

Wednesday 1st April.

I often feel inadequate but this last week has made it even more so as my inadequacy is at a distance from the ones who might appreciate my presence, however inadequate that presence might seem. On a shopping trip to Tesco, whilst wearing my dog-collar, there were a couple of occasions when people asked me to pray for people in the situation we find ourselves.

Did the presence of a dog-collar give comfort to some as a reminder that God is God and God is in the present however horrible that present might seem.

The story of Holy Week, which we are approaching, is a story of God moving from celebration, through isolation, doubt and abandonment, through pain and suffering, mockery and ridicule, through the cruel death on a cross until there is an empty tomb and initially bewilderment of mystery.

As I sit writing this on Passion Sunday afternoon much of the last 36 hours has been spent with tears in my eyes, or just held back, as I have been apart from those in need, as I've heard of those in pain.

I want to be with the hurt and they want someone to be with them – but who can go to the needy?

The pain of separation is the pain of love; the pain of separation is the pain of God.

I must not form God in my image but I am formed in his. If I feel pain from being separated from those who suffer how much more is that true of the God of Love and grace.

Psalm 118 was a Psalm sung by the people as they made their way to Jerusalem for Passover and it begins with a triumphal statement of truth: - (A Psalm for Palm Sunday)

¹ O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever!

That is a truth statement regardless of what we see around and about us; yes indeed, despite the pain and suffering, the isolation and separation, “the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures for ever”. So much of that truth has been expressed by thousands of people in our land who would not proclaim to be people of faith, yet rising from within is that desire to express love to others rather than to cause hurt or pain.

There, at the heart of each person, is the spark of love, the presence of God.

“Let the flame burn brighter, at the heart of the darkness” (We’ll walk the land) wrote Graham Kendrick “Hearts are waiting, longing aching, for awakening, once again.”

May this time help us who know Christ’s love, help others to know the source of the love at the heart of each of them: that they might make a full connection with the source of, and the enormity of the power, of love.