**Week 3 Video**

**Open our Hearts to your Love**

Recently I was introduced to an album called “The Anarchy Arias”. It is a collaboration between the English National Opera, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Glen Matlock, who was in a famous punk band in the 1970s. These songs are the punk, new wave, and rock songs that I would listen to as a teenager, but played by a wonderful orchestra and sung by talented opera singers. What isn’t there to love about that?! Well, in one particular way, it misses the mark and misses the point. These songs were brash protests against problems that still exist in our society, and now they suddenly seem tame. In this new setting, even the lyrics just don’t have the radical and shocking punch that they had in the 1970s, and much of the power and protest has now been lost.

When I was considering what it means to open our hearts to God’s love, I was reminded of the Anarchy Arias. For two thousand years, Christianity has been known as a faith of love. Jesus’s teaching on love, not to mention his life of love, has inspired groups and individuals to challenge the status quo, to stand up for those are oppressed, to speak for those with no voice, and to lay down their lives for those in need. Yes, people like St Francis, William Wilberforce, Corrie Ten Boom, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa; but also countless other nameless people who lived out the sacrifice that Christian love demands of us. This call on our lives is radical and revolutionary and it bucks the prevailing individualistic and materialist worldview in today’s world.

The reality is, though, that we’ve probably heard the phrase “God is love” countless times by now. And it’s easy to hear things so often that we just get used to them. The power and inspiration can be drained away from even the most life-giving and profound messages. Just like the Anarchy Arias, Christian love can become something bland and staid, worse still it can become sickly sweet and saccharine.

So, this week, let’s try and recapture something of the radical and revolutionary thing that is Christian love. Imagine that you’ve never even heard of Jesus. And then someone explains, first, that the creator of all loves you completely, unconditionally, so much so that he would die for you. This is a huge comfort. And then they go on to explain that, because God’s love is for **all**, we’re not simply called to put up with one another, or like each other when it’s convenient, but to ***love*** one another. This is a huge challenge. So, this week, embrace the comfort; feel his deep, unwavering love for you. But also embrace the challenge; in whatever way you can, reach out to others in love, help them in practical ways and reassure them of their ultimate worth.