

Luke 6:27-36 Love your enemies

In this passage is also the golden rule...*do to others as you would have them do to you v 31*

The doctors orders...Our troops are at war in Afghanistan... but Jesus said love your enemies...
There are different types of enemies...

One Voice have launched Street Angels in York – 3 praying for a homeless man, a man asks “are you Christians?” and then spat at one of the women, and cursed them. Jesus words are not theoretical. They are practical, real... how are we meant to live?

Jesus is saying a Christian should be different.

He says, I tell you who hear me...do you hear him? Hearing is more than just being in the audible range... it's agreeing, acknowledging, signing up, it's following, choosing, it's saying I want to live differently, I want my life to count.

Doctors orders... for your good, for your healing, restoration, cure, treatment, for you to get better!

Better than normal – says Jesus, loving those who love you, being good to those who are good to you, lending... “everyone does that... even the worst...what credit is that...”

And Jesus doesn't avoid credits. He says,... *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. V35f*

In other places he says you will be greeted, “Good and faithful servant!” God's plan to change the world is still through his church, his people...

So how do we do this?

Now you may say, “I don't have any enemies...” What Jesus talks about is much more down to earth, homely, immediate...

If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Vs 29

What is that about? Insult, slur, offence? What is your response – tit for tat? What if you could never be offended? This does not mean you are a doormat. Meekness is not weakness, it is controlled strength. Controlled – you are called to be disciplined, discipled...which means to be more like Jesus... WWJD what would Jesus do?

Where does it start? Exactly where you are now. Family, friends, church members, work colleagues. Next door...

The opportunities to practice what Jesus says are all around us, every day...

We say... can I miss a day? I have such good reasons to hate this person... No. Holding on to hate, hurts you. Hounds you. Haunts you. Holds you back, hurts your relationship with God...That's the start – he has been kind and merciful to you... A wise pastor once said: forgiveness opens doors...forgiveness breaks down barriers

Questions:

What is your initial, off-the-cuff reaction to, ‘love your enemies?’

Can you list situations in your life where you feel this teaching does not fit? Or situations on the world scene? Think through the possibilities of applying this action.

Street Angels in York were spat at by someone who asked, “are you Christians?” Do the group have other experiences of violence, rejection or abuse because they are Christians? How did/do they respond?

Matt 6:14,15 is pretty clear about forgiving. But what happens to us? Try to analyse the process. What happens inside? How is it that sometimes we find it easy to forgive and sometimes it seems impossible? Does it tap into patterns of the past?

A wise pastor once said: forgiveness opens doors...forgiveness breaks down barriers. Can you relate to that? Examples? And what about un-forgiveness, how does that hurt the person who refuses to forgive?