



## Reflection by Rev'd Tony Meek

Bible Sunday  
Matt 24:30-35  
29<sup>th</sup> October 2023

I understand that the Greeks had four different words for love. Perhaps other languages have even more. Love is not as simple as it seems. It is not just a matter of feeling the right thing. The love that we read of in the Bible is not a cosy emotional feeling. We are commanded to love. We are expected to respond to the command. This can't mean that we are expected to conjure up the 'right' feelings, because you can't be commanded to do that. How can we be commanded to 'love'? Does it make any sense? But they must have got it wrong, if Jesus can say, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." And more so if Jesus can add, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

Jesus did seem to think that you could do something about loving someone, that love is not so much an emotion as a determination.

In all of the stories of Jesus talking about love, he tells people to do it: not to feel in a certain way, but to love despite what they may feel, to give themselves for the sake of others, no matter what. That's how Jesus could command us to love our enemies. It is possible because love is not an emotion but a willingness.

Love: not just a nice feeling, but a discipline; a way we are commanded to follow. The way of love is not an easy way either.

C S Lewis said, "Love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give your heart to no-one."

The people of God are commanded to love in a thoroughgoing way: to love God and neighbour with heart and soul and mind. And, frankly, we make a poor job of it. We can understand the words of the commandments. We can appreciate the examples of saintly people who have obeyed the command to love.

We can see that God requires us to love in real and active ways, that we should be stirred to deeds rather than tears. But however hard we try we never quite make it. Sometimes we think that Jesus might just as well have commanded us to feel an emotion; doing the deed seems just as difficult.

But surely the glory of Christ demands our homage, drawing it from us in a way that's impossible to escape.

Perhaps the same can be said about the way in which God and our neighbours command our love. If we see them as they really are, then we will not be able to keep ourselves from loving them.

We see what God is like in Jesus Christ. He loved us so much that he died for us.

His whole life, death and resurrection can do nothing but demand love from us. Commandments on their own are unable to stir us to loving action, but God can do it, and he did it in Christ.

Christ's love for us, and for all people, is what demands from us a response.

It is what enables us to hear and obey the commandments. God in Christ loves you. Go and love too. You can do it!