelin'
It's an act of your will*

Now I wouldn't try to tell you
That it's easy to stand
Satan's throwin' everything
That's at his command

But Jesus is faithful
His promise is true
And whatever He asks
He gives the power to do

Chorus...



¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. John 15