

Come and See 2024: What is love and where does it come from

Schools and families Lent course 2024

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Hello there my name is Westy, I'm a Youth Minister at a church called St Andrews in a little village called Sonning just outside of Reading. It is wonderful to be with you today now I want to ask you two questions just to stop and pause and think about what is love? And where does love come from?

Now imagine you are at home and you bake a cake, you put all the ingredients, you mix it all in, you stick it in the oven at the right temperature, it comes out, you ice it, you decorate it, then you invite your friends and family to try it with you and it is absolutely delicious it's a great cake. Now I'm going to guess there's two reasons why maybe you like baking and one is you love baking and one is you love to eat cake and maybe share it with your family and friends.

There aren't many people, if any, who would bake a cake on purpose to make it taste disgusting, now I think that's a bit like God and Christians believe God creates the world and at the beginning of time he looks at the world that he's created and he says this is good. I think this is because God is a creative God, I think God creates spaces and he loves to create stuff to put in those spaces and Christians believe that God created the world because he is love and out of that place of love we're made in his image, that makes us like him.

I believe that when we love others and we love the world around us, it makes us want to do and say and make good for other people, make good things. I believe that when we show love, it shows that we want to help, we want to serve, we want to give to other people. I believe this love comes from being created by a God who is love and so my argument I guess today is that if love comes from God and love is God and then we're created to be just like him.

Now as we know the world has got a ton of people in it who love and are full of joy and spread peace, but we also know that the world has a lot of pain, a lot of sadness and a lot of sorrow. We know that some people in the world aren't that great at relationship, not actually that good sometimes at loving their fellow neighbour. We know that sometimes people fall out so badly that they just can't make it right again. This is really sad and I believe as a Christian that that makes God's heart really sad, but I also believe that God knows our pain, knows that we aren't always going to be loving like we should be and so I reckon, I believe what the Bible says about from the beginning of time God had a plan. I believe God knew when he created the world that humans would get it wrong, sadly. I think he knew giving us free will would mean that we'd mess it up, he knew that people would get greedy and selfish and mean, so mean that some people actually take it upon themselves to take the life of another because they feel like that's justice and it could have been solved, I would suggest, if we just loved the other person.

So this rescue plan I think God had from the beginning of time was to send his son Jesus to live as a human and to die on a cross. I think God wanted Jesus to know what it was like to be like us, to be let down, to be hurt, to be betrayed, to be hated, but the plan was that he'd die on a cross to forgive all of our sins. This means that anything you or I have ever said or done or thought that wasn't loving is forgiven by Jesus on the cross. Now imagine I hand you a Sharpie and a Post-it note and I say I want you to write on this Post-it note everything you've ever said, done or thought that was wrong. Now

imagine everyone in your school doing that, now imagine everyone in your town doing that and then imagine everyone in the world doing that, that's 8 billion Sharpies and Post-it notes with words scribbled on. Some of us might need more than one Post-It note If we're honest but imagine then we stick all of those Post-it notes on this person Jesus Christ who dies on the cross. That's a heck of a lot of Post-it notes, but this is what Christians believe is that when he came back to life, all the Post-it notes were gone and that means everything that you've ever said done or thought that was on that Post-It note has been forgiven. It means that you get to walk free, that's what love looks like, a God who forgives each and every one of us for anything that we've done wrong that wasn't loving toward our fellow neighbour or toward the world.

So coming back to our original two questions. What is love? I think love is the sacrifice made by Jesus on the cross for the wrong things that we've ever thought said or done. Love is God creating a world for us to have free will and to enjoy. And where does love come from? I think it comes from God, I think God is love, I think love is rooted in God and I think love exists because God is love and it ends and it starts with God and we are made in his image to be loving too. Thank you so much for listening, have a great day.