

## Talk Easter 6 2020 John 14: 15-21 and Acts 17: 22-31

In our confession a few minutes ago we washed our hands, or we watched Hannah wash hers.

I really miss using my hands to give people, outside of my household, a hug when they need it. I also miss sitting with people who are ill and holding their hand.

What have you been doing with your hands this week?

In our house we have been using our hands to do lots of things – I have been doing lots of writing, despite not having green fingers I have been growing some bean plants, Charlotte has been doing some sewing, we've clapped the carers and key workers and we have all done things around the house like the cooking. I've also helped out by transporting food from St Andrews' Street Baptist church to the hostels where some of the homeless are now staying. As you can see, we were protecting our hands by wearing gloves.

St Paul in his speech to the Athenians was telling the people about God's hands. He was speaking at the Areopagus, which is a kind of court and here is a modern-day picture of the Areopagus. He was telling people who didn't know about Jesus all about God. He said that God does not live in temples made of human hands. And perhaps that is a good reminder for us in these strange times when we are not able to go to church. The Greeks had lots of temples, dedicated to different Gods, Zeus, Appollo, Athena. And in the temples there were images, or statues of these Gods made by human hands, some with expensive decorations of silver and gold, which the Greeks worshipped thinking that they were really God. But Paul told them that the world and everything that is in it was created by God's hands. God doesn't require us to worship a statue made by humans, doesn't need humans to do anything for him, after

all it is God who gives us everything we need – life, breath and all things.

Jesus tells us that if we love him we are required to keep his commandments, to love God and to love other people. And when we serve God we don't do it to earn God's love, because we can't make God love us any more than God already does. We keep his commandments out of love.

Think about your family. Why do you do some of the jobs that nobody likes to do, maybe it is putting the bin out or doing the ironing, we do them because we love each other and we want to do things for them

The same is true with God, we do things because we love God and want to do things for God, to serve God.

But we don't do things by ourselves, Jesus also said in the gospel reading that we have just heard, that even though he was going to go away he would send the Holy Spirit, the Advocate.

An advocate is someone who is called to be with us and to help us. Nowadays in the legal system as well as the health system people may have an advocate, someone who can be with them and help them especially if there are difficult decisions to be made.

It is the advocate, HS that makes Jesus known to us, who teaches us and continues Jesus' work in the world today.

And we are called with the spirit's help to be part of that work – to keep God's commandments by showing our love for God by doing what to we can to help others. And in doing so we share God's love.

That is what charities like Christian Aid do. They share God's love with the poorest people in our world by providing aid where it is needed, shelter, food and clean water and helping run projects which lift them out of poverty. CA also fights against injustice in our world. They work as an advocate for those who do not have a voice in our world. As Paul says God had made people of all nations to inhabit the Earth. God created all of human kind and all people deserve to be treated fairly.

There are lots of ways that we can use our hands to serve God and to share God's love with others, even though we are all socially distancing and many of us are still self-isolating. If you haven't already done so, you might be able to raise some money for Christian Aid, or you might be able to use your hands to make something for someone else – a card or a picture to cheer them up, or write a letter to let them know that they are not forgotten. So, this week, if you love God, how are you going to serve God and to share God's love?