

## Home Groups – February 2014

### Week beginning 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2014 - Being church 7. Going beyond

**Introduction:** We are all very good at re-interpreting what someone else has said in a way that suit our own desires better. This is just as true when it comes to interpreting what God has said and the pharisees and teachers of the law were past masters at it. They would take a verse out of context and analyse and extrapolate and come up with a meaning that was completely different from what was originally intended. “Eye for eye..” were directions to a judge when sentencing a criminal or calculating compensation – not a commandment to take personal revenge. “Love your neighbour” did not mean that the only people you had to love were those who were like you and it was fine to hate everyone else. Once again Jesus takes us back to the original intention which can be summed up in the words: “Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.” We might feel this is an impossible standard, but at least it shows us what we should be aiming for. And as usual if we were to taking Jesus’ teaching and above all, his example seriously, it will have a radical impact on our relationships, our witness and maybe even our society.

**Warm up:** Do you have any plans for Lent in terms of spiritual reading or discipline ?  
(It might be good at this point to discuss the proposed Lent course: Life Source and also coming to the central prayer meeting on Ash Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> March)

### Word

Read Matthew 5 vv. 38 - 48

1. vv.39 - 42 In a country occupied by the Roman army the situations described in these verses were quite common – but probably less common for us in our present day in the UK.  
For each verse try and think of the equivalent situation that might happen in your own life and what response Jesus would want.
2. v.45 *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.* Think of examples from the life of Jesus that might show us how his teaching in this passage might work out in practice.
3. v.39 This situation is described in personal terms – but does this mean we should not resist evil in our society? e.g. Nazi aggression, the situations in Syria or Ukraine.  
How might this principle apply in those contexts?
4. vv.43 - 45 Whom might we consider to be our enemies and what will it mean in practice for us to love them? Think of examples.
5. v.44 What sort of things should we be praying for our enemies?

**Working it Out:** Is there any particular person in your life that you are estranged from or who is making life difficult for you? Ask God to show you in the light of this passage how He wants you to respond.

**Worship:** Read or sing the following song and use it as a prayer

But I say unto you...  
Love your enemies  
and pray for those who hurt you.  
Give to those who ask, don't turn away. And

*Refrain:*  
*Be like your Father in heaven above*  
*Who causes his sun to shine on evil and good,*  
*And sends down his rain to quench all men's thirst.*  
*In him we live and move and have our being.*

If you forgive your brother so will God forgive you  
Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves. And

*Refrain*

When you see the hungry,  
feed them from your table.  
For the poor and weary be their watering place. And

*Refrain*

Love your enemies and  
pray for those who hurt you.  
Give to those who ask don't turn away. And

*Refrain (x 2)*

*River of Praise 26 Beverlee Paine*

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