

The permanence of love

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Date: 14 May 2023

Preacher: Malcolm Hazell

[0:00] Well, good morning. Welcome to Union Baptist Church this morning. My name is Ollie. For those of you who don't know me, I'm a member here. I have been since as long as I can remember.

And it's been a pleasure to worship here for, I think, 36 out of my 37 year life. So very welcome to everyone here. And if you're watching online, a very warm welcome to you as well.

We come to worship our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We come because he loves us. We come because he calls us. And as we come, we join with millions upon millions everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now this morning we come also because we'll be praying for our sister Jackie, as she's inducted into the role of our children and families worker. Now she doesn't know this, but the induction routine does involve some high stakes, physical agility challenges. I hope she's been practicing. This might not go so well. We thank God for calling her to this role. And we'll be praying for his work and love and his words to shine through her in her role here at Union. Now for the past few weeks, we've been exploring this theme of love, that without love, our endeavours and service are absolutely nothing. That's also love never fails. But most importantly, that love is not a concept or an intangible notion. Love is not a warm, fuzzy feeling that we must drum up from inside us. Love is a person. Love is Christ. And we've been encouraged and strengthened by this truth. I don't know about you, but I've been immensely encouraged by our life group, our home group notes, as we've studied this concept of love as Christ, that we can know and that he lives inside us.

We show Christ. We show the love of Christ. And that is through us. God's love is demonstrated. It is by his Holy Spirit that we show true love. And because, as you'll know, human love is temperamental, inconsistent and categorically pants, we need to rely on the love of God. Let us pray together. Now, for this prayer, I have taken Psalm 136. I am going to require you to give us some oomph.

[2:35] Can we, it's the contrast here. Can we get able to see those words? If you can't see those words, you've got a very simple role. His love endures forever. Okay? Now, I'm going to do a little practice of this. So, I'm going to say a line. You've got to respond with his love endures forever.

And then we'll go for the little charade where I tell you not loud enough and you have to stand and shout. Okay? So, give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His love endures forever. Okay, so that was terrible. We're now going to stand and we're going to shout on your feet. Now, I'm going to apologize to Max as I too will be shouting. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His love endures forever. That was getting better. I reckon we can improve as we go. Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords. His love endures forever. To him who alone does great wonders. His love endures forever. Who, by his understanding, made the heavens. His love endures forever. He remembered us in our low estate. His love endures forever. And freed us from our enemies. His love endures forever. He gives food to every creature. His love endures forever. Now, this one has to be very loud. Okay. Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever. Hoorah. I enjoyed that. Thank you very much. Please take a seat. Amen. Now, we all want love. We all want to share love. We look for love in this world and in others. We might love our wives, our husbands, children, parents, friends, biscuits. We hope that these experiences of love will never end. But we also have a slightly skewed idea of love. This worldly idea of love is incomplete. It's a murky reflection of what true love really is.

We have this idea that love kind of exists on two ends of a scale where we can say, I love you in a romantic way. And I love biscuits. And this sort of gap in between is sort of a weird fuzzy thing that

no one seems to understand. This world's image of love is sort of fallen from perfection. And we only see a murky reflection of what true love is and what it feels like. Human love can fade. It can fail. It can falter. And it can dwindle. So, I'd like to introduce you to a friend of mine.

[5:17] Say hello to Wilberforce. Don't get too attached.

I reckon with the laws of physics, as this little man does his thing over the course of the service, his balance will become more sturdy. Now, Wilberforce here represents worldly love. I don't know if you can see him. I wonder whether the camera is able to get close in on Wilberforce. Here he is. This little gingerbread ice man. Now, over the course of this service, we're going to see in action the impermanence of human love. Wilberforce might think that he loves, but at some point he's just going to become a hideous puddle.

And hopefully we'll see the difference between human love, worldly love, and the love that Christ has for us. The love that endures forever. Can I invite the music group as we stand and sing? Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King. His love endures forever. Please stand. For he is good, he is above all ways.

[6:42] Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King. His love endures forever.

For he is good, he is above all ways. His love endures forever. Sing praise, sing praise. With a mighty hand and an astray shot, his love endures forever. For the life that's been reborn, his love endures forever.

Sing praise, sing praise. Sing praise, sing praise.

For the life that's been reborn, his love endures forever. For the life that's been reborn, his love endures forever.

[8:05] Forever God is faithful, forever God is strong. Forever God is with us.

Forever, forever. forever. Forever, forever. Forever, forever.

From the rising to the setting sun, his love endures forever. And in grace of God, we will carry the old.

His love endures forever. forever. In grace, sing praise.

In grace, sing praise. In grace, sing praise.

[9:03] Forever God is faithful, forever God is strong. Forever God is with us. Forever, forever.

Forever, forever. Forever, God is faithful, forever God is strong. Forever, God is with us.

Forever, forever. Forever. Let's just stay standing.

Father, we thank you that your love lasts forever. That your strength lasts forever. Forever. From before time as we can physically understand it, you were there and you loved.

That you flung stars into space. That you created the heavens and the earth and everything that lives in it. That throughout human failure, you have loved us and been persistent and been faithful.

[10:01] That you have loved. That you have reached down to us. That you have rescued us from the depths of our darkest nights. And Father, we thank you.

We praise you for that. Glory be to your name. Amen. Please take a seat. Right, I invite Andrew. Do you have all the equipment that Jackie's going to need for this?

Fortunately for Jackie, I haven't brought anything else. So you're off the hook there. So thank you, Ollie. It's important as part of our life as a church family that we pray for those who serve us.

We did a bit of that last week. As we reflected on the coronation of the king, we were praying for him. We also pray for those who serve us in the church. And today, we're really, really excited that we get to pray for and acknowledge God's calling on Jackie Ram.

