

## **Message 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1 John 1:1-2:2 'The light of love' – Alise Trendall**

I don't know about you but this passage got me thinking about the age old debate of good vs. evil. This past year we have watched a lot more TV than we normally would do, to pass the time during lockdowns. I've been struck by how complicated plots can be these days. No longer is the main character either a total goodie or baddie, they are a mixture of the two. Gone are the days when the sheriff brought the bandit to justice or the military stunned the space monster and order and peace were restored. We all knew who we could trust and whose side we were on back then. Now it can sometimes feel that the characters and the plot twists necessitate us sitting on the sofa, watching the box with popcorn in one hand and a notebook in the other to ensure we don't get lost! Certainly with the return on Line of Duty this is true! But I don't know about you, but I find myself drawn to these more complex characters who show their flaws who ultimately want to make the right choices but have an internal battle to always behave courageously & honestly, who always choose goodness. Characters a bit like Peter in the Bible, as Matt has been exploring this Easter in previous services. I think the internal battle of good and evil is one we can all identify with.

But this passage reminds us that there is an ultimate goodie. God is light, in him there is no darkness at all. There is one person who is unchanging, who we can trust and rely on and that is God. The only down-side is that as I read this passage I notice that those of us walking in fellowship with God are called to walk in the light and that as the passage says "If we claim to have fellowship with him [God] and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth" oh dear it appears like the only possible baddies in this passage is us! Living in continual darkness, always choosing wrong, but claiming to be without sin - we make God out to be a liar - that is not a good place to be, the passage speaks harshly to us saying God's word is not in us. But before you throw up your hands and say what sort of message is that? Where is the encouragement - well there is plenty, so bear with me!

God is well aware of the internal battle we all face. But despite that, I love the fact that we are referred to as "dear children". God doesn't distance himself from us. Those of us who have spent any time around little ones know that unlike Jesus who lived the perfect life, children are neither born perfect or evil. They enter the world with gifts and strengths as well as weaknesses and flaws. They often learn to say "mine" and "no" far more quickly than "please" and "let's share". Most of us veer between good and evil on a daily or maybe hourly basis and this passage ultimately reminds us that we are all salvageable and redeemable, there is not a line that once crossed means there is no way home. We are all dear children whose Father God waits with open arms to welcome his children home, however long they have been away. "If anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the father - Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sin". So whilst the great encouragement is to walk in the light, there is a comfort in knowing that as flawed "dear children" we can be forgiven when we fail to do so. Even eyewitnesses of Jesus needed to hear this - that there is a way to be made right again with God, through Jesus. He is every hero combined. He willingly carried the sin of all the world on the cross. Judged by a just God, paying the price and freeing us from the punishment. Delivering us from the darkness and restoring our friendship with the God of light.

Jesus smashed the barrier that kept us and our darkness distanced from the perfect light of God. As he died, the curtain in the temple was torn in 2 from top to bottom, symbolising that God through Jesus had made a

way for all of us to enjoy full and direct access to a loving God. There was now no longer a barrier. So what is our response to that wonderful news?

We tell others. That's the other important message of this passage. It's mentioned a number of times. "We have heard, we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched" - those first eye witnesses who lived alongside Jesus - they are giving testimony to their own experience of Jesus. They proclaim him. Why? Is it for their own good?...The passage tells us it is so that WE may have fellowship with them and with God. And they share the good news to make their joy complete. Having experienced the fellowship of God and with his Son, Jesus Christ they are compelled to share it with others.

Today who could you tell of the wonderful news that we have fellowship with God, forgiveness of sin and fellowship with each other. Surely that is wonderful news in a culture that has been cut off from so much and has experienced this past year so much isolation. Let's tell others of the love that we can find as "dear children" trying our best to walk in the light. We may even find our joy complete.

As I close, for all of us ping-ponging about between goodness and just a little bit of badness, there is encouragement that we will find mercy through our Saviour. Let's choose again, and keep choosing each day to walk in the light, to enjoy fellowship with God and each other. And let us thank God that nothing can separate us from his love. Amen