

24-2-19 Counter Cultural Living

Optional icebreaker: Can you share an occasion when you have been on the receiving end of a kindness recently?

READING: Luke 6:27-45

### SERMON

- This seems to be a time of great anger and resentment in the U.K. and world leaders speak with hatred about each other.
- Against this backdrop, how can we as individuals and as a church put our faith into action?
- Imagine the best you can do for the worst person you can think of and do it because God is generous to all- v.35.
- If we are only kind to those who are deserving, we are no better than non-believers and we are in danger of deciding **who** is deserving.
- The cycle of hatred and revenge can only be broken by love and forgiveness. Can we really be expected to forgive someone no matter what they have done? No-or it wouldn't make news headlines on the occasions when it happens.
- Billy Graham's advice was to pray for that person and to pray for yourself – not praying for them to do what **you** want but that they will know God's love and that Jesus will change **us**.
- In v.41-42 Jesus is not saying we should ignore wrongdoing but we should correct our own faults first. Judgement of others comes from an arrogant image of our own selves and our own importance.
- Influence of social media and the opportunity to express strong opinions, seeking affirmation, counting "likes".

- Jesus invites his followers to live a life that is different, serving and loving even our enemies, to pray for them as Jesus did from the cross, granting them the same respect and rights we want for ourselves.
- Are we prepared to do so? How are we going to do it?

### QUESTIONS

1. Which part of the sermon did you find most challenging?
2. What do you do when someone annoys or upsets you? Might you do anything differently in the light of this passage?
3. Can you think of an example of forgiveness having an impact on people who have heard about it?
4. In the light of v.41-45 how would you recommend approaching people who need help or correction?
5. How would you answer the question at the end of the sermon?