

Service for Week 31st Aug – 6th Sept

2026 By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Loving God, we bring you our broken world, racked by injustice and exploitation, suffering and sorrow, hatred and division.

Gracious God bring healing and renewal, finish your new creation among us: may your will be done and your kingdom come, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive them who trespass
against us. And lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory
for ever and ever.

Amen

Bible Reading Romans 13:8-14

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

The book of Romans in the New Testament is the letter that Paul wrote to the believers in Jesus Christ in Rome who were meeting in one another's houses. Paul sets out in his letter the way to live as Jesus taught. There is no evidence that Paul met Jesus but he did meet his disciples. Although the gospels were not written at that time it is thought that writings did exist - the 'sayings of Jesus' which were later used when the gospels were written.

Paul quotes the ten commandments which were given by God to Moses but goes beyond that to say 'Love your

neighbor as yourself'. This we find in Jesus' teaching in Matthew "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' The story that Jesus told of the Good Samaritan was an explanation of who was our neighbor -those that we know or we meet, especially those who need our help and care.

There are eight different words used to describe love in the ancient Greek language. The word used in our text is 'Agape' which means a selfless, unconditional love for others regardless of whether we know them or related to them. It is a desire to do the greatest good for them whatever the circumstances. As Paul puts it 'Love does no harm to its neighbor'.

Paul then goes on to describe how those early followers of Christ should prepare themselves as they go out into the community. He tells them to 'behave decently' and writes 'put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light' and 'clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ'. Paul is giving them a blueprint as it were of how to live their lives based on Christ's teachings.

In our society today, with 24hr news items on crime and violence in our local area and news of wars continuing

in several areas of the world Paul's words are so relevant to us at this time. Loving our neighbor does not mean accepting the behavior of those that use bombs to kill innocent people or who use violence for political or religious reasons. It does not mean giving in to the tyrant whether they are trying to occupy another country or being a bully in the playground.

It does not mean that we should be lenient in dealing with those that murder, rape or commit crimes. The Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi is reputed to have said "Hate the crime, not the criminal" and it was St. Augustine (424 AD) who wrote "With love for mankind and hatred of sins".

We live today in an increasingly troubled world and the recent threat of war is especially distressing for those who lived through the last World War. But Paul's words continue to show us how to live and gives encouragement, 'put on the armor of light' he writes. The light of God's truth that we learn through Jesus Christ.

Amen

Closing prayer

Lord of all, I pray for the victims of war across the world who bear the scars of conflict -lives blighted by the horrors of war. Grant that a time will come when people everywhere will live in harmony, in the name of Christ.

Amen

Prayers inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett