

Saturday Evening Liturgy

(Accompanied by “New Wine, Fresh Skins! Evening Prayer Saturday Website Slides.pdf”)

Evening Prayer (“About God’s Love”)

Saturday, 22 April 2023 19:30

OPENING PRAYER (Slide 1)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

STORY: “A Conversation at Bedtime” (Slide 2)

Author Unknown

Drew, Tipster, and Tease were camping together as they had done many times in the back garden outside Tipster’s house. Tipster’s family owned a small sheep farm just at the far edge of town where the fields and hedgerows opened towards the next village several miles away. Drew and Tease liked to come and help Tipster with the farm chores, and explore the countryside, and talk about things, and eat the cakes Tipster’s Mum usually offered them. And every now and then they would stay and camp as they were doing now.

It was a brilliantly clear night, and despite the chill they had turned their mattresses to stick out of the door of the tent so they could lay looking up at the stars. It being quite late, the curtains in the house windows had all been drawn, there wasn’t too much glow from the town lights, and the embers from the instant barbecue Tipster’s parents had given them for their dinner had well faded. The moon was down. There was never much noise from town traffic passing the farm, but it, too, was dropping away.

All of the sudden, taken by the spectacle, Drew kind of blurted, “Don’t you think the stars are amazing!”

“Yeah, sure,” Tease answered. “They’re not usually this bright and as many.”

“No, what I mean is,” Drew responded, “they’re always there. They’re amazing when you see them like this, because during the daytime they’re still there just like this, but you can’t see them at all, right? You can only see blue sky. Or clouds. Imagine if you lived on Earth only for one day like one of those mayflies, and it was in the daytime, you would think, ‘Oh, the sky is blue, that’s it.’ If someone started talking to you about the stars at night time, you wouldn’t know what they were on about.”

“That’s like God, then,” said Tipster. Tipster had a habit of saying things like this.

“Explain,” Tease challenged.

“Well, if you think about it, first of all, when we do think of God, we usually think about God way up there like those stars, far away. There, but far away. But then a lot of us, when we get busy going about and doing stuff in the daytime, don’t think of God at all, can’t even see him. And yet God is always, always there. It’s like it takes some darkness to notice God.”

“I just thought of something, Drew,” said Tease, “it’s true what you said about not seeing stars in the daytime. But it’s the same the other way as well. Think of all you would never know and might never believe about the world if you only ever came out at night. You can’t see colours at night.”

Just then a shooting star sped in a long arc almost from one edge of the sky to the other. It was impossible to miss it.

“Whoa!” shouted Drew.

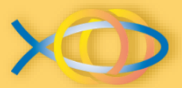
“And another one bites the dust,” added Tease.

“I watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven,” said Tipster.

“Man, Tipster, you do say some stuff,” said Tease.

“Jesus said that,” Tipster replied, “it’s in the Gospel. Seeing that shooting star made me think of it.”

“Yeah, but, like...well, it’s a bit of a conversation killer, isn’t it?” said Tease.



"I don't know," said Tipster. "I suppose so. You tell me."

"Terrible to be lost forever like that," said Drew.

"What I can't work out," said Tipster, "is why God didn't throw the whole thing away and start again. You know, after Adam and Eve. No—what I mean is, you have to admire that God didn't throw the whole thing away and start again. Actually, that's not right, either. What I really, really mean is, it tells you something about God that he didn't just throw the whole thing away and start all over again."

"Now I'm really not following you," said Tease.

"Sometimes when my Mum makes bread it goes wrong," Tipster answered. "You need a lot of things to go right making bread. Like, when you mix the water with the yeast, the water can't be too hot or you'll kill the yeast. Or if it's not hot enough, the yeast won't get started. Or if the yeast is too old, it won't get started. If there's too much salt, you'll kill the yeast. Often you can't know if everything's all right until you get near the end, and the dough either rises or it doesn't. And if it doesn't, Mum just bins the whole lot and starts all over again. God didn't do that. God never does that. That's not how God works."

"God spends millions and billions of time making everything there is, step by step. Just when it gets to the main point of the whole process, that's where it goes wrong. Not a little wrong, a lot wrong; poisonously wrong. With my Mum, it'd be, 'In the bin!' Instead, with God, it's, 'I know what to do about that.' Like in the Gospel, 'God so loved the world....'"

"Heavy," Tease said.

It took a while, but Drew spoke next. "Tipster, you know what you make me think of? I'm thinking about that story Jesus told about that woman who swept out all her house for that lost coin. That's like God. God knows exactly everything he made and everything that belongs to him. It could be a whole potful of coins, his whole collection of new ones and old ones, different countries, dented ones, worn ones, if it slipped from his hands and smashed all over the floor, and maybe some disappeared down cracks, he would know exactly what was missing and wouldn't stop till he had every one back. I suppose we call it love, but for God it's just how God is, Tipster, and we can't make him stop. Whatever we do, he'll keep believing we'll come back. And I think God has his own way of believing that tends to make things true. Not like, 'You have to do this' but...hmmm...hard to resist."

After that there seemed less to say. They kept watching the stars high above, but their attention began to lapse as drowsiness crept over them. Then they were asleep, surrounded by the buzzing and chirping and cooing noises native to the night. It was only after several hours that they woke again. By then, light had already come, enough so that all around at eye level they could see wonderful things and colours we know by day: blades of grass, flowers in the garden borders, darting flies, and one of the family cats washing its face. But the stars up above could no longer be seen.

RESPONSORIAL SCRIPTURE READING (Selections from John 3, John 15, 1 John 3, 1 John 4) *(Slide 3)*

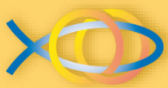
All read the antiphon aloud together at the beginning and at the end. For the intervening verses, half of the group reads aloud together the first line of each verse (marked "A"), and the other half responds by reading aloud the following line (marked "B").

What I command you is to love one another

- A. Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children
- B. And that is what we are

- A. Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son
- B. So that everyone who believes in him may not be lost, but may have eternal life

- A. God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son
- B. So that we could have life through him



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- A. This is the love I mean: not our love for God
- B. But God's love for us when he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away

- A. My dear people, let us love one another, since love comes from God
- B. And everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God

- A. Remain in my love; if you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love
- B. Just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love

- A. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you, and your joy be complete
- B. This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you

What I command you is to love one another

Our Father, who art in heaven...

Hail, Mary...

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

SONG: "O Love" by Elaine Hagenberg (Slide 4)

<https://www.elainehagenberg.com/o-love-satb>



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