

## All Saints Sunday, Luke 6:20-31

Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

<sup>21</sup> Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

<sup>22</sup> Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.

<sup>23</sup> "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

<sup>24</sup> "But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.

<sup>25</sup> Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.

<sup>26</sup> Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

<sup>27</sup> "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup> If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you.

### How to be good!

There are three kinds of people.

- There are those who are out for themselves alone (and think that you are too) — takers.
- Most of us a fair minded — if you are kind to me, I will be to you. If you are mean, I'll reciprocate. We are 'matchers'.
- And there are those who do unprompted good, and, however sore the provocation, do not return evil for evil — the saints.

It's more complicated than that, though, isn't it? Most of us are in the middle — but sometimes we are spurred to do good for its own sake, or else have moments of doing the wrong thing.

We are creatures inclined to copy the behaviour of those around us. If we are in saintly company, we rise to their level. If we are in bad company it is easy for our ethic to be eroded.

Before Jesus, this pattern was doubtless also true. There were the selfish or violent, and also the altruistic and gentle. How did Jesus change the world? In many ways! But one of them was by being the third kind of person — being saintly. Those around him had a clearer picture of goodness because he was good and showed what goodness was truly like. It wasn't enough to match the goodness of others with your own. Jesus suggested that we do more than that! And it is in this passage in Luke 6, or in the parallel passage in Matthew 5, the sermon on the mount, that he most clearly lays it out.

Firstly he upends our expectations of the signs of God's approval. 'If you are wealthy and happy, it must be because God approves of you!' they thought. Not so fast, says Jesus. The Lord is more inclined to bless those who are poor, hungry, broken and discriminated against. He goes on to tell us his alternative to tit-for-tat matching — love your enemies, pray for your persecutors, do good to your haters, bless those who curse you.

You can almost hear the crowd asking questions. 'Are you serious? How are we going to do that?' 'Well,' suggests Jesus, 'perhaps someone slaps your cheek with the back of his hand. What do you do? Offer him the other one! You have done no violence, you have made it no worse, but instead asserted that you are an equal, and given them a reproof to think on. If someone takes your cloak, what next? Strip and give him everything! — it is to *his* shame, not yours that you are now naked!'

Do to others, *not as they have done, but as you would have them do* to you — that way you draw the world, in Jesus's pattern, towards goodness and away from violence and selfishness.

We have more of a tendency to copy the behaviour of others than we realise. The Christian way is to 'hang around' with Jesus, and find that we are copying his good way. The Christian way is to do good in the world just as Jesus did. Others will then be encouraged to do good as well, following our pattern. It is a slow process, not a quick fix. But it works.

This is part of why we are going to get together on 17th November in Yoxford, it is to think together what good we can do, together, to reshape the world, and to draw others into Christ's love, so that they too can be transformed by the love and power of God, as we are being transformed.

*Blessings,*

*Tim.*

**ALL SOULS'  
Benefice Service**

The "**All Souls' Service**" is to remember our loved ones and those whose funeral services have been held in our Benefice during the last year. All Welcome

**Wednesday 2 nd November 2022**

**3pm**

**St. Peter's Church, Westleton**

**The Yoxmere Benefice**

*Serving the parishes of Darsham, Dunwich, Middleton, Peasenhall,*

*Sibton, Theberton, Westleton and Yoxford*