

**Mother's Day 27th March**

*For this session we step away from the series for a special focus on Mother's Day.*

**Reflect back**

- Are there stories to share about our generosity this past week?
- What particular part of Sunday's message spoke to you?

**Review the teaching**

Sarah Yardley based her talk on Deut 32v9-12

V9 - We are treasured, found, surrounded, guarded by God - He protects us.

Reflect on your earliest childhood memories, then your earliest memories of faith. Have you experienced the hope and joy of Jesus? Recall your first encounter with the Holy Spirit. Know that we are treasured daughters and sons of God.

V10 - God finds us when we're in the wasteland. "Wasteland" is a good description of life without Jesus.

Ps 43v1-2 Our souls thirst for the living God. TS Eliot wrote "The Wasteland" as a reflection of war and the death of his father and describes an empty soul. *"What are the roots that clutch, What branches grow Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, You cannot say or guess, for you know only, A heap of broken images, where the sun beats, And the dead tree gives no shelter, The cricket no relief. And the dry stone on sound of water... I will show you fear in a handful of dust."*

But God comes to find us - Jesus seeks and saves what is lost. We are "the apple of his eye". This means intimacy. We see our reflection in the eye of another as we look "nose to nose" like a child toward their mother. We need to spend time with Jesus and know his kindness towards us.

V11 - God loves me as I am but loves me too much to leave me as I am. Breastfeeding is a good analogy of God providing what we need as breastfeeding can provide:

- Sleep hormones for a baby to go to sleep.
- A natural interaction from baby's saliva to mother's skin that can provide the nutrients a baby needs.
- Anti-bodies for illness.
- Skin to skin contact to soothe baby, regulate heart rates and develop bonding.
- An intimacy and closeness to mother.

We can compare the above with the tenderness of Jesus:

- Soothes my troubled soul, for "He gives to his beloved sleep." Ps 127v2.
- Provides all the nutrients for my growth, "feeding me with knowledge and understanding." Jer 3v15.
- Brings healing to my places of disease and unrest, mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. Ps 103v1-5.
- Gives tender mercy, like the sunrise from heaven to bring joy to my soul. Luke 1v78.
- Develops my intimacy and closeness to God, who shows his goodness and loving kindness in salvation. Titus 3v3-5.

V12 - It is God alone who guides us. We are to have no other gods for our God is a jealous God.

**Realise the value**

- How can we encourage one another to feel treasured, loved and protected by God?
- What do we do when we feel we're in the "wastelands"? (Be honest!)
- How do we react to comparing intimacy with God to breastfeeding? Is it a good analogy? What analogy would you use to describe intimacy with God?
- Are there any in the Collective who feel in a wasteland? How can we pray for, and support them?