



Sunday Worship Service

20 February 2022 (Epiphany 7)

Love is the greatest gift of God. Without love, whatever we do is empty. Jesus Christ who we follow and believe is the true exposition of God's love. In his love, he came down to earth, lived with friends and enemies, died on an old cross and then rose again. His promise is this: I will be with you always and you will be my beloved ones. His love never divides. His love always asks us to empathy and be merciful to all including those who is hostile and display indifference. Can we love enemies? Love is not always present. Love for enemies can only be found in Jesus Christ who lived the greatest love of God for us all.

Centring Prayer: Take from Me...

“Be still in the presence of the Lord,
and wait patiently for him to act.” Psalm 37: 7

Lord, help me to relax.

Take from me the tension
that makes peace impossible.
Take from me the fears
that do not allow me to venture.
Take from me the worries
that blind my sight.
Take from me the distress
that hides your joy.

Help me to know
that I am with you,
that I am in your care,
that I am in your love,
that you and I are one.

Attributed to David Adam (The Open Gate, 1994)

Song: Be Still My Soul (TIS 123)

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side;
bear patiently the cross of grief and pain;
leave to your God to order and provide;
in every change he faithful will remain.

*Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

Be still, my soul: your God will undertake
to guide the future as he has the past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake,
all now mysterious shall be clear at last.

Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend ...

Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart
and all is darkened in the vale of tears,
then you shall better know his love, his heart,

who comes to soothe your sorrow, calm your fears.

Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend ...

Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
when we shall be for ever with the Lord,
when disappointment, grief and fear are gone,
sorrow forgotten, love's pure joy restored.

Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend ...

Katharina von Schlegel tr. Jane Laurie Borthwick

Prayer of the Day: Prayer for Enemies

Heavenly Father, we call upon you in Jesus' name.

We come with empty hands.

We have not been able to love our enemies.

As a rule we have never even seen them.

We have avoided them.

When we saw them, we felt only fear and anger, not love.

So we come to you, not as the children of your love,

but as the enemy of our enemies,

beseeking you for ourselves and all the others;

Bless those who curse you,

do good to those who hate you.

Forgive us for what we have failed to do for our enemies.

You lead us out of the constriction of fear

and out of the prison of hate,

into the wide space of freedom.

Let us see your sun,

which rises upon the evil and the good,

and rejoice in its warmth, together with our enemies. Amen.

Attributed to Jürgen Moltmann

Scripture Reading: Luke 6:27-38 (New Living Translation)

Love for Enemies

²⁷ “But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.²⁸ Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. ³⁰ Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don’t try to get them back. ³¹ Do to others as you would like them to do to you.

³² “If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! ³³ And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! ³⁴ And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return.

³⁵ “Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. ³⁶ You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

Do Not Judge Others

³⁷ “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Song: Seek Ye First (TIS 745)

Seek ye first the kingdom of God
and his righteousness,
and all these things shall be
added unto you.

Allelu, alleluia.

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
allelu, alleluia.*

Ask and it shall be given unto you,
seek and you shall find,
knock and it shall be
opened unto you.

Allelu, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia ...

We shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from
the mouth of the Lord.

Allelu, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia ...

Karen Lafferty

Sermon

Do to others as you would like them to do to you. *Luke 6:31*

It was World Radio Day last Sunday 13 February. I was coming back from the Blue Mountains where I had an early morning walk when an ABC Classic live program announced it. You may know I am a radio lover. I began my journey of radio listener when I was very little. So I have interesting childhood memories about radio. I grew up where my favourite entertainment was radio. There was a lot of music, many stories telling and

plays. For me, radio was like a smartphone that I could own by myself in my room and play with till late. I enjoyed it more than TV.

Anyhow, I immediately took a time travel back to the days when my mother put a class FM channel every morning. I never knew I would love listening to radio than other media. I guess, psychologically, I attach to radio as the moments I connected to my old home and neighbourhood. I was super excited when I was listening to the radio show explaining about World Radio Day 2022. This was a new addition in my knowledge about radio.

The DJ said, “Radio is gentle persuader.” Spot on. Yes, radio and its contents have never been rude to its listeners. At least, I am touched and healed by what my favourite channels bring to me. Recently, on ABC Classic, it was aired a re-make Korean popular song called “Don’t worry my dear”. The song is the OST of Korean drama “Reply 1988” and its tune is well-known to me and now many Australian listeners. The radio broadcasting the Korean song gently persuades them to be exposed to how Korean style composition and impression looks like. The Korean song that is performed by the world famous musicians and then aired on ABC Classic eventually touched my soul and heart who is now very much missing families and friends, and its related memories in South Korea. Gently and softly I was touched and persuaded to think about who I am and where I am going in this journey of faith that I don’t know what comes next. I was encouraged by the song that was live broadcasted on the radio, my favourite entertainment medium and time machine.

