

Love God with all your strength

Pitt Street Uniting Church, 4 November 2018

A meditation on the Gospel of Mark

by Cynthia Coghill, Liz Watson, Robyn Floyd and Gillian Hunt

Pentecost 24B

**Ruth 1: 1-18; Mark 12: 28-34; Contemporary Reading:
Women Doing Theology in Latin America by Ivonne Gerbara**

This reflection can be viewed on You Tube at <http://www.pittstreetuniting.org.au/> under "Sunday Gatherings" tab

In this reflection, you will hear poetry, there will be silences and a time to sit and sing.
A meditation on the Gospel of Mark.

"God, our God, is one."

God is One

The universal Oneness, in which we are all connected to every living and created being.
All are our neighbour.

It's a big ask. If loving everyone and everything seems too big an ask, can we begin in
our journey towards the oneness that is God by respecting our interconnectedness to
everything, by recognising the One God in us all?

You must love the Most High God with all your heart, with all your soul,

Taize chant "Ubi Caritas"

....."and with all your mind"

Known A Blessing by Jan Richardson

A blessing and a prayer

First
we will need grace.

Then
we will need courage.

Also
we will need
some strength.

We will need
to die a little
to what we have
always thought
what we have allowed
ourselves to see
of ourselves,
what we have built
our beliefs upon.

We will need this
and more.

Then
we will need
to let it all go

to leave room enough
for the astonishment
that will come
should we be given
a glimpse
of what the Holy One sees
in seeing us,
knows
in knowing us,
intricate
and unhidden
no part of us
foreign
no piece of us
fashioned from other
than love
desired
discerned
beheld entirely
all our days.

© Jan Richardson. janrichardson.com.

Prayer for ourselves.

Holy and ever-present God,
grant us minds that honour truth-
seeking,
that celebrate the power of reason
and the miracle of human self-
awareness.
But grant us also minds that are open
to
mystery, miracle and myth,
and to the richness of good metaphor.
Help us to live with the important
questions
about our faith,

and about how to live abundantly, in
the here and now,
and not be daunted.
And, in all our searching, yearning and
risking,
in our acceptance of the uncertainty of
our lives,
in the recognition that there is much
over which we have no control,
help us to trust you
and know
we are in safe hands.
Amen

by Elizabeth Watson

....."Love God with all your strength"

How free do we feel to abandon the safety and certainty of rules, and step into the uncertain realm of love? To commit all our might and strength to love. In this realm of love there are no boundaries on our responsibility, and no points at which we can limit love. It is to enter the realm of Spirit "not far from the Kingdom of God". In a sense, the conversation between Jesus and the scholar and us, ceases to be a theoretical discussion, and points to a way of being.

Adapted from writings of Andrew Prior (on line commentator in Text Week website for this reading)
<https://onemansweb.org/the-interpretation-of-love-mark-12-28-34.html>

I found a poem by Elizabeth Ramage. Elizabeth was observing children and dogs at the beach, I'm sure you too can conjure a picture of the water's edge and children and dogs absolutely absorbed in their experience of the vast, powerful, delightful, frightening, refreshing ocean.

This is her poem, **Mollymook Beach**.

Dear God, you are my sea, and I must be your child, your dog-
I will jump in the sea of your life
With both feet and make a big splash!
I will run, barking, and dig for fragrant fish
in your sands of promise.
I will play with your ripples
and make channels for you to flow through.
I will turn my back to your breaker
and let it knock me down, and tumble me,
and throw me laughing on the beach.
I will reach out for your voice in the stillness.
I will fossick for treasures
In your sunlit places.
I will float in your peace.
I will swim out into your depths
Until I drown in you.

From Elizabeth Ramage: November 1985 (*The Poetry and musings of Elizabeth Ramage p137*)

© Pitt Street Uniting Church office pittstuc@bigpond.com)

Taize Chant – Ubi Caritas.....

.....The second is this: ‘You must love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Doing Love: a Poem by: Kathy Galloway (*Love Burning Deep*, 1993 SPCK London)

In trying to understand and make sense of what is involved in this reading, about loving God with our mind, our strength, our heart – and finding ways to love our neighbour as ourselves, at times, poets seem to bring us close to discovering a meaning that is almost unable to be grasped. So Kathy Galloway describes “doing love”.

There’s only what you do.

Everything else is inside your head.

But what you do is an expression

Of who you are

And what you know.

And what you do covers a multitude of sins.

You do your tone of voice.

You do the way you cross your legs.

You do the spaces around you.

You do the silences between your words

as well as the words themselves.

You do the songs you sing.

You do the cup of tea you made your mum.

You do the way you spend your money and the way you didn’t spend it.

You do the love you make

and all the love you didn’t make.

You do the atmosphere you change in the room.

You do the rocking of the baby in your arms.

It’s what you do that carries me to you and you to me.

But, as already noted, what you do is the expression

of who you are

and what you know.

If who you are feels wrong, or not worth much,

scrunched up in a miserable little ball,

It goes without saying that what you do will mirror that.

And what others receive

will mirror that.

And what others do you will receive much the same.

And if you think that what you know is useless

or not enough, or not important enough

then what you do will either be under your capacity to do

or will be done more to convince yourself that no one else

has noticed what you don’t know.

The thing is

you’re all right. Like all the rest.

You’ll do just fine.

And what you know, till you know more,

is quite enough

to do love.