

Love as God Loves: Mission Impossible?

Being merciful as God is merciful is impossible for us. It's a bit like someone asking you to run faster than Usain Bolt. It's not going to happen.

However, the world needs to **love like God**. Leaders of powerful nations and governments can ignore weaker nations' valid struggle against aggressors. At the same time, weaker nations might not invest sufficiently in self-defence. Love takes responsibility.

The UK needs to **love like God**. People can be ashamed of some of the UK's past actions. It is right to apologise, and to make up for legitimate mistakes. However, it is as important also to identify and celebrate the UK's good values and successes. Love doesn't shame. Love encourages.

Families need to **love like God**. Many families can be broken. Family members sometimes do not speak to each other, refuse to apologise, or shun particular members. Love reconciles.

You and I need to **love like God**. You and I can shame, berate, or be overly critical of ourselves. God never shames us. Why do you and I do it to ourselves? Love heals.

We need to try, but we do not have power to always love like God. Jesus is the only one who loved like God. Mass is the celebration of you and I being accepted as beloved children of God, through praise and faith in Jesus. Jesus empowers us to **love like God**. How?

Show restraint - 1 Sam. – "I would not put out my hand against the LORD's anointed." If you feel attacked, it is ok to defend yourself proportionately. However, don't retaliate. **Restrain**. God didn't retaliate with you or me. Through Jesus death on the cross, He **restrained**. Everyone is anointed and precious to God. **Show restraint**.

Heal – Psalm: “the Lord forgives all your sins, and **heals** every one of your ills...” People need **healing**. God **heals** us from sin. God wants to heal the pain *behind* sin. St. Julian of Norwich said, “where God sees sin, He sees your pain.”¹ Luke 5:31, Jesus said the sick need doctors. Good doctors don't tell off sick people. Doctors **heal**. Jesus did not come to condemn. He came to **heal** (Jn. 3:17). You may be stuck in a pattern of sin. You may be in pain. Show God the pain behind your sin. His love **heals**. You may be hurt or angry with someone. Ask God to reveal their pain. Love them. Love **heals like God**.

Be human and heavenly - 1 Cor. – “Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.” People are **human** and **heavenly**. We are made in the image of Adam (our fallen first parent), and Jesus, the new Adam, the image of God. Be understanding of people if they fail - don't condemn. At the same time, don't settle for mediocrity. Aspire for people to become like Jesus: **human** and **heavenly**.

Do unto others ... Luke 6 – “as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.” Many non-religious people say that “doing to others what you would have them to do you” is a good way to live. Think: how do you want your spouse/partner, boss, work colleagues, children, parents, brothers and sisters, and/or friends to treat you? What's stopping you **doing the same to them** this week?

The world needs God's love. God's love is found in Jesus alone. But you, me, us, and the church are Jesus' body. God needs us to **love like Him**. There's a saying “the local church is the hope of the world.” [Repeat].

Receive Jesus in this Eucharist. Go into the world and **love like him**.

Show restraint.

Bring **healing**.

¹ “for it [sin] hath no manner of substance ne no party of being” and can only be known by the pain it causes’. Knowles, D. (1961). The English mystical tradition. Harper & Brothers. PP. 949–950

Be understanding of fallen **humanity**, and aspire to the **heavenly**.

Do unto others as you would have them do to you.

Prayer

Picture Jesus looking at you, loving you. He knocks at the door of your heart to come in.

Jesus, I invite you into my heart. Love me. Help me to love like you.

Help me to **show restraint**.

Heal the pain behind my sin. Help me to bring **healing** to others.

Let me be understanding of **human** weakness, and aspire to **heaven**.

Help me to **do to others** what I would want them to do to me.

Help me bring you to others this week for the salvation of the world and renewal of the church, in Jesus' name, amen!