Jesus’ love is like gentle persuader. His love and love in action never be rude and forcibly and artificially lead human history. Whatever Christianity has made mistakes and misunderstandings has its origin from church and false leading doctrines. But his love asks us patiently to wait and endure until all will be well. 1 Corinthians 13 says, “Love is patient (v 4)” and “never gives up and endures through every circumstances (v 7).” In today’s passage, Jesus once again teaches the earliest followers and their communities scattered

who thrived hard to live the conviction in their risen Lord Christ Jesus. Jesus' teaching of love for enemies and of their attitude toward neighbours was a sacred way of persuading people to change their perspective on who Jesus was and what his teaching would mean for their faith journey ahead. The crowds who gathered around Jesus listened when he told them that the kingdom of God belongs to them (Luke 6:20). And Jesus told them about love for enemies, who hate them, curse them, hurt them and slap them. Such a hard task! Love the un-loveable. Then Jesus said, "Do to others as you would like them to do to you. (v 31)"

Who are the crowds? Likely, they are peasants and farmers and fishermen—the poor, the lower classes of society, the people of the land. But they are also tax collectors, prostitutes, and those labelled sinners by the religious powers. Mostly nameless and faceless, they act as a single character in the unfolding drama of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee. They are the people who are healed, forgiven, and freed from evil spirit. To all of them, Jesus was asking them to become the people of God who own the kingdom revealed in and among them – Jesus Christ. In his teaching, we are able to find how the earliest forms of Jesus ministry would look like. It would have been small and unorganised. But they owned the kingdom of God and the love that could change their way of loving others including enemies and un-loveable. They were very small group of people holding on tightly to their beliefs and expectations. Jesus, the Gentle Persuader, asked them to be compassionate to those who had power and ruled over them. It was impossible to make possible to happen. Jesus is the model who gave himself up for us all and rose again from the empty tomb for all humanity!

I studied and found that in Luke's gospel there were people who lived out what Jesus taught about love for enemies and being merciful to others. In Luke 8, there were a few names from the earliest Jesus' community. Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna contributed from their own resources to support Jesus' healing and feeding ministries. Interestingly, the passage witnesses that the women had been cursed of evil spirits and diseases. Mary

Magdalene had mercy on her when she was cursed by seven demons. Jesus casted out them and freed her. Then she would have ended up following Jesus and supporting his ministry. The women were the recipients of Christ' mercy and love and then became the givers to give away all resources for many. I believe that they lived for others as they loved God. *Agape* – a love that they could only find in Christ' love for them. Apostle Paul redefined love – *agape* for us all. He said, “Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) This re-definition of love was done by Paul who previously persecuted all believers of Jesus Christ and then became a forgiven debtor of the greatest love of Jesus Christ. He found *agape* in Christ' love. *Agape* means literally the highest form of pure and sacrificial love and charity. For Paul, Jesus' *agape* love was gentle persuader that turned his life upside down. He received the love for enemies from Jesus Christ. Then he participated in God's life and spread the good news about *agape* love to ancient Roman world. We are the recipients of Christ's love found in his life, death and resurrection. So how would we live that love everyday for us and for those un-loveable? How can we go about loving our enemies?

To be honest, the world we live today is not like the one when Romeo and Juliet or Hamlet lived. When we call 'enemies', it would be a dramatic way to describe those who might say no to us or grow opposition to our opinion and intention. In our modern society, Jesus' teaching of love for enemies means for us to show the genuine respect to those who display indifference toward you. Hatred is not the opposite of love. The opposite of love is indifference. Show our enemies the genuine respect that every human being deserves. And then, as Jesus taught, learn to think of them with compassion and be merciful just as our Father in heaven is merciful. And in our lives, as Uniting Church in Boronia Park and Gladesville, and wherever we live, let us cultivate compassion as our common good. As we are preparing ourselves

to come back to a new normal congregational life from March this year, I would like to encourage whole congregation to make every effort to open up our services for all who seek for the *agape* love of God, the life's greatest gift that can only be found in Jesus Christ our Lord. Let love draw us back to love. And let our enemies find *agape* love in our mercifulness and kindness given by God.

Let us pray:

God of all mercy and compassionate hearts,
teach us to know how to love those
who display indifference to us.

Teach us hope, faith and forgiveness,
so we live with them and bless them
in showing the genuine respect
that you imprint in us.

Teach us, O Lord, your ways. **Amen.**

Prayers for Enemies

Bless my enemies, O Lord.

Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Enemies have driven me into Thy embrace more than friends have. Friends have bound me to earth, enemies have loosed me from earth and have demolished all my aspirations in the world. Enemies have made me a stranger in worldly realms and an extraneous inhabitant of the world. Just as a hunted animal finds safer shelter than an unhunted animal does, so have I, persecuted by enemies, found the safest sanctuary, having ensconced myself beneath Thy tabernacle, where neither friends nor enemies can slay my soul.

Bless my enemies, O Lord.

Even I bless them and do not curse them.

They, rather than I, have confessed my sins before the world. They have punished me, whenever I have hesitated to punish myself. They have tormented me, whenever I have tried to flee torments. They have scolded me, whenever I have flattered myself. They have spat upon me, whenever I have filled myself with arrogance.

