



## Welcome to our All Age Worship Service (24/01/21)

### You Are Loved!

Prepared by Dave & Emma

All I once held dear, built my life upon  
All this world reveres, and wars to own  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss  
Spent and worthless now, compared to this

Chorus

*Knowing You, Jesus, knowing You  
There is no greater thing  
You're my all, You're the best  
You're my joy, my righteousness  
And I love You, Lord*



Now my heart's desire is to know You more  
To be found in You and known as Yours  
To possess by faith what I could not earn  
All-surpassing gift of righteousness

Oh, to know the power of Your risen life  
And to know You in Your sufferings  
To become like You in Your death, my Lord  
So with You to live and never die

Words and music by Graham Kendrick

When Emma and I started talking about what we should do for today's service, I must admit we were a bit stumped for a while about what to do. But then I started thinking about Charlie Mackesy, some of you may have heard of him.

He is an artist who has done lots of great work and is perhaps best known for his sketches and for his book *The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse*. His work touches on many aspects of life, especially how we view ourselves. If you haven't seen his work or read his book, I would really recommend you do.

Charlie is a fantastic speaker, with great humour, he's very engaging, he sometimes goes off on a tangent, but always brings it back to a very simple and straightforward point. This is great for me as I like simple and straightforward. I think I'm like Winnie the Pooh – a bear of little brain, oh, and I like honey!

**Happy Birthday** to Sheila  
the younger! (25th Jan)



**God Bless You!**

Father God...

Thank you for this opportunity to spend time in your presence, and to worship you. Even though we are not physically together, thank you that you are with us. Please fill us with your peace and love afresh today, so that we may overflow with your gentleness and beauty. Empower us to live out the message of your hope so that we may portray the joy of knowing you.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen

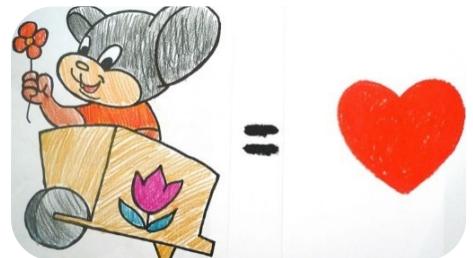
*The Boy, the mole,  
the fox and the Horse*



*Charlie Mackesy*

Charlie has recorded talks for the Alpha Course, and in one particular talk, he comes to the point that you, me, we are truly loved by God. It doesn't matter what we present to the outside world or what is going on in the inside. All that matters is that we are truly known and loved by God. He talked about how we might see ourselves and he demonstrated this through some sketches he had done of a mouse. The first picture was a perfectly drawn and perfectly coloured in mouse. He said that we can tend to think that we need to be perfect – perfectly presented, perfectly behaved, in order to be loved by God.

But he then went on to show the same mouse, but this time it had been scrawled all over. It was a right mess. He said in reality this is more what we are like. He then drew a heart around the scruffy mouse, showing that it doesn't matter what we look or feel like, what we have or haven't done, we are truly loved by



God just as we are. Then finally, he drew a cross behind the heart and said that God's love for us isn't just words, it's backed up by action. Jesus died on the cross for each of us, for you and for me.



**John 15:13 – Greater love has no-one than this, to lay down one's life for his friends.**

You really are truly and deeply loved by God.

## Now over to Emma!

### You are Loved

One of our family's favourite tv programmes is The Repair Shop. It's one of the few non-sports programmes we all watch as a family. If you haven't seen it, each episode follows professional craftsmen and women who restore family heirlooms that have sentimental value for their owners. There is always a story to be told as to how the person came to have the heirloom and the reaction when they receive their item back, restored into its former glory, usually brings tears to your eyes. Quite often there isn't a dry eye in the household!



This rocking horse belonged to a little girl who absolutely loved it, she loved it so much she wore out the fabric that covered it. The little girl sadly died, and the family asked if the horse could be restored in her memory. The restorers didn't want to make it look brand new, as it wouldn't have been the horse the little girl had known and loved. However, they were able to give the horse a new mane and tail, a new saddle and face. They put the character and heart back into the horse.

Watching the restorers working on the repairs is also really interesting. Everything they do is so intricate and requires patience and a steady hand. They put so much care and attention to detail into their work. It is always a labour of love.

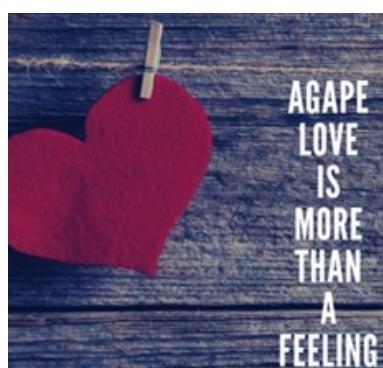
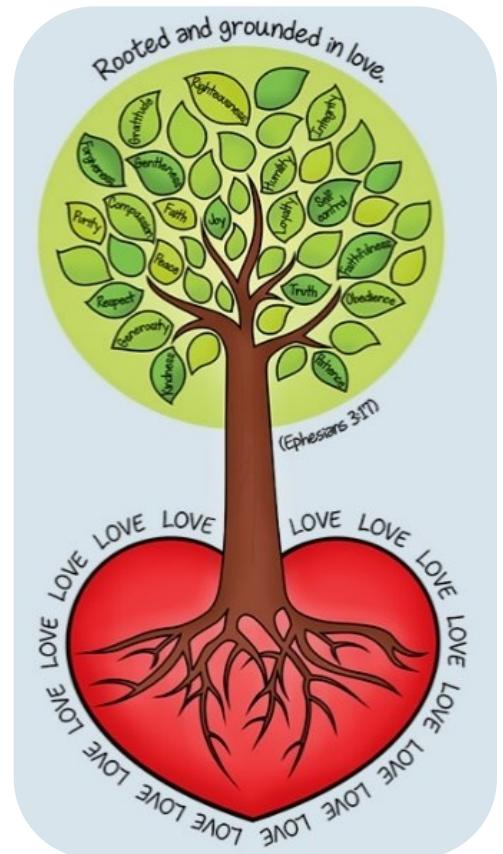
The items that are brought in for repair are always important to the people who bring them in, even in their broken, dirty and damaged state – they are always loved and precious. They are brought into the Repair Shop in order to be repaired and restored to their former glory. The expert understands the way the item was made originally and is able to carefully take it apart, clean it, repair it and restore it. This takes time, patience, gentle handling, knowledge, experience and love.

