

Only Love conquers hate

Keppel Bharath

March 31, 2019

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Scriptures today for reflection:

| | | |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | Psalm 32 | (On Screen RESPONSIVE) |
| New Testament | 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 | |
| | Luke C6 verses 27 – 39 | |

Organ Prelude selected by organist

Gary Postma

Welcome

Today March 31 is the last day of March 2019. I look forward to the warmer months.

Welcome one and all to worship here at St John's.

Whether you are a member, an adherent or a visitor you are welcome.

Come and meet me after the service so I can extend the right hand of fellowship to you.

Announcements

Call to Worship

on screen

L: The Lord be with you.

C: AND ALSO WITH YOU.

L: To those who eagerly come to worship God,

C: You are welcome here.

L: To those who grumbled about coming,

C: You are welcome here.

L: To those who are not sure why you are here,

C: You are welcome here.

L: In the name of the One who loves and forgives us,

C: You are welcome in this house of worship. Thanks be to God!

L: Come let us worship GOD on this the day that he has created for us his people.

OPENING HYMN: #634- Will you come and follow me

John Lamberton Bell was born in Scotland in 1949. He was a member of the Iona Community, a broadcaster, and a student activist.

He worked throughout the world, lecturing in theological colleges in the UK, Canada and the United States, but is primarily concerned with the renewal of congregational worship at the grass roots level.

Bell studied at the University of Glasgow where in 1974 he was elected President of the Students' Representative Council. His election represented a significant development as it was the start of a few years' control by the left wing of the SRC.

In 1977 he was elected Rector of the University of Glasgow while he was still a student.

After a period in the Netherlands and two posts in church youth work, Bell became employed full-time in the areas of music and worship with the Wild Goose Resource Group. He is a past convener of the Church of Scotland's Panel on Worship and also convened the committee to revise the Church Hymnary.

In 1987, he wrote this hymn will you come and follow me. Indeed a simple sentence but there are a lot of things to accomplish.

In 1999, Bell was honoured by the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Royal School of Church Music which bestowed a Fellowship on him.

In 2002, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Glasgow.

Let us sing together #634 Will you come and follow me.

Prayer of Approach and Adoration

Unison on the screen

Almighty, creating God,

You have called us to this place of worship.

You breathe life into us each day.

You welcome us just as we are,

With all of our hopes and fears,

All of our faults and talents.

As we worship, may we rest in your spirit,

And may we remember that you alone

Renew our lives.

Help us shake off all that weighs us down,

That we may be free to hold fast to you,

The One who fills our lives with unmerited grace

And abounding love.

In the name of Christ your Son, we pray,

Our Father ... (debts)

And now we continue in celebrating people of the world by hearing the Lord's Prayer in :

Hebrew Dr Eenkhorn

And Korean

So we have now heard the Lord's Prayer in English, French, Spanish, German Hebrew, Dutch and Korean.

Next time I preach Clement you are on Deck along with any other volunteers

Children's Hymn : #434:For the beauty of the Earth

For the Beauty of the Earth" is a Christian hymn by Folliott S. Pierpoint (1835-1917).

Pierpoint was 29 at the time he wrote this hymn .

He was mesmerized by the beauty of the countryside that surrounded him.

It first appeared in 1864 in a book of Eucharistic Hymns and Poems entitled "Lyra Eucharistica.

It was written as a Eucharistic hymn - hence the title of "The Sacrifice of Praise", the refrain "Christ, our God, to Thee we raise, This, our sacrifice of praise", and as is seen throughout the original text of 1864.

The text was more radically modified by the publishers of "Hymns Ancient and Modern" for the 1916 Hymnbook, so it could serve as a general hymn.

Focus on the beauty that surrounds here in Cornwall and all around God's grand Earth.

Let us sing Hymn #434

Time with the Young and Young at heart

Today is March 31. So how do you remember the months and how many days they each have .

