

Just as we did last week, we have to put the reading from St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians into the context of its time. This context was that Paul was expecting the Lord Jesus to return at any moment. For what they're worth, I'll give you my thoughts about this. Paul give us a choice of A or B. Socrates used this trick in his philosophical arguments: A or B? Yes or no? Black or white? But there are many shade of grey in between black and white. Devoting yourself to the Lord's affairs and loving your husband or wife are not mutually exclusive – and they're not meant to be. The creature is not in competition with the Creator. One reveals itself in the other. All the signs and hints and revelations and experiences of God's presence that I have ever had, have been through other people. Inevitably. And what are the 'Lord's affairs'? The first and most important of them must surely be loving and serving others. Imagine how the parable of the sheep and the goats would sound if it went like this:

“For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not come to see me.

And they answer: ‘But we couldn't, we were devoted to the Lord's affairs!’”

Love always seeks to express itself, to share and reveal itself – otherwise it isn't love. The Creator seeks to express, share and reveal himself in creation. The

extraordinary, the transcendent and the divine seeks always to express, share and reveal itself in the ordinary, the indwelling and the human. This is the meaning of the Incarnation: it is why there were animals as well as angels in the manger. It is why St Paul cried out: 'Not I that live, but Christ in me...' (Galatians 2:20)