As she starts out in the new role of children and young families worker here at Union Baptist Church. So, she's right here waiting. This is wonderful. I'm going to ask Jackie and Helen, who's our deacon for children and young families, to come and join me on the stage over here.

[11:11] And we'll get ready. Now, the word induction is a strange word. It doesn't involve any magnets or electricity. Can you two stand over here so we can see you? It is about acknowledging God's call on someone.

And we say setting apart. That doesn't mean that Jackie's going to be working alone by any means. She's going to be working in a team and she's going to be working with God's help. But we're

recognizing God's call on her life for this role at this time, which is a very exciting thing. So, let me explain a little bit about what this is about. God gives all of us different ways of serving and roles to serve in the church. Today, we give thanks for the gifts which God is giving to this church family through the ministry of Jackie to serve with our children and their families. We thank God for her gifts and her experience working with children and the love she has for our children. And today, we set her apart to work with our children in this congregation and in our community.

Today, we celebrate the whole people of God, the whole family, young and old. Especially, we thank God today for the presence of children and young people as part of our church family, for their contribution to this church and for their own journeys of faith.

[12:28] Together, today, we'll make promises and we'll pray for Jackie and for one another. So, at this point, I'm going to invite, we're just going to hear the story of how we got to this point. And Helen, who's our deacon for children and young families, is just going to share a little bit of that story from the church's perspective.

And then we'll ask Jackie to share from her perspective. Over to you, Helen. Good morning. Now, many of you will be aware that the role of children and families worker is something that we have thought about and prayed about for many years.

And last year, after much discussion and much prayer, the CYP team and the wider leadership team felt that it was the Lord's timing to move forward with this role.

So, we came together, the CYP team and the leadership, to put together a job role and a job advert. And that went live in spring of this year. And critically, we were looking for someone who could hold and disseminate our mission, be an example to our children and our young families, coordinate the children's work, link the children to us, the wider church, and be an advocate for our children.

To support and encourage every one of us within the team and network more widely with other organisations. So, not an easy task. But alongside this, in God's grace, in God's provision, we have an incredible person who was holding a key leadership role in Discoverers, was helping in trailblazers and navigators, working in the holiday club, had experience in local schools, and a background at a field centre and in foster care.

[14:15] So, we advertised, and I'm delighted to say, Jackie applied. Now, I think it's fair to say that the interview process was pretty rigorous.

We did not go easy on her. Because it was really important that we understood as a church that Jackie was the right person for this role. But also that we understood that this role was right for Jackie.

So, after the interview, and much prayer, I'm delighted to say that we were absolutely certain that God was calling Jackie to the role of children and young families worker for such a time as this.

And I'll let Jackie explain why she thinks that's right too. Wonderful. Thank you, Helen. Over to you, Jackie. Hello. Hello.

Okay. So, I first felt called to doing this kind of role probably around six years ago. While teaching about the environment in my previous job, I felt God telling me that he wanted me to use my gifts for him.

[15:22] It was after a particularly busy and successful family day. And I really felt God saying, this is good, but why aren't you doing this for me? The thought of actually being a children's worker back then never really crossed my mind.

And if it had, to be honest, I would have rejected the idea immediately. As I wouldn't have seen myself as good enough. And standing up here at the front of church was an utterly terrifying idea. However, the first seed had been planted.

As Helen said, those of you who have been at church for a while will know, appointing a children and families worker has been discussed for several years. And each time it was mentioned, I felt drawn to the role.

And I began to consider it as a possibility, although I still didn't really think it would become a reality. This all coincided with me taking a bigger part in the children's work at Union, both on a Sunday morning and on a Friday evening at Kids Club, which is now Discoverers.

I've been blessed to work alongside amazing people who have taught me and encouraged me and helped me to grow in confidence and to step out of my comfort zone. As a foster carer, I've been

through challenging times with the children I looked after.

[16:33] And I know how the loving community of this church made a huge difference to me and to the children I looked after. I'm excited to have a role where I can help this church to continue to be a place where God's love is seen in action.

I'm also really excited about the opportunity to reach out to families in our community who have little or no understanding about Christianity. It took me until the age of 35 to figure out how amazing God is.

Until then, I struggled with many things and coped by keeping everything inside. God brought me to this church and put people in my life who helped me to open the lid on my fears and begin to let go. God gave me this loving church family, which has helped me so much. And God has helped me to be more honest, happier and confident in just being me. And I hope that I can use these things to be an encouragement to others.

Through all of this, I've come to a point where I realized that my confidence needs to be in God's great love and not my own strength. And that is what has led me to this point today. I feel very privileged to be appointed in this role and have the opportunity to support families in our church and community.

[17:39] Wonderful. Thank you so much, Becky. Can you stay there? Because you're going to have some questions to answer. But yeah, let's give a round of applause. Wow. I hadn't actually heard that, although I knew a lot of that.

And I hadn't heard what Helen said, although I knew a lot of that. And just hearing that, just the way that God has been in this process, that is amazing how God is at work. And I think we should all feel encouraged by that as a church family today and really excited for what he's got in store.

Now, in a moment, we've got some questions for Jackie. So just to explain about that. Jackie, we've heard how you've been called by God to serve as children and young families worker here at Union Baptist Church.

And this is a good time for you to reaffirm your faith in Jesus. So there's going to be some questions for you that are going to come up on the screen and you say the bits in bold. So, do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

And do you confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord? I do. Now, the next bit is a bit more specific about what you're going to be doing.

[18:48] And you might recognise the words of this question, which is based around our mission statement for children and young people. Will you enthusiastically work with us, with God's help through prayer, to build an engaging, fun and caring environment so that children, young people, families and leaders equip each other to grow in faith as they hear about Jesus, learn through the Bible, know Jesus personally and tell others about Jesus?