When we were young we had to learn this by a small rhyme

30 days have September

April June and November

All the rest have 31 you hear

Except February which has 28 or 29 in a leap year

When we were young we learned all things by Rhyme and some of them were really funny.

I had a little frog his name was tiny tim

I put him in my bath so that he could swim.

He drank all the water and ate all the soap

And when he spoke a bubble came from his throat

Its raining its pouring

The old man is snoring

He bumped his head

and went to bed

And could not get up in the morning

So we had to learn all of these rhymes by heart and that was supposed to make us smart .

I know it did not work I my case.

What these rhymes did do was to allow us to imagine and memorize things.

At a recent seminar in Toronto I asked the class what date it was . They all looked at their phones.

They did not have watches. I felt so old.

Anyway God gave us a large brain and he wants us to use it everyday . So please use it.

So let us say a prayer .
Heavenly father above
Shower us with your love
Help us to be patient and trusting
Good hearted and loving
Keep us safe in your arms all of today
And help us to be friendly as we play
Amen

Thanks to Rev John Crowdis who showed me how to write Sermons in prose

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Song of Illumination

#384 : O breath of life come sweeping through us

Bessie Porter Head was the youngest daughter of Tobias Porter, manager of John Alexander's flour mill in Belfast. Of her early life nothing is known; but in 1894 she became secretary of the YWCA in Swansea. She then served with the South Africa General Mission from 1897-1907, mostly in Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and Johannesburg, helping to found several branches of the YWCA.

With the chairman of the Mission and a fellow missionary she toured North America in 1906-7; her intended return to South Africa in November 1907 was cancelled in favour of marriage, on 17 December, to the chairman, Albert Alfred Head (1844-1928), a wealthy - and generous - insurance underwriter who had been widowed three years previously.

With her husband she continued actively to support both the SAGM and the Keswick Convention, with which the mission was closely associated. She was a frequent speaker for both organizations and a prolific contributor, in prose and in verse, to their publications.

A collection of her writings, *Heavenly Places, & Other Messages*, was published in 1920.

Invariably known as Bessie Porter before her marriage, she later styled herself Bessie Porter Head. After her husband's death in 1928 she moved into the SAGM house in Wimbledon, where she died.

The Scriptures

Responsive Psalm : PSALM 32

Old Testament

New Testament : [Luke 6 Verses 27- 39](#)

Reader : This is the Word of the Lord

Responsive: Thanks be to God for His Word to us.

Hymn of the month #100 I'll Praise you, Lord

Sermon ONLY LOVE CONQUERS HATE

I have been given the strength to put together this message by our Father in Heaven who gives us all the strength and power of thought to reflect on the message that I his servant will deliver. AMEN.

This past three weeks was quite a shocker to the people of New Zealand and most of the people all around the world.

How can someone be filled with so much hate that they go out to mosques and when the people there are congregating for their prayers, they kill them.

Our world is hurting. We are fragmenting. What is happening to God's world

We are more than that. We are a spiritual organization devoted to healing a hurting world.

What happened to the thought of caring for each other, looking out for each other and protection of our brothers and sisters?

So let me ask , how do you deal with your enemies?

Do you just avoid and ignore them, hoping that you outlive and outlast them?

Maybe you secretly hope and plan and pray for bad things to happen to them.

Or maybe you gossip about them, spread lies about them, turn them into the police when they do something wrong, and pray that God will punish them for their wicked ways.

This is how most of the world operates toward enemies. We go to war with them. We plan and plot their demise.

We rejoice in their failures and mourn at their successes.

We write letters, make phone calls and muster up support among our friends.

Well all of this is not working so we have to STOP.

When we sing “They will know we are Christians by our love” we should really sit down and think what that means.

Today everyone seems to be mad at the world. We’re mad about movies, the media, the militant movements...of...gays and lesbians.

We’re mad about crime on the streets, and drugs in our neighborhood. We’re mad about education, the impact of society upon our children etc. etc.

As Christians the Bible tells us to be the salt and light in a sinful world. We are called to speak out boldly with prophetic voices calling people to repentance.

