**Monday 20th July**

1 John 3: 23, 24

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: we know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Throughout the New Testament, when God’s commandments are distilled out into their most basic form, there are two things that come to the fore:

**Love God, Love others**

That’s the basis of what God requires of His children. In today’s verses from 1 John, we read ‘believe in Jesus’ and ‘love others’. And yet those few words can be so difficult for us! Believing in Jesus doesn’t just mean giving mental assent to His existence. It means believing in such a way that we will stake our lives on Him. When Blondin asked the watching crowd whether they believed that he could cross Niagara Falls on a tight rope, they all roared their agreement! But when he asked if any would put their life on the line by allowing him to push them across in a wheelbarrow it suddenly went quiet! The story goes that it was only Blondin’s mother who truly trusted him enough to volunteer. When we say we believe in Jesus, is it with the kind of faith that trusts him with our lives?

Similarly, with loving one another. How can we love each other in deed as well as in word? There have been many lovely examples of people reaching out to others over these past months. There have been opportunities to express love in different ways.  But the Word of God and the example of Jesus challenge us greatly because we are called to love our enemies, to love the unlovely, and that is not easy.

Believe in Jesus; love others. So simple, and yet so difficult. But we are not alone. As John writes, we have ‘the Spirit He gave us’ – God’s empowering presence - to work the character of Jesus in our lives.

*Father, please help me to believe in Jesus in such a way that it impacts everything I do and say and think and to love others in the way that He taught and modelled. Lord, I recognise that I need you in order to be able to live this way. Please fill me afresh with your Spirit. In these days, may I grow in faith and love to your praise and glory. Amen.*

