

# Mike's message .....

## A grace filled Lent .....

One of my favourite poems is "Love bade me welcome" by George Herbert. Writing in the early 17th century, Herbert's poetry was written with ingenious use of imagery.

During Lent we'll be looking at the theme of Grace; God's love that transforms us. We'll be using Victor Hugo's 'Les Miserables' as the background to our Lent meditations (previous knowledge of the book is not essential).

Lent meditations will be on Tuesdays at 11.00am and Wednesdays at 7.00pm in church.

Although written two hundred years after Herbert's 'Love bade me welcome' there is the common theme of God's abundant welcome and our response. The poem is a dialogue between the character Love (God revealed in Christ) and ourselves. It speaks of God's acceptance of us even when we are unworthy. That is the Lent and Easter message, a love that is greater than our understanding, greater than our expectations, greater even than death itself.

Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back,  
 Guilty of dust and sin.  
 But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack  
 From my first entrance in,  
 Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning  
 If I lack'd anything.

"A guest," I answer'd, "worthy to be here";  
 Love said, "You shall be he."  
 "I, the unkind, the ungrateful? ah my dear,  
 I cannot look on thee."  
 Love took my hand and smiling did reply,  
 "Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord, but I have marr'd them; let my shame  
 Go where it doth deserve."  
 "And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?"  
 "My dear, then I will serve."  
 "You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."  
 So I did sit and eat.

George Herbert (1593 - 1633)

May the grace of God transform our hearts and minds this Lent and Easter.

Mike Claridge