This morning I want us to think about ourselves as an item taken into the Repair Shop to be repaired. You might be feeling a bit like that rocking horse this morning, tatty, worn out and broken. But today I want us to take some time to remind ourselves how truly loved we are.

I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts, living within you as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvellous love; and may you be able to feel and understand, as all God's children should, how long, how wide, how deep, and how high his love really is; and to experience this love for yourselves, though it is so great that you will never see the end of it or fully know or understand it. And so, at last you will be filled up with God himself. (Ephesians 3 v18-19)

Paul is in prison when he wrote this letter because he refused to stop speaking about Jesus. Paul writes “**May your roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvellous love.**”

Think of yourself for a minute as a tree, your roots pushing down through the soil, soaking up all the nourishment you need to survive and flourish. The soil is God’s love for you – it provides you with everything you need, every moment of every day.



So, what is this love that we are rooted in? We know this kind of love is called Agape love. Agape love is perfect, unconditional love. It is not just about feelings and emotions, but about a decision, it is a sentiment that demonstrates itself through actions: God loved the world so much He sent His Son. He didn't just say He loved the world; He did something to show that. God took action to prove how much He loves us. He sent Jesus. Jesus took action to prove how much He loves us by willingly going to

the cross to die for our sins. “**Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God’s glorious ideal; yet now God declares us “not guilty” of offending him if we trust in Jesus Christ, who in his kindness freely takes away our sins.**” (Romans 3 v23-24)

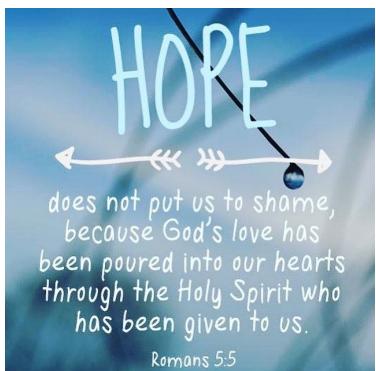
God doesn't just tell us in the Bible that He loves us. He goes out of His way to let us know several other important things about His love...

He wants us to know that He has loved us for a long, long time, before we even thought about Him. Long ago, even before he made the world, God chose us to be his very own through what Christ would do for us; he decided then to make us holy in his eyes, without a single fault—we who stand before him covered with his love.<sup>5</sup> His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by sending Jesus Christ to die for us. And he did this because he wanted to! (Ephesians 1 V4-6)

He wants us to understand that His loves for us is the starting place for our lives as Christians. If we don't grasp this, we can't move on.

He wants us to know that His love fills every part of our being:  
For we know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love

everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. (Romans 5 v5)



We love because  
He first loved us.

1 John 4:19



He wants us to know that there is nothing that can ever stop Him from loving us.

For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels won't, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God's love away. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, or where we are—high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean—nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when he died for us. (Romans 8 v38-39)

If you accept all of this as fact it will bless you greatly, but for me personally, I want much more than just factual knowledge that God loves me. I want to really believe it and feel it in my heart, don't you? I want to feel God rejoicing over me and delighting in me!

I said before that agape loves requires action. God took action, Jesus took action and today God wants you to take action. He longs for every one of us to know this love that never ends or fails. He wants us to know in our heads and in our hearts just how much we are truly loved. Paul had a head knowledge about God. He knew the laws and followed them closely. But when he had a heart encounter with God, his whole life changed dramatically. He knew that he was loved, accepted and forgiven. He was so sure of it, that he had to tell other people, even though it meant imprisonment and torture.

Do you believe God truly loves you? Do you believe that God looks at you and sees something He has carefully and lovingly made, something He sees as beautiful? Do you believe He truly knows you inside and out, and loves you because of that, not in spite of it?

If you don't ask Him. Ask Him right now, to show you how much He loves you. And if you do believe it, thank Him and ask Him to show you afresh today what that means for your life right now.



Father God,

In your word you tell us that you chose us before the world even began. You tell us that you love us, that we are precious to you and that we matter to you. However, some of us struggle to believe it because we don't feel we deserve that love, perhaps due to things we have done or said in the past. Some of us have been hurt by people we believed loved us and therefore find it hard to trust when we hear the words "I love you."

Whatever the circumstance, Lord, I pray that you would touch the hearts and minds of every single person watching this. By the power of your Holy Spirit I pray that we would start to believe in our hearts and minds and souls, how truly loved we are by you. Help us to **"feel and understand, as all God's children should, how long, how wide, how deep, and how high your love really is; and to experience this love for ourselves."**

Thank you that you took action to show us your love by sending Jesus to die in our place. Thank you that Jesus took action to show his love for us by accepting your plan for his life and going willingly to the cross for us.

Today we say sorry for the things we have said, done or thought that have caused hurt to other people and we thank you for your grace and mercy. We take action by giving you our lives and choosing to follow you. We trust you that you have our best interests at heart, and we declare this morning that we love you.

Amen.



**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 evermore. Amen**

