

**16 May 2021**

## **West Kirk of Calder & Polbeth Harwood**

By: Rev Dr Nanda Groenewald

Reading: John 15:9-17

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A couple of weeks ago Alison started her sermon with the words: 'All you need is love', so the Beatles said.

And then she said that now we will all probably be singing that song all day long... Well Ali, it's 2 weeks later, and I'm still singing it!

'All you need is love...'

*(Cat plays short chorus of this song)*

Loud and clear the Beatles sang these words, and the whole world listened.

They said: 'All you need is love.' And then... they broke up!

So love was not enough to keep them together. They said one thing, and did another.

And in our Scripture reading today, Jesus said that that is exactly what we shouldn't do – we can't say that we believe in him and then don't show it in our actions.

Words alone are not enough.

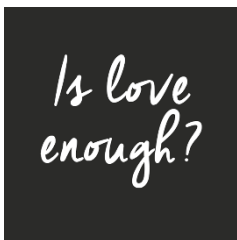
Today is Christian Aid Sunday.



And I would now like to show you a video of a woman called Florence, who lives in Kenya.

And as you watch this video, please reflect on what you think Florence would say about the statement: ALL you need is love.

*Christian Aid video clip: Florence's story.*



I think most people's initial reaction to this video clip would be: Love is *not* enough!

Florence and her community need *water*, for a start, and if they have water, they can get food, and if they get food, they can get money...

So love alone is not enough.

Or at least, that is what you might think if you are not a Christian...

But did you notice the big smile on Florence's face, despite her difficult circumstances? Despite the fact that not that long ago, she had to walk 6 hours a day to collect water – in her bare feet? Did you notice how she sings as she works?

She might be living in very harsh conditions, yet, she has joy in her heart. How is that even possible? It's because she knows that God loves her.

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Our circumstances might be nothing like Florence's, but we've had a difficult year too. Not because of the climate crisis, but because of the Covid-19 pandemic.



What did you find the hardest to cope with this past year?

Having to wear a mask? Having to wash your hands all the time?  
Developing dry skin because of all the hand sanitiser you have to use?  
The social distancing? The isolation? Maybe getting unwell, or even losing a loved one?

It's been a hard hard year, there is no denying that.

But you know, in Kenya, they have to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic on top of all their other problems! And we thought we had it bad...

Despite everything we have to suffer because of this virus, we are so lucky.

- Because we have soap and water readily available to wash our hands all the time! And where there is no soap and water, there is hand sanitiser, most of us even carry a small bottle of the stuff around with us all the time.
- *Lots of people in other countries around the world do not have clean water to wash their hands in, never mind soap or hand sanitiser...*
- We can all afford to buy or make masks.
- *In lots of other countries around the world people don't even have proper clothes to wear everyday, never mind having enough material left over to make trendy masks.*
- The fact that we can practice social distancing, means that we actually have enough room to stay far away from others.
- *In so many countries around the world a whole extended family live in a single room...*

We might be devastated by this virus, but we are still very fortunate.

We should say thank you that at least we have the tools we need to keep ourselves as safe as possible.

And before long all of us would have had 2 vaccinations against Covid-19, no questions asked. *There are people in other countries in the world that will never be able to say that.*

And you know, to hear about these things over the radio or to see them on the telly can be so upsetting. It can make us feel depressed.

And then what do we do? We change the channel. We scroll past it on our phones, because it's not our problem.

And that is where we are wrong. Because it IS our problem.



Jesus says that just like he remains in the Father's love, so we should remain in his love.

He doesn't *ask* us to love each other, he doesn't *request* us to love each other, he *commands* us to love each other! His words were: My *command* is this: love each other as I have loved you.

And how did Jesus love us? He gave his life for us. He put our needs above his own.

So let's love, by not scrolling or walking past those who need us, but by stopping, and doing something about it.



Mother Theresa said: Faith is action is love. And love in action is service.

And I think that is a brilliant summary of what it means to believe in God. That is what Jesus taught us. Our faith in God should make us love others. And the only way in which we can show others that we love them, is by serving them.

Supporting Christian Aid is one way in which we can do this. There are many other ways too. It doesn't matter *what* we do or *how* we do it, as long as we love others like Jesus loves us.

Now I know this might sound like a tall order. It might feel like too much – because if we really pay attention to what is going on in the world around us, we will notice that there is just so much need.

But we should never allow this to put us off – because even a small difference, is still a difference. And if every single one of us makes a small difference, it could have a huge effect!

True love, the love of God, IS enough.

Because through this love a dam was built in Florence's village. Which meant that ultimately, it was LOVE that gave her food, water and money.



So my conclusion is that the Beatles were right: All you need *is* love, but not love as the world understands it – the love of God.

Amen

### **Announcement about offering**

**Prayer (WK: Rhoda Lawton/PH: Rev Alison Quilter)**

**Hymn: Youtube clip: Come Thou fount of every blessing**

### **Blessing**

*Receive the blessing of God, and go in peace:*

Lord Jesus, we rejoice

that you have chosen us to be your disciples.

Help us to be faithful to you by obeying your commands.

As we go out into your world,

help us to live a life that reflects your love,

by being loving and kind to others.

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father Son and Holy Spirit be with you all, and with all whom you love. On this day, and forever more.

Amen

***Cat plays congregation out: All you need is love***