But all of this must be presented with compassion and concern.

Truth must be spoken in love. We must be people full of grace and truth.

Our culture must know us as truth-tellers not as tellers of alternative facts that we twist to meet our intentions

When we interact with our enemies, it must not be out of hate and spite, but out of love and compassion. This is Christ’s example and instruction.

It is the instructions of Christ on how to treat others that we encounter in Luke 6:27-38.

This passage falls near the beginning of one of Christ’s famous sermons in which he instructs His disciples on how to live as His followers.

The last time I delivered a Sermon here at St John’s, I spoke about the Beatitudes from the Plateau and I promised that I would return with your attitude towards others. Here it is.

Now remember that the Beatitudes were the Instruction Manual for Christ Followers. So if you wanted to follow Christ this is what you need to do.

They contain truths that Christ practiced and lived by, and as imitators of Christ, what we also should live by. If we were going to summarize the entire sermon down into three words, they would be: “Attitude is everything!”

As we worked our way through that sermon, we found that it turns our world upside down. Christ gives us some commands and some principles which are practically impossible to carry out consistently.

As I have wrestled and struggled with the news in the last few weeks, Jesus is trying to show us that law keeping is all about attitude. Attitude is everything.

Throughout history, people have imagined that they are keeping the law if they simply do what it says.

Jesus preaches this sermon on beatitudes to show us that keeping the law is not so much about outward actions as inner attitudes of the heart.

If you don't murder someone, but you hate them down to the depths in your heart than you have not lived up to the teachings of Jesus in Luke 6 20- 27.

Today we describe an attitude of the heart that expresses itself “positively when others are negative, and generously when others are selfish.

It is an inner disposition.

In Luke 6:20-26, Jesus wanted us to develop an attitude of trust toward God in our circumstances.

Now we move from talking about our attitude in our circumstances to our attitude toward other people (Luke 6:27-38).

Whether we are interacting with friends or enemies, Christians or non-Christians, our attitude toward other people should be to love them.

We do not have problems loving the friends and family we get along with.

It's the rest of the people and even family members or other Christians who seem to hate us.

And these people are out to cause us harm.

These are the people that Jesus focuses on in Luke 6:27-38.

He provides instructions on loving those we would rather hate.

Jesus Christ shows us what our attitude should be toward those we would rather hate, and how to develop and live out that attitude.

But today I would like to say to all of you: Love your enemies.

The first things to consider is who are your enemies.

Let's begin with who they are not.

Rulers and those in authority are not our enemies. They have been set up by God to administer justice and keep the peace.

We may not agree with everything our Prime Minister stands for, or every decision that he makes, but he is not our enemy.

Nor are people whom God brings into our lives to point out our faults. Sometimes God uses other Christians to show us where we err.

But as Proverbs says, wounds from a friend can be trusted. Do not hate those who lovingly and gently point out your weaknesses, but let them guide you into a more Christ like living.

People who disagree with us on some of the finer points of theology are not our enemies either. We may argue with each other. We may debate. But we are not enemies if we all hold to the basic tenants of being a Christian.

A Christian believes in the Scripture, the deity, humanity, sinlessness and bodily resurrection of Christ, the Trinity, and salvation by grace alone through faith in Christ alone.

Just because some people are our enemies does not mean we should not love them. We are supposed to love all people – the pastors, and parents, politicians, and policemen who give you tickets for speeding on 2nd street and those who speak with prophetic voices into our lives. That's not our enemies.

Our enemies are those who purposefully seek our ill-will.

They have bitterness and hatred in their hearts against us.

They do not seek our good, but only what is evil. It is these people we are to love.

Loving our enemies goes contrary to what feels right or normal. Loving our enemies is a challenging thing.

But understand what the word love means. It comes from the Greek verb *agapao* which is unconditional love. Hence the AGAPE Centre.

This means that we show love to them – no matter what – even if they remain our enemies for life.

