

Service for Week 17th -23th Feb 2025

By Chaplain Andy

### **Our Opening Prayer.**

Gracious God, we don't find it easy to give someone a second chance, especially when they have let us down personally. Yet you go on giving us another chance day after day, and despite our repeated failures, you are willing still to trust us. Help us to forgive others as you have forgiven us in Christ's name.

**Amen**

### **Say to yourself The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name.....

**Amen**

**Bible Reading Luke 6: 27-38**

**6:29, 30 pp—;Mt 5:39-42**

*Jesus said*

"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 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. 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 sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. "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."

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Reflection**

I have recently watched a video of a family in Cleveland, America talking about their father who was shot and died. They were asked about their feelings towards the man who murdered him. They said that it is through their Christian faith in God that they hold no ill feeling towards the killer. They know it was because of his mental sickness that made him do it and they would like to reach out to him in love and forgiveness.

It reminded me of a news story, which you may remember, of a father Gordon Wilson in Ireland, who publicly forgave the IRA members responsible for the death of his daughter, Marie Wilson, in

the Enniskillen bombing on Remembrance Day in 1987. Gordon's act of forgiveness made a powerful impact during a time of great conflict in Northern Ireland.

In Luke's gospel Jesus asks us to 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.' In Mathew's gospel Jesus says You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Also "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you....'

Caring, sensitivity to others and turning the other cheek to those that persecute us all feature in Hindu, Buddhist, Bahia, Sikh and the Islamic faith. But one of the unique aspects of the Christian faith is to follow what Jesus asks us specifically to do - to 'love our enemies'. This is, especially for families in the circumstances I described previously, one of the very hardest things to do.

The killing of innocent people, whether as the result of war and conflict or through knife and gun crime on our streets is sadly an increasing part of life today. How can we feel love for those that carry out such attacks? It may be the result of a mental illness or happen while under the influence of mind-altering drugs – we can feel sorry for them but can we love them?

In the Bible the word most used for love is the Greek word 'agape.' This is unconditional, selfless love often defined as 'love that's not concerned with your own needs, but only concerned with the needs of the other.' As I say what Jesus is asking us to do - to love our enemies, is extremely hard in the circumstances I have described.

Jesus goes on to teach us to 'Forgive, and you will be forgiven' words which are echoed in The Lord's Prayer when we say the words - 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' If we can love and forgive Jesus says "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"

Words that are perhaps strange to us today, but this I understand is to do with the dry measuring method they used at the time. In measuring out dry goods such as flour they would press it down and shake it to make the container hold more. Then they would then heap the measure up until it overflowed. In the same way God's love will be given to us in abundance until we are filled and overflowing.

**Amen.**

### Closing Prayer

Loving God, when I am hurt my natural inclination is to want revenge. Teach me Lord to leave vengeance to you, knowing that in your own time justice will be done.

**Amen**

Prayers inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett