

TITLE AND NUMBER: 68. Love your enemies



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Luke 6:27-36

[Jesus said,] "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

What does this Bible passage tell us?

This passage is probably one of the most difficult passages to come to terms with and is way outside of our comfort zone. It is parallel to the 'Sermon on the Mount' found in Matthew 5. In our culture, there is a lot of emphasis on revenge and getting our own back for what happens to us. 'Turning the other cheek' is a well known phrase in the English language and describes a deliberate intention of walking away from a situation to avoid a nasty confrontation. Someone put it like this: "As Christians, we love the individual who did the evil deed but not the deed that the person does." What Jesus said, opposed the Old Testament instruction of 'an eye for an eye' (Exodus 21:23) but supported the instruction 'do not gloat when your enemy falls' (Proverbs 24:17). The people who were listening to Him would certainly have been challenged by this. They wanted justice on their terms.

In the Lord's Prayer we say, 'forgive us as we forgive those who sin against us.' But in this passage, Jesus says we are to go even further and LOVE our enemies. The Good News of the Gospel is the fact that, although we are sinners, God loves us and sent Jesus to die for us. Should we not therefore love those who mistreat and sin against us? It is much easier to love those who love us, but loving our enemies is a completely different ball game. As God has been merciful and forgiven us, should we not show mercy to those who have wronged us? (v36)

Love in return for love is human and love in return for being wronged is what Jesus taught.

Reflections:

- What is your reaction to the idea of loving your enemies?
- How might you respond now to those you have considered to be your enemies?
Ask the Holy Spirit to help you love them
- Loving people who have hurt you can be hard. Perhaps you want to speak to Chaplaincy about this.



Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