Relying on God's help, I will. Wonderful. Will you work in partnership with the other staff and leaders of this church and with the team of those who serve in children's ministry?

Will you encourage and seek to equip them to carry out Jesus' mission in the local community and in the world? I will, with God's help and guidance.

Will you be faithful in prayer, in reading the Bible and in study, that your faith may be deepened and that you may live out the truth of the gospel? Relying on God's help, I will.

That's wonderful. That's wonderful. Now at this point, I'd like all of us to stand if we're able, because I've got a question for all of us as the whole church family in terms of supporting Jackie in this role.

[20:05] So I'm going to read the part in normal type. If you can join in with a nice enthusiastic we will, if you agree with this statement. And this will be really encouraging for Jackie to hear you say this really loudly.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, will you acknowledge and receive Jackie as our children and young families worker? Will you pray for her, encourage and support her in the days ahead?

We will. We will. That's wonderful. Now please remain standing as I pray for Jackie. Dear God, we thank you for the guidance of your Holy Spirit, which has brought us and Jackie to this point today.

We pray that our partnership in the gospel may bring blessings to many children and families and praise to your name. For Jackie, we pray that you will keep her faithful to her calling in good times and in difficult times.

Equip her with all the wisdom and spiritual gifts that are needed. Give her patience, joy, self-control and all the fruits of the Spirit that she might become more like Jesus Christ. Give her courage in proclaiming the good news of Jesus and in demonstrating what your love looks like.

[21:15] To you be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus from generation to generation forevermore. Amen. Amen. So in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and on behalf of Union Baptist Church, I declare that you are inducted as children and young families worker of Union Baptist Church.

Congratulations. Now I'd like to pray a prayer of blessing on Jackie. As I pray, you might just like to lift up your hands to confer this blessing on Jackie as we pray for God to bless her and fill her.

So Jackie, may the Lord bless you and guard you, fill you and surround you, guide you and sustain you now and always. Amen.

Amen. Thank you. Next time. Welcome, everyone. Now Jackie is not going to be doing children's work alone. She's going to be working as part of a wider and wider ministry of children's work taking place in this town with other churches and other Christian organizations.

And at this point, I'd like to welcome our special guest, Rebecca Hawes who's here representing youth for Christ to bring her greetings and then Rebecca with others will pray for Jackie. So if we step this way, welcome Rebecca.

[22:30] Rebecca. Thank you, it's great to be here. So yeah, on behalf of Wiccan Youth for Christ, Erica, our director who was unable to be here but sends her love, can I offer you our congratulations and please be assured of our love, our prayers and our support as you step into this new venture. That's wonderful, thank you very much. Now a few people are going to pray for Jackie, two of them on the stage already. Can I ask Mike to come up and I think Helen has lined up some of our children who are going to join us as well, so hopefully they know who they are.

So if we can, Jackie, if you just take a step forward, we're going to gather around you and we'll just put a hand on your shoulder and so if you can pass that round and we're all going to pray for you.

Okay, let's pray for Jackie.

Dear God, help Jackie have a wonderful time with us. Help us to show our positivity and kindness. Help us to show her the ways. In your mighty name, amen. Dear God, please help to change and grow in this new role. Amen.

Amen. Dear Lord, you sent Jesus to be our greatest teacher. Help us all, especially Jackie, to be humble like Jesus was and follow in all his teachings. Fill her with patience and understanding as she teaches and guides our children and families. May she be a shining light in all our lives. Amen.

[24:13] Amen. Dear God, thank you for everything that Jackie has taught us about you. Help her to keep trusting you as she leads us each week.

Amen.

Amen. Father, thank you for calling Jackie to minister to the children and young people here at UBC. I pray that she will be filled with the Holy Spirit and have a deep desire and an ability to guide the children and young families that they would grow in their knowledge and understanding of you. I pray that by her prayers, her teaching and her example, all the children she loves and works alongside will grow in their personal relationship with you. Amen.

Father God, we thank you that you brought Jackie to this point. We thank you that we've been able to set her apart in your name. We pray that you will equip her for all that she has ahead of her. May this work bring her joy and love and peace and all the gifts of your Holy Spirit. Lord, we pray for her that you will lead her. Bless her in Jesus' name. Amen.

[25:29] Jesus, we thank you for all that you have begun in Jackie already. We thank you for the lives that have been touched by her willingness to stand up for you to this point.

And Father, as Jackie steps into this new venture, would she know your guiding, would she know your leading, would she know all that you have for her in the days ahead, and would you draw her ever closer to you, so that through Jackie and through all the children and families that she impacts,

glory would be given to your name, Jesus. Amen.

Amen. Lord, we pray that Jackie would, you would equip her to build relationships with the children, with their families, so that we can work together to grow your church, and especially to minister to our children and their families.

We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, thank you so much, everyone, for praying. And thank you, Jackie. And we're going to put Jackie straight to work, actually, because she's leading navigators and trailblazers this morning.

So that's starting as she means to continue. And I'm going to hand over to Ollie, who's going to pray for our children before they go off. Thanks, Ollie. Let's pray.

[26:43] Lord God, we thank you for these children. We thank you for their leaders. We thank you for the blessing that these children are, for the joy they bring and the laughter that they cause. We lift them to you.

We pray that you would bless their time together, that it would be full of laughter, fun, love, and learning that draws them closer to you. Amen. Amen.

And as we, as the children leave, if I could invite the music group, Jackie was given an opportunity to choose some songs. I kept telling her that I'd already picked them. So multiple songs here have been chosen by Jackie, but I think that's the Lord guiding both of us.

So please stand and sing, and children, go away. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but only trust in Jesus' name.

[28:04] Christ alone, hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but only trust in Jesus' name.

Christ alone, Lord of all. Christ alone, Lord of all. Weak made strong in the Savior's love.

