**What Kind of Love?**

URC Daily Devotions – 14th February 2021

From Psalm 31:

*Empty, broken, lifeless*

*I give my spirit, Lord.*

In you, O Lord, I take refuge.

Let me never be put to shame

In your Justice rescue me.

Redeem me, O faithful God.

I am the scorn of all my enemies,

a horror to all my friends.

Like the dead, I am forgotten;

like a broken and useless vessel.

My fate lies solely in your hands.

My Father, deliver me!

O Lord, I say, “You are my God.”

I place all my trust in you.

Let your face shine on your servant

and save me, O Lord of love

All who wait for the Lord:

Have courage, be strong, find hope!

Shannon Cerneka and Orin Johnson

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Today is Valentine’s Day…

For many, it’s a day of flowers, chocolates, special gestures of love. But why all the effort?

How does it feel to be on the receiving end? How does it feel to be the giver?

Even whilst I affirm and coddle a special someone over here, do I deliberately, thoughtlessly, or inadvertently contribute to hurting some removed ‘other’ – making them feel unloved, unvalued, unappreciated?

Instead of - or alongside – our one-off gestures for a ‘loved one’, what if we made an ongoing commitment to all?

Today is Racial Justice Sunday - and Valentine’s Day seems a perfect opportunity to consider the significance. Who is included/excluded? Who is loved/not loved? Accepted/not accepted? Honoured/not honoured? Respected/not respected? Who counts enough for us to consciously take time and effort to consider them and raise them up?

There are many in our communities and world who are waiting - seeking justice; a better fate.

Many who find themselves scorned, overlooked, rejected – simply for being who they are.

People whose talents are undervalued. Denied. Abused.

Voices crying ceaselessly – ‘In you, God, is my refuge. In your Word. In your promises. In you alone I find my strength.’

Many people have long been awaiting their earthly salvation. Could now be their time?

Could today be the day we consciously listen for the voices we too easily ignore? The day we affirm the God-given worth of every individual, of every heritage and background? The day we actively seek God’s face mirrored in individuals and communities whom the world – and we ourselves - have scorned and broken and deemed useless?

Today is Valentine’s Day. It is Racial Justice Sunday. Let us (re)commit ourselves to an active love – rejecting racism, sexism, homophobia and all the many points at which injustice intersects. Let us raise up, honour, value and love – without barriers, without limits.

**Time to Love**

God of love,

You love without limits.

You reach across barriers,

Overcome every obstacle,

So that nothing can separate us

From your love.

In our most desperate moments,

In the midst of our anguish,

In the throes of our helplessness,

There you are, with your love.

You lift us up,

Honour and affirm,

Provide strength and refuge

As a sign of your love.

Intensely personal,

Yet all-embracing;

Move us to love

Just as you love.

**Amen**