Bless my enemies, O Lord.

Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Whenever I have made myself wise, they have called me foolish. Whenever I have made myself mighty, they have mocked me as though I were a dwarf. Whenever I have wanted to lead people, they have shoved me into the background. Whenever I have rushed to enrich myself, they have prevented me with an iron hand. Whenever I thought that I would sleep peacefully, they have wakened me from sleep. Whenever I have tried to build a home for a long and tranquil life, they have demolished it and driven me out.

Truly, enemies have cut me loose from the world and have stretched out my hands to the hem of Thy garment.

Bless my enemies, O Lord.

Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Bless them and multiply them; multiply them and make them even more bitterly against me. So that my fleeing to Thee may have no return; so that all hope in men may be scattered like cobwebs; so that absolute serenity may begin to reign in my soul; so that my heart may become the grave of my two evil twins: arrogance and anger; so that I might amass all my treasure in heaven; ah, so that I may for once be freed from self deception, which has entangled me in the dreadful web of illusory life.

Enemies have taught me to know what hardly anyone knows, that a person has no enemies in the world except himself. One hates his enemies only when he fails to realize that they are not enemies, but cruel friends. It is truly difficult for me to say who has done me more good and who has done me

more evil in the world: friends or enemies. Therefore bless, O Lord, both my friends and my enemies.

A slave curses enemies, for he does not understand. But a son blesses them, for he understands. For a son knows that his enemies cannot touch his life. Therefore he freely steps among them and prays to God for them.

Bless my enemies, O Lord.

Even I bless them and do not curse them. Amen.

Attributed to St. Nicolai of Zica

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

我們在天上的父，
願人都尊祢的名為聖，
하늘에 계신 우리 아버지，
아버지의 이름을 거룩하게 하시며，

your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

願祢的國降臨，
願祢的旨意行在地上，
如同行在天上。
아버지의 나라가 오게 하시며，
아버지의 뜻이 하늘에서와 같이
땅에서도 이루어지게 하소서.

Give us today our daily bread.

我們日用的飲食 今日賜給我們，
오늘 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주시고，

Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.

免我們的債
如同我們免了人的債
우리가 우리에게 잘못한 사람을
용서하여 준 것같이
우리 죄를 용서하여 주시고,

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

不叫我們遇見試探，
救我們脫離兇惡，
우리를 시험에 빠지지 않게 하시고
악에서 구하소서.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever.

因為國度，權柄，榮耀，
全是祢的，直到永遠。
나라와 권능과 영광이
영원히 아버지의 것입니다.

Amen.

Dedication of the Offering

The offering will be used for the congregation's continuing mission and ministry in these changing times. Please make your offering through a Bank Deposit or a personal cheque whichever is convenient to you.

Account Name: Boronia Park Uniting Church

BSB: 634-634

Account: 100023784

Reference: Offering

Mail to: Mrs. Robyn Harvey
96a Champion Rd. Gladesville NSW 2111

Please contact Robyn Harvey, Treasurer on 0418 783 290 or robyn.49@bigpond.net.au for more information about Direct Debit.

Next Sunday Service Participants

Scripture Reading (Luke 9:28-36):	Daniel Yeon
Kids Talk:	Isabella Lee
Prayers of the People:	Phoebe Kim

Key Dates of NCLS Survey

Sunday 20 February – Hurrah! Everyone has finished their survey and submitted it online or placed it in their return envelope!!

Monday 21 February – Hard copies will be collected from your personal letter box and arrangements made with you if your letter box is not accessible to non-residents

Wednesday 23 February – Last date if you prefer to post your hard copy to **PO Box 3238, Putney NSW 2112.**

Song: What the Lord Has Done in Me

Let the weak say I am strong
Let the poor say I am rich
Let the blind say I can see
It's what the Lord has done in me

Hosanna hosanna

To the Lamb that was slain

Hosanna hosanna

Jesus died and rose again

Into the river I will wade
There my sins are washed away
From the heaven's mercy stream
Of the Saviour's love for me

Hosanna hosanna ...

I will rise from waters deep
Into the saving arms of God
I will sing salvation songs
Jesus Christ has set me free

Hosanna hosanna ...

Reuben Morgan

Blessing

Our strength is our God
who is found in Christ Jesus.

Our strength is the Lord Jesus
who is found in people's lives.

Our strength is the Holy Spirit
who is found among the works of our hands,
for and with the un-lovable.

Our strength is turning a cheek,
loving enemies, and
standing in solidarity with those
who are judged and discouraged
by the limitation of knowledge and power of the world.

A God who redefines our understanding of strength
is now sending us forth
to live the love we have found in Christ today.

Attributed to Seung Jae Yeon

Blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon us and remain with us always.
Amen.

The Boronia Park Uniting Church communications team who recorded and edited the videos, ensured all the videos ran as they should and designed the invitation and order of service.

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