Through the storm, he is Lord, Lord of all. Jesus' blood and righteousness. For the storm, you are a man who is in the Savior's love.

Lord of all. And the Lord is in the Savior's love. For the storm, you are a man who is in the Savior's love. Christ alone, Lord of others. Past the Father's love. Was there cannot be for you, Lord you are a man who Thee-Closey is on the■■■■■■■■ Joes Palemurese. You are■■ing you. You are in the Savior's name who is on the Alphainet, their strength to the world. Right in the Son of God will■■ their hand, how a man who is in the Ssaxe in the hai- Christmas Mary. It's unchanging grace In every high and stormy gale I am the holes within the ale I am the holes within the ale Christ the Lord, Father's staff Wind made strong in the Saviour's love Through the storm He is Lord Glory on all Christ alone, Lord of stone Wind made strong in the Saviour's love Through the storm He is Lord

[29:57] Glory on all When He shall come with trumpet sound Oh, may I learn in Him be found Dressed in His righteousness alone For the sun, Lord of stone Christ alone, Lord of stone Wind made strong in the Saviour's love Through the storm He is Lord Lord of all Lord of all Christ alone, Lord of stone Wind made strong in the Saviour's love Through the storm He is Lord

Lord of all Amen Please take a seat We've got a few quick notices Well, I've got two and then Sheena's going to bring something very exciting in a moment So, first one is the church members meeting which is this Tuesday at 7.30 in the Hub These meetings, it's really important that we come together and we listen to what God is saying to us So, if you can make it it'd be a real blessing if you could be there The second is that Chris is going to Tanzania Just a little bit Not that minute But we need to get him there So, he's having a fundraising lunch where Quizmangtalo will be doing a quiz No, Chris Mangtalo will be doing a quiz and it'll be a real blessing to him and it'll be a wonderful evening of fun and we'll hear a bit about what he'll be doing out there as well

Lovely And I'm going to invite Sheena who's going to share something exciting with us Well, good morning everybody I want to tell you about an opportunity to show God's love in action I'm the Deacon for Community Our sermon series is about love and how we show love to others and how we can do that is in practical acts of service and we can do this through a morning of painting and gardening projects at Hannah Ball School on the 17th of June Now, we did this last year at Hannibal and they were so appreciative they really loved what we did and we had a great time too and we were able to make a difference to them So, this year what they're offering us is likely to be

painting a room a small room and some more gardening projects We're finalising the actual projects in the next week or so but we would love it if you could help us make this happen So, that's Saturday the 17th of June 9.30 to 1 at Hannah Ball School and if you can help please do sign up there's a link on the This Week sheet in your email or you can go onto the UBC website and on the very front page you'll find the Community Action Day and there's a link there to sign up or you can even talk to me after the service and say you'd like to do so but please, do get together let's bless this school and show God's love in action

Thank you Thank you, Sheena One thing I should have said about Chris's Tanzania thing is that we encourage you to sign up online so we know about numbers Lovely Right, where are we?

Intercessions Ian Lovely Thank you Let's come to our Lord in prayer Heavenly Father we sung earlier that your love endures forever We thank you for this truth Even though our love for you, Lord often doesn't last is often rather fickle your love is steadfast and your love never fails And Father the ultimate expression of your love was the way you sent your son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins Oh Lord, such love And Lord, you command us to love one another as you've loved us to share your love with those around us Help us to do that day by day with our family our friends our work colleagues even with strangers

[34:42] We thank you for the opportunity to share your love in a practical way at the Community Action Day at Hannibal School on the 17th of June that Sheen has just shared with us Lord, may we make a difference at that school through all the painting and the gardening that takes place but may your love be seen through all that is done and the conversations that take place Lord, help us to be able to show your love more to our neighbours We thank you for those who are able to meet up with neighbours over the coronation weekend last weekend or perhaps are involved in initiatives and activities in our local communities I pray that you would help us to strengthen our friendships and relationships with our neighbours and be prepared to share our faith with them Lord, we thank you again for Jackie and her willingness to serve you as a children and family's worker Lord, equip her in every way we pray that she may be able to share your love with the children and our parents that she meets in her new role

Lord, we particularly want to pray for children and young people today It seems they are facing ever-increasing pressures from society pressures to conform to particular ways of thinking or behaving and in this particular time of year for many pressures from exams and to achieve in their academic work Lord, help us as individuals whether as parents or relatives of children and young people or just as friends or neighbours to be able to support our children and young people and share your love with them show us how best to do that and as a church family help us to share the truth of the gospel with them we thank you especially for all those in this fellowship who do that week by week out the back leading groups from the very youngest to the older teenagers and also during the week with various groups that happen during the week Lord, inspire those leaders and equip them to serve you so faithfully we pray too for Wickham Youth for Christ as they go into schools and around the town may they make a lasting difference in the lives of the children and young people they meet

Lord, in all these things and all these activities we pray that the faithful teaching of your gospel will bear fruit bringing young lives to a lasting relationship with you and Lord, our hearts are so saddened at the news of the murder of a 17 year old teenager just across the other side of Eastern Street here last Sunday evening while some of us were actually worshipping in this building Lord, it's difficult at times to fathom man's inhumanity to man we pray for the family and the friends of the victim who will be their comfort at this time we pray for a speedy and full recovery for the other person who was injured in the incident and we pray for justice but not revenge we pray for changed hearts and we pray for all those in the criminal justice system and especially the police who worked tirelessly to bring about justice but also to bring about positive change in the lives of offenders Lord, amongst our children and young people and across our community communities and society as a whole may your enduring love be known and experienced more and more we ask this in and through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ Amen Amen So we are back in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 and it's on page 1154 in the Pew Bible and we're doing the whole chapter today If I speak in the

tongues of men or of angels but do not have love I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have a faith that can move mountains but do not have love I am nothing If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast but do not have love I gain nothing 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 It does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth It always protects It always protects It always trusts It always hopes It always perseveres Love never fails But where there are prophecies they will cease Where there are tongues they will be stilled

