

March 2025

Dear Friend in Christ,

On the 5th of March the holy season of Lent begins. Let's prepare our hearts this Lent with God's great love for us which can grace each of us with a lasting and sustaining hope no matter how dark and confusing our situation.

For God's love, look no further from the passage of Mt 6: 25-32. But we somehow let verse 26 just pass through without taking some time for that to settle in. Verse 26 says: *"Look at the birds of the air, they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"*

After Jesus gets us thinking about God's love and care for the birds by giving them everything they need even when they do no work on their own, Jesus switches His focus to the people and asks, *"Don't you think you're worth more than the birds?"* Don't we know that God loves us more than any sparrow? But what is Jesus trying to tell us? Is it because we don't recognise and care about it?

We all are able to believe in God's great love for us. Because in Rom 8: 35, 37 it says *"Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ"* even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted or lacking food or clothes.....Indeed we've been blessed with every blessing (Eph 1:3), gifts from the Holy Spirit to serve Him (1 Cor 12:1-11). But more importantly- all these gifts point to the central gift God gives, that is Himself. Isn't it amazing!

Yet we somehow missed this feeling of God's great love swelling in our heart even though we read so many revelations in the Bible. In Hosea 11:8 it says: *"How can I give you up...? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender."* In Zephaniah 3:17 *"The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; He will rejoice over you in gladness"*. There are many more.

God loves us because of who He is, not who we are! God's love flows from the fact that He is God. In 1Jn 4:8 it says *"God is Love"*. We can learn God's great love for us from the life of David. He was a man who is greatly loved by God and who returned God's great love so devotedly that he has been known as a man after God's own heart. (1 Sam 13:14). The more you and I are caught up in the great love of God, the more it will change our lives and revolutionise our world. We may not realise it, there is power in the great love of God. There is power in the love of God to transform our hard, selfish, and hateful heart into a soft heart that cares for others. Yes, there is power in the love of God, to turn even our most painful situations into experiences of joy.

However, most of us only just read and know and even confess the truth that God is love. That is about all. But this is not enough. God's love must matter to us personally. We must be changed by it. God's love must grip us. But of course there are certain types of people who may find it challenging to embrace the reality that God is love. One type is one who has been hurt or deceived by someone meant to protect or to love. Such hurt is not easily forgotten. Another kind is the selfish person who demand



that people love them by doing what the person wants. Such selfishness destroys authentic love. Such person needs to grow in their understanding of God's love.

Yes, everyone needs to grow in God's love. And we mature by allowing the words of Scripture to challenge us and move our hearts and our desires to a deeper, better place that we have been before. Note this- Our personal experience of God's loving embrace will only mature when it matches the description of the kind of love that we find in God's Word.

So dear friends in the dark times of our lives when we need forgiveness, comfort, or solace, King David reminds us that our God is a shepherd *"He restores my soul"* (Ps 23:3). Even when we face threats, taunts, or danger, our Heavenly shepherd loves us with His perfect protection: *"Even though I walk through the valley of-the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me...."*

Let's read these words to experience God's love in your heart and in a way you and I have not experienced before. It will be one of the most wonderful and comforting experiences of our lives. Try it. Let us have the desire to experience more of this love and to tell others about it.

Finally, know this- the best day of our life is when we are welcomed home to be with Jesus and experience the full, physical and permanent embrace of God. Death is our last enemy and serves as the entrance into a full and unmediated experience of divine love. We all will exist in His Love forever. It will be the best day of our lives.

Amen.