Now loving our enemies does not mean we support them in what they do, or agree with them, or even necessarily become good friends with them.

Loving our enemies' means that when they hate us, we love them in return.

It means that the cycle of hate, the cycle of revenge, and the cycle of retaliation stops with us.

You can be angry at a person for what they do, and yet still love them.

Jesus is our best example for how to live out such principles.

As you read through the Gospels, notice how Jesus loves his enemies. Take Judas for example.

Jesus wasn't ignorant of who Judas was or what he was going to do, but Jesus loved Judas anyway.

Notice how Jesus interacts with Judas. He never slights Judas or has an unkind word for Him.

It seems at times, that Judas gets better treatment and more special love from Jesus than some of the other disciples.

This is the same example we see from God.

I believe that God loves Satan. He doesn't love the things that Satan does. He doesn't love the rebellion that Satan leads. He doesn't love the horrible results of Satan's actions. But I do believe that God loves Satan.

The principles of Scripture lead to this conclusion. Furthermore, Romans 5:8 says that God demonstrates his love for us in that while we were sinners.

God reconciled us to Himself through the death of Jesus Christ his only son.

Loving our enemies is foreign and backwards to the way our flesh operates.

It is only by divine help can we learn to develop an attitude of love for our enemies.

It must be stressed that the emphasis is on love.

Sometimes, you will be forced to choose between loving a person, and doing what Jesus says.

For example, Jesus says in Luke 6:30 to give to everyone who asks you.

Parents all know that sometimes it is not always possible to give their children what they ask.

This is the same way God treats us and the same way we should treat others.

What if a drug addict asked you to give them money so they can feed their addiction? In that case, it might be unloving for you to give them money.

Now today there are a lot of people that are looking for Love in many places and they wonder around chasing the wrong things.

They busy themselves doing things that they think are important to them and they get frustrated when they do not find what they are looking for. LOVE.

While reading Tuesday's with Morrie , I saw that Morrie Schwartz brought meaning to life by devoting himself to loving others.

He also devoted himself to his community or by tried to help his students and or people in need around his University.

This gave his life meaning and purpose. The principle is that love has no limits but itself.

Now in Luke 6:27-28 we find exhortations to loving your enemies. Now Exhortation is derived from the Latin verb hortari meaning to incite. These exhortations or words of encouragement work both ways.

They both help us develop an attitude of love for our enemies, and as we do them, they reveal an attitude of love for ourselves.

You have all heard that if you're feeling depressed, one way to cheer yourself up is to smile. The outward and physical act of smiling somehow causes an inner attitude change from depression to joy.

I don't know how it works, but it does. Sometimes we smile because we are happy, but other times, we smile in order to become happy.

On a personal note, I always whistle happy songs. I may be sad when I start whistling but within a few moments my sadness turns to happiness

How often have we heard from couples who are getting a divorce that "they just don't love each other anymore"?

What they mean is they don't have feelings of love for each other anymore.

And what you will hear from many marriage counselors is that love isn't a feeling, it's a choice.

That is true, but I'll tell you what, it's the feelings of love that keep a marriage exciting and enjoyable.

The choice to love keeps a marriage together while feelings of love keep it exciting.

So although love is a choice, it is also a feeling and you need to stay in love with your spouse.

Well if you are married and you have lost the feelings of love for your spouse, the best way to get it back is to do loving things for your spouse.

Sit down, and think long and hard about what you did as a couple when you were dating or when you first got married.

What enjoyable things did you do together? Then, when you have five or ten things jotted down, – go do them! Go to Dairy Queen on a whim.

And do not keep score as in a football game. My wife reminded me that there are no winners in a marriage that keeps score. Everyone loses.

The action of doing loving things will eventually produce an inner feeling of love.

Maybe your enemy is another person in church. Or a person on your street.

Whoever your enemy is, I doubt very much that you feel love toward them.

So how do we generate love? We don't do these things because Christ told us to, and we're going to follow the letter of the law.

