

COFFEE WITH CHRISTIANS



DISCLAIMER: This blog is the expressed views of the author only and may not necessarily reflect the official opinion of St Peter's Anglican Church. From time to time the author may provide certain links or references to other sites that she believes may be useful or of interest to you. The author does not control, endorse, promote, or have any affiliation with any other site mentioned. This blog or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the written permission of the author except for the use of brief quotations used in the context intended.

LOVE, LIGHT AND LIBERATION.

14 February 2017.

A devotional written by Jenny Duyster



Love is like a light in the heart. Love will often help you decide to do good over bad. Love is faith in action. We can say a million words to help people but often it is love and kindness that makes a difference. Living in a relationship with other people be they our family, friends, church or community will often lead to times when we fear the opinion of the status quo, in that we are tempted to forsake truth for acceptance. The trade off is that we are saved from ridicule at the cost of being untrue to God and ourselves. Dave Willis said, "*Don't worry about other people's opinions of you. God never told you to impress people; only to love them*".

If we love God with all our being then we should not live in fear.

There is no fear in love. But perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. - 1 John 18:19a, b.

Are we willing to stand for something or would we rather amalgamate into the passive sleeping consciousness of our current society and leave a legacy of deterioration behind?

Loving others does not mean we compromise truth or morality, or that we remain idle in doing what is good in God's eye, but it does mean that differences in opinion should never lead to hate. Hate is such an evil destructive force...it can spread like wildfire or it can subtly creep into hearts and take its victims as hostage, and by surprise. Hate takes but a few moments to master, love takes a life time.

We obey God not because we are mindless followers or spineless goody-two-shoes but because we love Him. *We love because He first loved us*- 1 John 18:19c. We want to do the right thing by Him and to our brothers and sisters in humanity and not only our brother and sisters in Christ. We want to do the right thing in looking after our living planet Earth. We want to do the right thing more out of love and respect rather than duty, ritual or tradition. We do it because we want to, not because we have to. When we obey God through love, we obey from our own will, and when our will turns toward the Will of God that's when we are transformed more and more into the likeness of Christ. When we obey God in all Truth (the Truth as

opposed to our truths) and demonstrate love, and not in piety or ego, we become a vessel of His work of which He can mould and use for His purposes. When we authentically follow and obey God in our heart of hearts, we get closer to Him and our relationship with Him becomes thus more evident. But God can never be limited to a definition as He is far more; our words cannot explain God because our thoughts cannot truly fathom God since God is spirit.

For *“God is not what you imagine or what you think you understand”*. ~Saint Augustine.
God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth – John 4:24.

God is not limited to the dimensional restrictions of created things. I cannot describe God. God is too infinite. Plotinus said, *“The finite is the shadow of God”*;

However aspects of God become understandable through obedience as well as through the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

To love God is not to be rebellious toward Him. Man’s misconception and distortion of God and what God requires of us can lead to rebellion. People blame God for all sorts of things when it has been man that has misled them. Even more, those who abuse others and justify it under God’s name are the provokers of rebellion in others.

If you only listen to other people about God and have a second hand relationship, rather than seeking Him first hand, you may be frustrated with your spiritual walk and become rebellious, or you may be a photocopy Christian looking good but not authentic. You may be seeking God outwardly through the Church or meetings, and while these are good, helpful and encouraging (and has its place in teaching, learning, Communion and worship) they are more on a material level for some people as for those people it is the placement of the body and the socialisation with others that may substitute seeking God from within. It may become a relationship with God through other people rather than through Christ/Holy Spirit. The commitment is from the outside. The outside of the cup may look spiritual and clean and sometimes even fancy, but if the inside (the part that is hidden from men) is unattended to, then why use that cup. It is the inside of the cup that is going to affect the quality of the water. It is the inside reflective man and his heart and soul that needs to connect with God and also connect with the wonders of nature, God’s magnificent creation.

I started following Jesus Christ since 12 years of age, (and before that I have always had an attraction and love for God) and people have asked the question- “Do you Know God?” I used to say yes. We are expected to know God in a day, a few weeks, years but the truth is that in my life time, I will only know bits of God. How can I totally know God, He is too big ... I don’t even know the “reality or totality” of my best friend; the inner circle of other people’s self where no one else enters so how can I KNOW God. KNOWing is the cup full, not half full or half empty. A growing love for God is to have patience in getting to know Him; patience and trust in His revealing of Himself more and more, when we can handle more, and as we are prepared for the next step. There also needs to be an open heart toward God, the acceptance that He might surprise us if we really desire to know Him for who He is and not who we say He is.

On what level do you want to know God? Is it on a superficial level, on a comfort zone/ own agenda level, on a club mentality level, or because you are really interested in who and what God is? People are at different stages and no judgement should be passed for that is part of individual growth.

Getting to know someone heart to heart takes risks depending on how deep you want that relationship. We might discover things about ourselves and God (and His people and those who claim to be) that we didn't expect which may lead us to re-evaluate aspects of our faith. We may find some things that we were told to be lies or parts omitted, and the agony in seeking truth can sometimes be too much to bear. Following God in spirit and truth is not a neat westernised evangelical package; it takes courage and it can be very messy – In fact you can be tested and challenged to the very deepest core of who you are and of your very existence but your love for God and the truth will persevere and God's love for you will overcome, and then there is no fear for perfect love casts out fear. You might go through doors God wants you to open fearing but you will come though fearless for the more you trust Him and grow, the more fearless you become. Seeking truth exercises spiritual boldness.

You finally realise that the wilderness or the darkness you had to go through was necessary to reveal the light in such a way as not to blind you. You know that the salt to your wounds were for healing. To understand light you must also acknowledge darkness.

Darkness cannot put out the Light. It can only make God brighter. ~Author Unknown.

Love is not pure emotion for emotion is circumstantial and emotion can be conditional but love is a virtue. Love is a persevered commitment through fatigue, trials, and disappointments and so on. One stays committed while going through the roller coaster of life, and at times our faith might revert back to that of a mustard seed but the mustard seed is still an anchor and will sprout and bloom again. And so it is with our relationship with God.

However, the roller coaster also involves the good and prosperous times and we need to also practice love and commitment at the highs. Why? Because one is more likely *not* to cling to the cross when one becomes more and more successful and everything is going splendidly.

True, authentic free flowing love does not exist without mercy and forgiveness, Sacrifice has a cost and risk. Self-sacrifice is not sacrificing others for our benefit, but sacrificing ourselves for others and ultimately for God; without blowing our own trumpet or seeking publicity. Taking up our cross daily involves time, it involves finances, it sometimes involves unpopularity and rejection (not just from unbelievers but also believers) however it involves love despite the opposition. Jesus Christ was an example of this.

The cross is a heavy responsibility but it is not a burden as Christ has lifted the burden. In fact the more people who carry their cross daily, the lighter the universal cross becomes...the more good, the more impact, the more of a ripple effect through out the world.

Loving God's way does not mean you are a pushover. In fact it requires a lot of strength; it involves wisdom and understanding, not just knowledge, and perhaps is part of the truth that will set you free. ☒ JMD.

When we lose God, it is not God who is lost. ~Author Unknown