[40:14] Where there is knowledge it will pass away For we know in part and we prophecy in part But when completeness comes what is in part disappears When I was a child I talked like a child I thought like a child I reasoned like a child When I became man I put the ways of childhood behind me For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror Then we shall see face to face Now I know in part Then I shall know fully even as I am fully known And now these three remain Faith, hope and love But the greatest of these is love We're going to sing a song

How Great the Chasm is another song chosen by Jackie which I think encapsulates everything Let's stand and let's sing How Great the Chasm that lay between us How high the mountain I could not climb In desperation

I turned to heaven And spoke your name into the light Then through the darkness your loving kindness Tore through the shadows of my soul The word is finished The end is written Jesus Christ is my living hope Who could imagine So great a mercy What heart could bather Such fabulous grace The God of ages Stepped down from glory To wear my sin And bear my shame The trust has spoken

I am forgiven The King of kings Calls me his own Beautiful Saviour I'm yours forever Jesus Christ My living hope Hallelujah Praise the one Who set me free Hallelujah Death has lost his grip On me He'll have broken Every chain And salvation In your name Jesus Christ My living hope Hallelujah Praise the one Who set me free Hallelujah Death has lost his grip Jesus Christ You have broken You have broken Every chain You have broken Every chain There's salvation In your name Jesus Christ My living hope Then came the morning That sealed the promise Your very body The roaring lion The roaring lion Declared the grave As the name on me Then came the morning That sealed the promise The very body Began to breathe Out of the silence The roaring lion Declared the grave Has no faith on me Jesus Christ Is the victory Hallelujah Hallelujah Praise the one Who set me free

[45:24] Hallelujah Death has lost his grip One day Where I've wounded Every chain There's salvation In your name Jesus Christ My living hope Hallelujah Praise the one Who set me free Hallelujah Death has lost his grip Hallelujah Death has lost his grip One day With unbroken Every chain There's salvation In your name Jesus Christ My living hope Jesus Christ My living hope O God you are My living hope You are my living hope Father thank you so much That you came down You bridged that chasm We could not do that We could not make ourselves Good enough for you You came

You love us first You bridged that gap And you draw us close to you Praise your name Amen Amen Please take a seat Invite Malcolm up If you're interested to know Wilberforce is beginning to sweat a little bit His face is Oh It's very runny Very runny I think we need a fan heater I think we might Yes I'll pop in a little spot of sunshine over there I'm going to pray for Malcolm As he brings the Lord's word to us Thank you Father we thank you for Malcolm We thank you for the way that you've been speaking through him As he's been preparing for this sermon I pray that you would bless him now That the words that flow from his mouth would be your words That we would hear direct from your heart this morning Amen Thank you Oli and thank you everyone who's been part of the service this morning It's been so wonderful, rich and full of God's love

Have you sensed his love this morning? Have you sensed his love? Just You may not have done so have you yet? Have you yet? Sensed his love? I pray that you might To know his love is life Just a couple of things Did you know that Margaret Cunliffe is 101 today?

Wow Well we celebrated our 100th but it seems like each year that goes by after the 100th It's almost a greater achievement isn't it?

I don't know And wasn't that beautiful? The children praying for Jackie That was very, really wonderful Thank you for organizing that And thank you children I know they're not here but that was great That was great Do pass on our thanks to your child if they were one of them I want to pray again I want to pray for you as I preach Let's turn to him in prayer Loving Heavenly Father we thank you that you know us And you love us We marvel that you see us You see all that is hidden To other eyes And you love us Holy Spirit of God we invite you to lead us To repent of lesser loves Than love of God This morning we repented the love of money and possessions We repent of the love of ego and power

[49:04] We repent of the lusts and appetites of the flesh We repent of the lusts and appetites of the flesh May every love in our lives Be eclipsed by your great love Revealed to us and demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Father today may we each of us know the wonder Of being known And loved Before we were even conceived By you May we know the love of Jesus that has been present in our world Throughout our lives And may the joy and certainty Of that love That will greet us On the final day Hold us Hold us Hold us this day Hold us for all eternity And all God's people said

So be it Amen Well it's a treat Looking at 1 Corinthians 13 Andrew and I were discussing And Andrew and I were discussing what possible Further Sermons we might have in the months ahead And we were wondering whether to look at 1 Corinthians 13 Coming up to Christmas I said maybe another Christmas But how wonderful such this passage is I hope it has edified you, built you up, strengthened your security in God In this chapter Paul describes What he describes in chapter 12 As the most excellent way Isn't that beautiful?

If you were describing how to live your life Wouldn't you like somebody to say This is the most excellent way Imagine Ollie on piece of work a child has written The most excellent piece of work This is the most excellent way And the way described in chapter 13 Is this way of love There's lots of other ways of course, aren't there?

The world will tell us all sorts of self-help ways That we might follow But you and I as followers of Jesus And those he's calling A call to this most excellent way The way of love The way of love Set out for us And lived out and demonstrated by the Lord Jesus And empowered in the people of God By the Holy Spirit of God And cheered on by the love of the Father Isn't that beautiful?

That is our calling Some commentators describe this chapter As a personnel specification of love Some of you may have seen in broadcast Little CV of Jesus Christ I hope you enjoyed that But it's a CV of love really, isn't it?

