

January 20 to 26

Essen District

As the Law was given through Moses, so grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ.
(John 1:17)

Simply to be loved as you are

I recently spoke to a friend of mine who had been the pastor of a free-church congregation for 10 years. Rich and eventful years, but nevertheless a time which he described as being under constant pressure. There are many people who would describe their lives as “under pressure” whether in their job, in their family life or even in their free time. Not least on the issue of faith do many feel that pressure is put upon them. They feel the expectation to do everything “right”, to keep all the rules and to do the right thing for everyone. Worse still, they live a life that should also be all right for God. Hardly possible! God is perfect, I don’t even come close. God is loving, sometimes I am. He is compassionate, I am perhaps now and then. How could anyone reach the mark, so as to be glad about such a life with him?

It is exactly with that in mind, that this statement from John speaks to us. We have known the power and the expectations of the commandments since the days of Moses. But to be forgiven, and to be surrounded by the unconditional love and kindness of God, is something which only became a true reality in Jesus Christ. You don’t need to be successful, “right”, or to live without fault in order to breathe freely and to be loved. You can now breathe a sigh of relief, because God has taken this burden from off your shoulders. He loves you as you are, and unconditionally. Through Jesus grace has become true.

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I GIVE THANKS

- for this unique opportunity to live a life both liberated and redeemed
- for the churches and services in which I can both celebrate and experience this with other brothers and sisters
- for having the chance to take this „different thinking from God“ into my own neighbourhood

I PRAY

- that our services may become more and more places where this freedom and redemption is found
- that I increasingly succeed in taking responsibility for things out of love and gratitude instead of through obligation and pressure
- that a new enthusiasm may infuse both life and church with a passion to bring this „different thinking from God“ into the world

Essen District

The churches in the Essen District are situated in North Rhine-Westphalia, Northern Hesse and West Thuringia. This is an area with a very varied culture, landscape and local economy. It includes the Rineland, the Ruhr conurbation as well as the hill country of East Westphalia-Lippe and Thuringia. The 34 churches have a total of 3400 confessing members.

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