**Sunday, May 9th, 2021**

**Psalm 98 & John 15:9-17**

6-year-old Lindsey was drawing pictures as she sat at the kitchen counter,

          while her Mom was getting dinner ready.

"Mom, there are five things I want to be when I grow up," said Lindsey.

Mom asked: "Really? Five things? What are they?"

“I'm going to be a doctor, a professor, a movie star, an artist, and a singer.”

Surprised Mom said, "You want to be all that?"

"Sure," said Lindsey.

“What about being a Mom?”

Lindsey thought for a few minutes and then said:

“I don't know.      I think that's too hard for me.”

Well, nobody ever said being a mother was easy.

Today is Mother's Day, a day when we remember our mothers,

          and all they did for us, through the good times and the difficult times.

It is a day for mothers to remember just how important,

          and often difficult, raising children can be.

May the memories bring us joy and laughter and gratitude,

          for all mothers everywhere.

God loves and cares for us so much He wants us abide in His love.

We know this, and yet so often we wander away.

Imagine if God wrote a letter to you – you personally –

          to show you how much He loves you.

I had to write to tell you how much I love you and care for you.

Yesterday, I saw you walking and laughing with your friends.

I hoped that soon you would want me to walk along with you, too.

So, I painted you a sunset to close your day,

          and whispered a cool breeze to refresh you.

I waited, but you never called.

So, I just kept on loving you.

As I watched you fall asleep last night, I wanted to touch you.

I spilled moonlight onto your face,

          trickling down your cheeks as so many tears have.

You didn't even think of Me, But I wanted so much to comfort you.

The next day I exploded a brilliant sunrise into glorious morning for you.

But you woke up late and rushed off to get your "To Do" list finished.

You didn't even notice I was there with you.

My sky became cloudy, and My tears were the rain.

I love you, if only you would notice how close I am to you.

If only you would listen and come closer to me.

I really love you.

I try to say it in the quiet of the green meadow, in the brightness of the blue sky,

          in the dazzling colors of the flowers, in the cheerful song of the birds.

The wind whispers My love throughout the treetops.

I shout it to you in the thunder of the great waterfalls.

I warm you with the clothing of My sunshine,

          and perfume the air with nature's sweet scent.

My love for you is deeper than any ocean,

          and greater than any need in your heart.

If you would only realize how I care.

If only you could learn to walk along with me,

          if you could learn to abide in my love, always:

          when things are going well,

          and when everything seems to be going wrong,

          then perhaps you would notice the difference it makes

                   when we walk together.

Then my love, and peace, and joy, will be in you

I will always love you, no matter what.

But I hope you will abide with me always, and experience my love.

          With all my love, your Heavenly Father.

God gives us His gift of love.

But it is up to each of us to choose how we use this gift,

          how we will share it with others.

God has given us His commandments so we can experience

          a wonderful new way to live and enjoy life.

His commandments are just that: commandments.

They are not hints, or suggestions, or stray thoughts.

They are His commandments.

He wants us to pay attention and obey them.

Not because it will change how He loves us,

          but because it is how he wants us to live,

          and experience His love.

God experience great satisfaction and pleasure when we come near to Him,

          and obey His commandments.

Psalm 98 is such a happy Psalm.

It encourages us to sing a new song to the Lord,

          and to shout with joy to God.

The sound of horns and trumpet are meant to enhance the celebration.

But then it declares that even the rivers can clap their hands,

          and the hills ring out with joy.

When we imagine such a spectacular celebration,

          it is difficult to remain grumpy, and downcast, and fearful.

Then we are prepared to go out and bear fruit, fruit which will last,

          as we celebrate God's great love,

          and as we love one another.

AMEN