[52:06] And of course that CV That person's speck Or however we want to describe it Is supremely fulfilled In the person of Jesus Christ Now it's now the third week Of looking at this chapter We had a little detour last week We thought we ought to notice the coronation And remember the King of love, Jesus I hope this series has helped you To refocus and remember What's most important I think I need to carry on remembering And re-remembering In the prayers before the service Which incidentally you're all invited to join In that room up there At 9.45 every Sunday We pray for the ministry of the word Both here and for the children Come early, pray, seek God This is the powerhouse of the church Prayer, I entreat you as senior pastor Come and pray at 9.45 if you're able Or if your alarm clock can be set a little earlier And seek God in this place

What was I going on about? I don't know how that came up As we were praying As we were praying As we were praying Yes, thank you It's really good Judy's listening As we were praying Brother Colin said Well we tend to say exactly the same prayers Every time when we're up there I'm not sure that's true actually I take And in a sense he's right But do you know what?

When my wife says to me I love you I could sit there and say Do you know? She's just said it again Couldn't she be more creative? You know?

We say Lord Feed your people through your word We say it passionately And we love in our hearts We say I love you Lord And he doesn't say oh I think you said that last week He loves to hear his

people say We love him And he loves to say I love you to us That's why we take communion regularly Just to see how much he's demonstrated That love to us So don't be afraid to keep praying The same prayers The Holy Spirit makes them new every time So let's come back shall we To this glorious passage And we've got to chapter 13 verse 8 But let me do a quick recap On where we've got to so far So verses 1 to 3 It's a big jump here Gary If you're thinking golly that was quick And the first three verses That I was preaching on I said and what the word of God says Without love we're nothing Just like a clanging cymbal

And then Pete shared with us So helpfully that love is described In verses 4 to 8 And embodied in the person of Jesus And I'm really excited in these last verses That love is permanent God's love is permanent Now some of you when I said that Would say yeah but some other loves aren't Let me tell you and remind you that God's love Is permanent Unending True and faithful How beautiful is that And we're going to be looking at that Because that's what verses 8 to 13 Are all about Now the fascinating thing about what Paul does here Is he offers a stark contrast between life now And life when he comes again And we see him in all his fullness in glory In the new heaven and the new earth And often when we think of life now

[55:55] We think of life now as being certain and concrete Solid and sure We kind of have a handle on it And we think of life in the future as kind of being spiritual intangible Kind of uncertain And Paul says if that's our impression You've got that all wrong In fact it's exactly the other way round He explains that life now is transitory And it's imperfect Would you agree with that?

We can see it passes and it's imperfect I think just look at yourself in the morning You see beauty but you see imperfection I see growing imperfection And now what we're seeing is a dim image Says Paul But the life that is to come Will be full It will be solid and strong Indelible And it will be vivid I find as you probably have told I can't always see the words there I find as I get older I can't quite see quite as clearly Now some of you have got like 20-20 vision And oh wow that's amazing But let me tell you that whatever level of clarity That you currently see It is nothing, nothing compared with what is to come Let's work through each verse As we consider these last verses of 8 to 13 So the first

The first thing which Paul is wanting to say Is what you're experiencing now Is incomplete It's not the whole thing It's just in part Let me read the verses 9 and 10 For we know in part And we prophesy in part But when completeness comes What is part What is in part disappears Paul is saying that life now Is incomplete In our current life In our current life We will feel frustration Because we can't see the whole picture Now how many here like jigsaw puzzles?

I expected slightly more Actually upstairs don't seem to like them quite so much Or perhaps they weren't Anyway, now I personally find jigsaw puzzles pretty frustrating My wife loves them In fact we had a very small table while we were on holiday And a jigsaw puzzle pervaded the whole table It's such a joy isn't it?

Anyway, now fortunately we had a picture kind of thing Of what was supposed to be being filled in But life can Does life sometimes feel to you A bit like a jigsaw puzzle Without the picture You're kind of putting bits in But you're not quite sure how it should look Well Paul says that's because what we're looking at now is incomplete We see just in part We can't see the whole thing Occasionally you get glimpses of what it should all look like But we're not going to get that fully until we see him face to face Now when Jesus comes again Everything is going to be complete Our bodies will rise Perfected without any decay Isn't that great?

[59:16] When Jesus comes again Our relationships even though they may be good now They will be perfect Isn't that great? No misunderstandings Wouldn't that be fantastic?

Just living together in perfect harmony Can't wait Our world that is subject to decay And is glorious in part Wouldn't you agree?

It looks fantastic Did anybody watch the Eurovision last night And all the beautiful pictures of different parts of the world? It's beautiful in part, glorious in part But we're going to see it perfected It's going to be wonderful So first of all What we're experiencing today If you think it's not quite right It's all a bit bitty It is incomplete Paul says correct If your love, all the loves you've experienced of God and of others Feels a bit like you want something more That's normal That's exactly the experience of humanity Until we see him in all his fullness Let's go on then To the second verse Or

the verse 11 So we've done 9 and 10 There's an immaturity in this life Yeah, I don't know if anybody described Anybody been described as immature?

Sometimes when I'm playing with a puppy My dad says I'm very immature And I should not kiss an animal like that I wonder what you see in terms of immaturity Let's have a look at verse 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child When I became a man, I put away childhood behind me So what Paul is saying is that Paul likens the current life To one as awaiting development Awaiting maturity Completeness, ripening that comes with time Paul highlights that being a child is a temporary state Sometimes, do you ever wish you were a child again?