No, we do them to develop a genuine, heart-felt love for all of our friends and our enemies and that turns back on to us.

The first practical way to develop love and show love to our enemies is to do a good deed for them.

Christ says at the end of Luke 6:27, do good to those who hate you.

Does this mean that we are to do good to a criminal when he tries to rob us? No, it does not. Although God may love Satan, He does not aid Satan.

Our mercy to our enemy must not be so far extended as to expose us to the mercy of that enemy.

Let's just consider a few examples of how to do good to our enemies.

Do you have a boss you can't stand? Show up early, stay late, work extra hard. Send him a note of appreciation.

Is there a person from a completely different culture who you may know, well invite them over to dinner and prepare food from their culture and just see how appreciative of your efforts they would be.

Jesus says to do good for our enemies. Do you have an enemy? Pray and think this week about what good you can do for them.

But the question is why does Jesus want us to do good to those who hate us?

This is a question of motivation. Why would we even think of helping someone who only wants to cause us harm?

Well in helping them or showing them your love we start to befriend them and thus we destroy our enemies by making them our friends.

Shocking, isn't it? Yet this is the same thing Jesus teaches in Luke C 6.

Do good to your enemies not to bring more judgment upon them, but simply to show love for them.

Some of you may say that very rarely does doing good for someone who hates you cause them to start loving you.

Sometimes doing good for an enemy will cause them to become a friend, but hating and harming an enemy never has.

So it is better to do good for them, even if they continue to hate us.

We must do good to those who hate us for one reason and that is to show love to our enemies, and doing good to those who hate us will display to them the love of God.

And maybe if we show them the love of God, they will experience something they have never experienced before, and will want more of it.

And they may come to us, or they may turn to the Bible because they know we are Christians and live according to it, and they will learn of God's infinite love for them.

We show love to our enemies because that is what God has done for us when he wanted to bring us into His family.

So hopefully, they may be brought into our family.

I am convinced that one of the reasons so much evangelism fails today is , people cannot see the love and grace of God in their lives and actions.

Forget showing love to our enemies for the moment, most of the time, we don't even show love to our own brothers and sisters in Christ.

What is we as a whole group be more effective in completing the Great Commissions of making disciples of all the nations.

What if we were more effective at carrying out the great commandment of loving God and loving one another?

Love God, love one another, and love your enemies.

Do you have an enemy? Love them. How do you develop this love?

Do good for them. As you do good for your enemies, the amazing miracle of divine love will blossom in your heart for them.

Now don't forget about those that you love. We have the capacity to do both

In December of 2018 Michele's father Horace , a man whom I have grown to adore came to spend a few days with us and when he arrived .

I immediately reached out to him not as my Father in law but as a person . I cooked for him and made coffee for him and took him to the Gym and on nature walks with Tobi my dog.

When he returned to Ottawa he told everyone that I treated him like a Prince. As he started to lose his memory his wife started to show flashcards of the family to stimulate his memory. Well he remembered me as Keppel and Michele as Keppel's wife.

I succeeded in making his stay with us enjoyable, unforgettable and I gave the love that God has given me, to him. And he in turn relayed that to everyone he met. That my friends is the circle of life.

This is not news but this is the reality of sharing Christian Love.

And to Him whom we owe all that we have we show all honor and glory as he continues to shine his love on us and bless us all. AMEN.

WE RESPOND IN FAITH AND SERVICE

Offering and Offertory

**I will share God's love – Don Besig and Nancy Price
Duet Keppel Bharath / Michele Alexis**

Doxology on screen

Thank you for these gifts that we have received from your bounty. Help us to use them wisely to continue doing your work here at St John's or elsewhere in your universe.

We ask these things in your name AMEN.

Pastoral Prayers, Thanksgiving and Intercession Finish on Mar 30 2019

Father in heaven please hear our prayer. We come today before you a broken and sad people. We have been fed on your Word, been refreshed through your readings and our songs of praise to you which allows us to feel the encircling of your Spirit around us as individuals and around our Church .

