

## God's love – (Valentines Day) -14<sup>th</sup> February 2010

### St George's Anglican Church

By Rev Colin Ruge

Today is Valentine's day... a day special to lovers and also the commercial world.

It's origin is unsure... many different ideas are put forward. One I read was interesting (Similar to Newsletter). It tells of a Roman priest living in Rome in the days of Emperor Claudius who was trying to build up his army and expected every man to volunteer and join. But many didn't want to join so the emperor had the idea that there would be no more marriages and thus men would be keen to join the army... they hadn't anything better to do!! (If you can't love 'em, fight for 'em)

So, this priest decided he would go against the emperors wishes and marry couples secretly. But he was caught and sentenced to death.

Then story get interesting. The daughter of the prison guard befriended him and she helped him to keep his spirits up. Other young people heard of his plight and sent him cards and flowers. On the day of his death, he sent a note to the girl thanking her for her friendship and signed it "Love from your valentine" and thus the custom was started.

Now isn't that a heart-wrenching story?? But Subject of love impt one.. Bible full of it.

Now, a bit more down to earth. Earlier this month, Ruth and I celebrated our wedding anniversary and we had some friends with us and the question was asked "How come you have stayed together over all these years?"

The remark was made that so many marriages seem to break up after a few years, so much so that it seems to be the norm.

Well, I'm never very good at answering questions like that ...not without a good deal of thought.... I can usually come up with a more romantic answer much later when I think about it. Maybe something like "I give flowers occasionally, I change my socks each day and other romantic things"

You know...real romantic stuff

I do try to be romantic. Reminds me of the man at his golden wedding anniversary: It was a party that was thrown for the elderly couple. The husband was very moved by the occasion and wanted to tell his wife what he

thought of her. She was very hard of hearing, however, and often misunderstood what was said. With many family members and friends gathered around, he toasted her and said, "My dear wife, after 50 years I've found you tried and true!" Everyone clapped for them, but his wife was a little irritated and asked, "What did you say?" So he repeated it again: "After 50 years I've found you tried and true!" The wife was now visibly upset and shouted back, "Well let me tell you something, after 50 years I'm tired of you too!"

One answer that I did give...which I thought was quite brilliant was that I believed that a good marriage is one that is based on a single word... 'LOVE' I thought that this was a tremendous statement. Unfortunately, our guest asked, "What do you mean by 'love'?" And I would have talked about the kind of love that God has for us.

That's what the reading is all about this morning. (John 15:9 – 17) NLT read.

"Remain in my love"

The word 'love' has many meanings. It's tossed around these days and often without any meaning at all. But when we try to understand the love that God has for us we find that we are dealing with a whole new dimension of love. Different from all the other expressions of love that we use in our everyday talk about love.

Love when associated with God takes on a whole new idea. But an idea that somehow we must try to attain to if we are going to make Valentine's day meaningful.

This is the same kind of love we talk about when we say "God is love." This kind of love gives itself completely and utterly. To the extent that, as in Jesus, it gives up all the power in the world to become one of us. To lay down its life so that we can live.

It is love that transcends all the other kinds of love, because it gives of itself without the expectation of receiving anything in return. "God's love is the only love where the honeymoon never ends"

That's God's love... the kind of love that God wants us to have... in our marriages.... In everyday life.

The love that keeps a marriage going.

The love that we are called to as followers of Jesus.

My guest said to me, “Loving all the time is hard work, isn’t it?”  
And when we look at the love that Jesus has for us, we wonder how we can attain to it.

Our marriage, our association with others, as good as they are, don’t always measure up to this kind of loving.  
And God knows this. He knows our frailties... the mistakes we make, and He says “ “remain in my love.”

He wants us to feel what it is like to remain in His love.

To receive it  
Let it seep in  
Sink down  
Fill our souls and bodies.

To understand that He is talking about each one of us who are here today.  
So, we can say, “Hey, I’m loved”

He wants to come to us... be in us and fill our hearts and minds  
To shut out all the other concerns and let that love overflow us.  
Soothe us.

45 years,, we haven’t started yet!!  
And we will never know fully what that kind of love is... until we dwell eternally with Jesus.

We are a people who are loved.

God loves you.... He knows everything about you... ... He loves you wherever you are... whatever you are doing Ps139:1,2  
He says we are important to Him .... He knows us intimately... even the hairs on our heads are numbered. Matt 10:30  
We are made in an image of Him Gen 1:27  
We are His children (1John 3:1) He calls us His children. And, as a loving Father, He draws us to Him and comforts us when we are in trouble. 2 Corin 1:4.

Finally, when our time is over, He wants to welcome us home (Rev 21:3, 4) where there will be no more crying, suffering and pain.  
Nothing can separate us from that love. (Rom 8:38, 39) Because we are His children.

But in the meantime, we know that that love bridges barriers which we feel are insurmountable

It helps us to start again

It helps us to say, "I'm not sick of you" and mean it.

And when we grasp something of that love and pray for strength and wisdom to put it into practice

We somehow come close to Jesus

Life becomes different

We see it from a new perspective

Tends to make us give a little more than taking

It helps us to love

I know that you have felt that

Looking for opportunities to give

Of ourselves

Your time

Your money

Of as much of you as possible

Because that is what God is asking us to do.

Love Him by loving those who are dear to you and ask Him for the strength to love those who don't love you because Jesus has said, "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." John 13:35

I finish with a benediction I used two Sundays ago

Blessing Go as far as you dare...It talks about God's love

Go as far as you dare,

for you cannot go beyond the reach of God. God is always there for you.

Give as extravagantly as you like,

for you cannot spend all the riches of God.... Love your church—Help it to do its work in the world.

Care as lavishly as you are able,

for you cannot exhaust the love of God...Just think how you are loved, forgiven, helped to go on living

..

Keep journeying as a servant

For God will always be with you,...This is God's Valentine gift to you. He says "I have loved you with an everlasting love"