Sometimes people say I wish I was a child at school again I don't But anyway, I'm always intrigued by people saying that I'm afraid we're going in one direction We're not going back to childhood We are going forward to maturity, brothers and sisters The goal of life is not to remain a child, says Paul It's to grow up, to stop babbling And to know mature wisdom And in chapter 15, Paul goes on to explain this vital progression That will come in all its fullness when Jesus returns By offering a metaphor of seeds that develop into plants Or acorns into trees And what we see now is a little acorn or a seed But what will come will be the full-grown version A connectedness but a difference between the two And only when we see love fully restored Matured and ripened Will we get the whole picture Will we truly find maturity, says Paul

[62:19] Now I want to have a little conversation of two fetuses in a womb You'll see the picture come up And I want you to just enter into this little narrative And see if it tells you something about this necessity of change and maturity If we are to know full, fully love So just imagine these two twins talking to each other Now I know some of you will say Well they won't be able to talk at this stage Just imagine it, okay Just imagine Here they are Do you believe in life after delivery?

Maybe we are here in preparation for what we will later be Other baby Nonsense There is no life after delivery I think I think there will be more More light out there Maybe we will be able to walk with legs And eat with our mouths Maybe we will have our senses That we can't understand now New senses It could be amazing, couldn't it?

Other baby That's completely absurd Walking is impossible It's so slidey in here Mouths would be messy, wouldn't they?

Umbilical cords are rather more efficient 100% efficient You're talking rubbish You're talking rubbish If there is life after delivery Surely someone would come back Delivery is the end of life And in the after delivery There is nothing but darkness and silence And oblivion I think you're wrong I think you're wrong Surely We will meet mother And we will be taken care of Mother?

You actually believe in mother? If mother exists, then where is she now? Where is she now? She's all around us We are surrounded by her We are of her And it is in her that we live Without her this world would not be And we could not exist Well I don't see her Sometimes When you are silent And you focus And you really listen And you really listen You can know her presence Calling down from above You can know her love

[65:35] Friends We will One day be delivered Unto eternal life In the eternal kingdom We will be completed, matured And we will finally experience The presence of Jesus Face to face Lastly Lastly Well not lastly They never trust a minister saying The hazy vision Moves to transparency Verse 12 For we now see only a reflection in a mirror Then we will see face to face Now I know in part Then I shall know fully Even as I am fully known Paul sees life as Offering an indistinct foretaste Of the fullness of life That is to come

I remember black and white TVs With really poor reception Some of you will as well Just imagine moving from that To those massive screens With full colour Many of you have I have got a little one My wife says it is quite big enough But I like it a little But one day It will just be Vivid Full Transparent I can't Tell you enough about it But perhaps prayerfully think And thank the Lord for what's coming And he'll reveal more Of what it will be like to you Every appreciation of his love now All the longing and desire For more that we experience And is natural to the human being Will be met perfectly On that day Isn't that glorious?

Paul is saying to the Corinthians Don't imagine that this is it This life is like an unfinished scale The perfected love of Jesus Is a completed symphony During this last week I was talking with a dear brother And he asked me So are you saying Malcolm That in all the mess of this life We're simply to hang on And hope for the best?

Are we really expected to tough it out To put up with all the rubbish Waiting until Jesus comes again? I really appreciated the honesty actually That's a good question isn't it?

Anybody else want to echo that one? I thought it was a good question Let me offer Paul's answer I think Paul He had some unique experience That perhaps we haven't quite had But we've had experiences perhaps he hasn't Paul experienced God's love Bursting into his life Through the resurrected Christ On the road to Damascus Do you remember that?

[68:55] He was blinded by the intensity Of the presence of Christ And Christ said to him Do you remember? Why are you persecuting me? But he didn't reject him He chose him It's amazing isn't it?

How God does that When you and I Open our lives Repent of our sins Open our lives to Christ When I did that And you are born again We receive a foretaste Of all that God will give us In the future The Holy Spirit is the deposit Of all the good things that are to come So therefore When that my dear friend says Are we just expected to tough it out?

In one sense yes But in another sense All that will be Is cascading towards us And is tasted in part now That's the experience that every Christian Should have And should know And we need to pray that Of our lives And experience that As we read God's word But let me go on to the final verse Which I think will help us to know How we take hold Of all that is to come In the now Would you like to do that?

To take hold of more of that love And vision and maturity In the now Let me read to you verse 13 On to this slide here The future access now Through three gifts And now these three remain Everything's changing Everything's going to pop But these three says Paul These three remain Faith, hope and love But the greatest of these is love You see brothers and sisters Faith looks to God Who has made himself known through Jesus And enables us To reach out and to trust him And as we do so Peace comes Into our hearts Have you found that?

As we reach out in faith We are delivered resources of heaven We can say this and this and this and this and this Is happening Lord But nevertheless I trust you Resources of heaven Coming our way Filling us afresh Hope looks ahead to God We've been doing that today haven't we?

[71:35] Looking ahead, has it been encouraging? I hope it has It looks ahead About all that God will do in the future And as we do that Strangely and gloriously By the spirit That future starts invading The present Right here And right now May even have experienced it As we have been Going through this passage As I have been preaching And as we access that knowledge And word of God Come alive in us by the spirit We can start to know a joy That doesn't make any sense A peace that passes Any kind of understanding So in one sense My dear friend Who says Are we just supposed to tough it out And wait for that day?

There is a sense of persevering In the faith But certainly it isn't a Hopeless, faithless, loveless Persevering Is it brothers and sisters? It is a faith filled Hope filled Love refreshed Persevering But my question was Well why is love the greatest?

Do you notice he just says it Doesn't he? But the greatest of these is love And we all go Yes, that's true But I want to ask why? Why is love best? Because When Jesus comes again Faith will be replaced by sight Do you know what?

When we enter into heaven Into glory You won't have to exercise any faith Is that good news to you? You can lay that one down At the moment it's a crucial Offering of ourselves to God Trusting him But you won't need it anymore Because when Jesus comes again Faith will vanish into sight Hallelujah Because hope is going to be emptied In the delight of his full presence Because you will see him face to face And friends Love Is God's river Leading us Into a glorious future Let us step into that river And let us take Let it take us Where it is going Friends, our life now is partial It's immature If anybody tells you You're a bit partial A bit immature

Just say Yeah Word of God says that too And if they say You're lacking in love Say correct But one day I will be perfected in love You're looking at the moment And you see Jesus But in this mirror darkly Like it's a bronze mirror He was talking about And you can just catch the glimpse of him But

you're going to see him And the weird thing is When you see him You're going to fall down on your face Which is kind of funny really Isn't it?

