

## Reading

1 Peter 3:1–9

*You should all agree among yourselves and be sympathetic; love the brothers.*

A reading from the first letter of St Peter.

- 1 Wives should be obedient to their husbands.  
Then, if there are some husbands who have not yet obeyed the word,  
they may find themselves won over, without a word spoken,  
by the way their wives behave,  
2 when they see how faithful and conscientious they are.
- 3 Do not dress up for show:  
doing up your hair, wearing gold bracelets and fine clothes;  
4 all this should be inside, in a person's heart, imperishable:  
the ornament of a sweet and gentle disposition  
— this is what is precious in the sight of God.
- 5 That was how the holy women of the past  
dressed themselves attractively  
— they hoped in God and were tender and obedient to their husbands;  
6 like Sarah, who was obedient to Abraham, and called him her lord.  
You are now her children, as long as you live good lives  
and do not give way to fear and worry.
- 7 In the same way, husbands must always treat their wives  
with consideration in their life together,  
respecting a woman as one who,  
though she may be the weaker partner,  
is equally an heir to the life of grace.  
This will stop anything from coming in the way of your prayers.
- 8 Finally: you should all agree among yourselves and be sympathetic,  
love the brothers, have compassion and be self-effacing.
- 9 Never pay back one wrong with another one;  
instead, pay back with a blessing.  
That is what you are called to do,  
so that you inherit a blessing yourself.

The word of the Lord.

# Looking at the Text

N-12 1 John 3:18-24

*Our love is to be something real and active.*

## The first letter of St John

This letter reflects on many of the themes of John's Gospel — including light and darkness, living as God's children, and specifically, the greatest commandments of faith in Jesus and loving one another as he loves us. In keeping these commandments, we will share the life that Jesus himself shares with the Father. This is a great mystery, beyond words and understanding — it is the mystery that is made real in the ordinary everyday living out of love that God, who is love, enables us to do.

### In this passage

We hear that our love is to be real — not just talk. And our conscience will help us to discern if we are living out this real love. If we can feel 'at peace' in our conscience — our hearts and minds — peace that we are living in a loving way, we are probably getting something right! St John says we can ask God for all the help we need to live out our love, knowing that God pours out the gift of the Holy Spirit for just that purpose.

## Reflecting on Scripture together

*Use the 'Reflecting on Scripture together — a simple way' in the introduction 'Choosing your Wedding readings'.*

## Further Reflection

*Following the 'slow reading' process, here are some questions for further reflection:*

- What does it mean for our love not to be just words or mere talk? Talk together about the many different ways you can and do make your love for one another real.
- What do you think about 'conscience' — how would you describe it? How does it work?
- How do you know you are living out real love? And how do you know when you are not?
- God is love and wants to help us live in love. What sort of things would you like to ask God's help with in your own relationship? For now? And for the months and years to come?
- You may like to pray the last sentence, repeating it together a few times: *'We know that he lives in us, by the Spirit that he has given us'.*