Help us to take care of each other as you have shown us in Luke 6 Verses 27-34. We come from different paths and will return in different paths but as we cross paths each day help us to continue to know your presence and power in the very different lives that we lead, to your praise and glory.

May the Father's hand keep us from stumbling, the footprints of Jesus give us confidence to follow, and the fire of the Spirit keep us warm and safe as we walk with God this day and every day.

Please pray for the people of New Zealand who have been dealt a very dark blow . Please pray for the people of the world

As we take leave of worship, praise and prayer from this place and head into our daily lives, may our lives be sustained through the love of you our Heavenly Father. May we feel the presence of our Saviour walking beside us, and know the power of the Spirit in both our actions and our words. May God's Word be in our hearts. May God's Word be on our lips. May God's Word be in our touch. May God's Word be the life you live. We ask these things in your name AMEN

Closing Hymn

#760 where cross the crowded ways of life

Frank Mason North was born in New York on, Dec. 3, 1850. He graduated at Wesleyan University 1872, and entered the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church 1872. In 1892 he became Correspondence Secretary of the New York City Church Extension and Missionary Society, and then the editor of The Christian City.

He was a member of the New York East Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and served several pastorates in New York State and City as well as one at Middletown, Connecticut, 1887-1892. During the years 1892-1912, while Corresponding Secretary of the New York City Extension and Missionary Society and the editor of The Christian City, he was also Corresponding Secretary of the National City Evangelical Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church. From 1912 to 1924 he was the Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of his church and through these years he served as Chairman of its Executive Committee. He was also Secretary, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and President of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. It was largely through his efforts and influence that the Federal Council was organized.

In this one of my mother's favorite Hymns Dr North states that only when human hearts have learned your love and followed where your feet have trod will we see the glories of your heaven above.

Let us sing #760 where cross the crowded ways of life

Commissioning (Unison) on the screen

In the power of the Holy Spirit we now go forth into the world to fulfill our calling as the people of God, the body of Christ.

The Benediction

May the love of Jesus Christ bring us wholeness,
the grace of God the Father grant us peace,
the breath of Holy Spirit instil passion
and the unity between them give us strength as we leave this place of worship.

Amen

Choral Benediction: We are Here Joined in Christ **on the screen**

The Postlude **chosen by Gary----**

Thought for Today

As we look ahead to receiving our new minister, may we listen with open hearts for God's call in our lives.

Thank you for worshipping with us today. Take a moment "to like" us on Facebook

Screen announcement – may run from time to time
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS IN THE HOSPITAL?
Please advise Rev. Johnston or the office staff

Were you away last Sunday?
The worship service is available <http://sjpc.podomatic.com>

SCREEN ANNOUNCEMENT - for frequent use:

DIRECT DEBIT If you are considering make your gift to ST. John's through the direct bank payment, please contact the office for further information and the necessary documentation. Direct Debit is a safe, secure means to ensure your investment in St. John's is made each month

Luke 6 27 – 39

Love for Enemies

²⁷“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³²“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Judging Others

³⁷ "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

5:9 The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal

5:10 While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho.

5:11 On the day after the Passover, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain.

5:12 The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Psalm 32

32:1 Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

32:2 Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

32:3 While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

32:4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah

32:5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah

32:6 Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.

32:7 You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. Selah

32:8 I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

32:9 Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.

32:10 Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.

32:11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

5:16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way.

5:17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;

5:19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

5:20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

15:1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him.

15:2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

15:3 So he told them this parable:

15:11b "There was a man who had two sons.

15:12 The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them.

15:13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.

15:14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need.

15:15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs.

15:16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.

15:17 But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger!

15:18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you;

15:19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'"

15:20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

15:21 Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

15:22 But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe--the best one--and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

15:23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate;

15:24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

15:25 "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.

15:26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on.

15:27 He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.'

15:28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him.

15:29 But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends.

15:30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!'

15:31 Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.

15:32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"