[74:39] Because it's the first chance You've actually got Anyway, you get the point Now we know in part Then we shall know fully Even as I am known Childlikeness is failing to appreciate Brothers and sisters The centrality of love Friends Let us take Paul At his word Let us delight And spend our days In the love of God This is our calling This is our destiny This is the most excellent way Let us follow in the footsteps Of the king of love Jesus himself Then our lives will have weight And substance Then they will add up To something enduring Something essential There will be a community That will be A signpost A signpost to Jesus Who is the embodiment of love

And that my dear friends Is what will transform our town Nothing less Than the love of Jesus Love will overcome Every fear Because love has risen from the grave Not even the finality of death Had a chance Against the powerful love of God So watch out brothers and sisters As every idol Will fade away into nothingness And let these three remain Faith Hope And love But the greatest of these Is love Let us just spend a moment Responding to God now And Ollie will guide us Through this I think after a passage as

Powerful as This We must reflect not only on The passage which we have had Spoken to us today But take it back to where it Began We have spent three weeks Digging deep And it's been wonderful We come to a time Where we can reflect We have a love in Christ Which is complete It is our foundation And our secure hope It is by which others see that we Belong to him We need this powerful love To flow through us in all that we do And we invite I'm going to invite Music group I think Paul's going to play Just quietly for us I thought it might be helpful To have The main headlines From what we've Learned over the last few weeks And I thought it might be useful It's not on there

I do Apologise All this is to come from the context Of how we serve If I serve But I have not love I am nothing So without God's love We are nothing God's love never fails God's love is permanent And as we've been reminded Without Christ we are nothing Christ never fails Christ Is Permanent We shall see Christ And dwell In his presence Forever Let's take a few minutes Of personal reflection Inviting the Holy Spirit To speak directly To us Listen to what the Father Is telling you In these Moments Thank you Paul Let's take a few minutes Thank you Paul Amen Who Different Here Is The Three Amen.

[80:06] Amen. Amen.

Lord, you are patient, you are kind. You don't envy, you don't boast, you don't prowl. Lord, we cannot fully understand the depths of your love. But may we be a people who go out into this world as love. As we serve, that we may do so in this love.

A people that understand that it is you that we call upon to deliver that love. That is your love. May we be Christ to others, knowing in part what we expect to see.

May we be Christ to others, knowing in part what we expect to see. Showing that this world is temporary. That we know of a greater love and a greater presence to come.

[82:02] For now we only see in part. Then we shall see face to face. Amen.

We're going to close with a time of worship. I'd like to pick some words to link in this bit, but my words are useless. We've got a great and powerful God.

He loves us for some reason. And he calls us to him. So, let us sing and give thanks to the Lord. God, the uncreated one.

King forevermore. And then, boldly, I approach the throne. By grace alone, somehow I stand. Let's stand. And let's bring our worship to the Lord.

Amen. Amen. Charles ede Amen. Amen.

[83:56] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

I believe so alone somehow I stand, where even angels fear to tread.

[88:09] Invited by redeeming love before the throne of God above, he falls because with their scars into his everlasting arms.

And when condemnation grips my heart, and Satan tends me to despair, I hear the voices scatter spear.

The great I am, the Lord is here. Praise the one who vies for me, and heals my soul eternally.

Only I approach your throne, blameless now I'm running home.

I am God I come, welcome as your throne, into the arms of majesty. Behold the bright and bright.

[89:42] I am God I come, welcome as your throne, into the arms of majesty.

Behold the bright and bright and bright inspired ■■■ USA, where nor God gave light love. I am Jesusa UP as your son, as Your multi ale's glory, into the earth my world.

Look how worthy the actions of dignity and health is wrestled. A thousand years, a thousand times, I'll now be up to see His grace.

Holy, I approach your home When it's now a prouder home I am God, I call Who welcomes us your own Into the arms of majesty Holy, I approach your home When it's now a prouder home I am God, I call Who welcomes us your own Into the arms of majesty This is the art of celebration Now you flee from condemnation

Oh, praise the one Oh, praise the one Who made it into all my sin This is the art of celebration Now you flee from condemnation Oh, praise the one Oh, praise the one Who made it into all my sin Only I approach your throne Goodness, now I'm running home I am God, I call God, I bless your own Into the arms of majesty Lord, I am God What incredible truths we have just sung

[92:51] I think there's Possibly A lot of people this morning That needed to hear that That you are loved Deeply By the heart of the Father That maybe There has been love Which has Been Very imperfect In your lives But I need you to know And God wants you to know That you are Permanently Loved And treasured And fixed in him Let's pray Father Father Thank you That we love Because you First loved us Your love Saved us Not because of our righteousness But because of Christ's Mercy and grace Our saviour May we go from here

Filled with the peace Of the Lord Jesus Christ And in everything we do Do so In the knowledge And the love Of God Amen Please take a seat I invite you To find someone Who Do the prayer team Still wear those badges Yes they do Find someone In the prayer team They wear a badge That look like praying hands Find someone to pray with This morning If you I invite you to do so And please run us For tea and coffee I don't have a map It's sort of that way And follow the people Looking for coffee And if you want to Take a little glimpse To see what Wilberforce Is getting up to He's not doing particularly Well at the moment I'll move him slightly Out the way But Earthly love is not Permanent Christ Christ is Bless you Thank you So That morning You Th■■■ Thank you.