



God is Love?

2017 is only a few weeks old, but I am sure I am not the only one who has suffered bereavement and experienced perplexing situations—things which can make you start to wonder whether God really cares for you. Why does he let things happen?

What is Love?

February needs its traditional Valentines warm-up, to take our mind off the mist and mud. But what IS love? The ancient Greeks called love "the madness of the gods." Modern psychologists define it as the strong desire for emotional union with another person, and like a force of nature which can not be commanded, demanded, or taken away.

A free emotion?

The psychologists go on: love is bigger than you are. You can invite love, but you cannot dictate how, when, and where love expresses itself. You can choose to surrender to love, or not. You can even find yourself loving people you don't like at all. Love is inherently free. It

cannot be bought, sold, or traded. You cannot make someone love you. Love can be defined as a measure of selfless give and take.

Love and pain

So where does this leave those of us who believe God IS love, that God loves us as individuals, and wants to be involved in our lives, in a relationship with us? I think all of the things I have quoted from the psychologists are true of our relationship with God. He won't force us to love him, but he loves us despite what we are like. How does he show it, in this broken, painful world? The fact that the world is broken is too big to cover in these few lines, though the Bible says we can look forward to a time when it will no longer be like this. But for now, Isaiah 43:2 says, 'When you pass through the



"I don't want someone who sees the good about me, I want someone who sees the bad and still loves me."

waters, I will be with you'. Note that he says 'When', not 'if'. This world is full of pain. But God is with those who choose to accept his love. Why not look for a relationship with God this year?

Margaret Hobbs is from
St Thomas's Church, Oakwood
www.st-toms.org.uk

