**Generous God - Generous living**

We love and serve our generous God, how could we not? Look at what has happened over the past weeks since we celebrated Christmas; Jesus Christ, the Son of God, willingly set aside his Divine nature to be born on earth as one of us, a tiny human being. He called people by name to follow him as he began a short three years of preaching and teaching about the love of God. He went to his death betrayed by one of his friends, deserted by the rest of them, except the women. That suffering, that death was for us, was for you.

All the sin, the wrongdoing, the hurts we inflict on others, the ignoring of God, our defiance in deciding to do things, and to live life in our own way that did not and does not honour the love of our Generous God for us. I wonder if we take God for granted. Do we simply take what he gives us, the resources and talents and simply consume them with little regard for the fact that it all comes from God’s generosity?

There is a saying which goes like this ‘*You can give without loving, but you can’t love without giving’.* On several occasions throughout the year there are occasions that are specifically aimed at showing our love for others, Valentine’s Day comes to mind as do birthdays and presents at Christmas.

Our Gospel reading this morning speaks of love and gifts from God. Love is a complicated feeling, and yet Jesus tells us “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” We are reminded of what is expected of us in the Gospel of Mark where Jesus says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength,” and, “‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Jesus tells us at the beginning of the gospel reading that if we love him, we will keep his commandments. But there is more, we will have the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, who abides with us and in us. The Spirit speaks to us and inspires us to live for God in everything, in who we are, the way we order our lives to be more Christlike.

We love and serve a Generous God and as our understanding of that love of God for us grows, our hearts respond by sharing that love in so many ways. Paul, speaking in Acts shared his love for God by speaking at the Areopagus in Athens and explained God to them in his own words and a way that answered their questions.

We love and serve our generous God, how could we not? Think for a moment about the slide we show each week for the Collection of our Offering to God*, “All that we have and all that we are, originates in God’s generosity. All things come from you O Lord, and of your own do we give you”.*

God loves us and gives us gifts, the gift of a life lived with him for all eternity, the gift of love and of loving, of caring for others, wanting to help people less fortunate than ourselves, wanting our church to keep growing in love and service and worship. The month of May is our Gift Month where we think about all that we have received from God and how to share what we have. We will bring our gifts to God at Pentecost, be it the gift of some time, of sharing our knowledge, our gift of music, our gift of finances.

Next week we’ll take a look at how we might respond to God’s generosity but for today, I simply want you to think about the generosity of God, reflect on all that you have been given, entrusted with.

All that we have and all that we are originates in God’s generosity.