

TITLE AND NUMBER: 225 God's kindness far outweighs ours



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSES: Luke 6.35-38

'But love your enemies, do good to them.....Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.....Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'

LOOKING FURTHER: Luke 6 v 31-34

What does the Bible passage tell us?

Being in prison is a different world to the one outside. You can't be seen to be weak – and kindness can be considered a weakness. However, in this passage, Jesus is talking about being kind to people who are not kind to you and not judging people for their behaviour or attitudes. It says (in v33) that being nice to people who are nice to you is what other people would expect. But God expects more from us. It can be really hard to live up to this standard ordinarily, but especially in prison.

Verse 31 says, 'Do to others as you would have them do to you'. This comes from the same root idea. God expects us to treat other people well regardless of their behaviour towards us. So, what is the point of this massive effort in kindness? Verse 35 says, 'Our reward will be great' because we will be reflecting to others God's goodness to us, which leads to a better life for all.

There is often a sense of reciprocity with God which means if we do something for Him/for His sake, He gives us back far more in blessing. We will never be the loser. It will never be one-sided - He will always repay us. It may seem to others that we have been foolish in being kind to someone who doesn't deserve it, or sharing when we don't have much ourselves. Remember, God sees it all and will reward us openly. We may have to choose not to retaliate, not to get our own back on people. We may have to choose to back down over an issue, even though we think/know we are in the right. It may mean we have to promise not to take offence where rude people are concerned. God will see every one of those choices and He will repay us with boundless generosity. His kindness far outweighs ours and we benefit in the end!

Reflection

- Think of a situation where you were annoyed/upset with someone else. Could it have gone better? If you had applied this thinking, how might the outcome have been different?
- Do you believe that God will reward your good/generous behaviour? Sometimes what is often called a 'random act of kindness' will come our way, or we will have favour in a future situation as a result. God 'repays' in lots of amazing ways. Others may well start to treat you better, too!
- If you are having a hard time from some people, or are being bullied, it is difficult to see how this teaching works in your situation. Perhaps you should discuss this with the Chaplain and pray for wisdom in dealing with it all? God's answers are always better than ours. You could pray too for those who have hurt you.

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



Kindness

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.

