

Worship Material
Having a generous spirit
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 23rd February

Begin with an opening prayer

Lord, fill us with expectation that:
as we worship, you will meet us;
as we worship, you will speak your words into our hearts;
as we worship, you will challenge us and change us.
Lord, we are here and we worship you.

Amen.

Read Luke 6:27-38

Bible notes

This passage follows on from last week's pronouncing of blessings and woes. Surrounded by a crowd of diverse people from a wide geographical area, all seeking teaching and healing, Jesus speaks directly to his disciples. Whether these teachings were presented in this manifesto-like way, or whether Luke has drawn together the key threads that were repeated through Jesus' ministry, these provide key elements of what it means to live as the people of God. At their heart is the generosity that comes from extreme love for all, without boundaries.

From the outset, the intention was that the people of God would live differently and attract others to a relationship with God. We see this contrast in the comparison between what is being instructed here and the behaviour of 'sinners' – those out of step with God. An enemy, in this context, is one who rejects or denounces those who follow Jesus. In fact, Jesus is not suggesting anything new here. The Hebrew Bible instructs that God's people should 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Leviticus 19:18). But as with the telling of the Good Samaritan's story a few chapters later, Jesus is providing some clarity around this and removing the misplaced perspective that this applies only to those who are 'like me'. 'Do to others as you would have them do to you' (v.31) means all others, including foreigners and those who don't follow God. Being the people of God entails reflecting God's generosity. We need to make our own judgements about what this looks like in different situations, but these verses provide some practical examples. This behaviour is not just a nice idea, but an obligation.

Prayer

Praise to the Lord in whom we trust.
Give thanks to the Lord who puts trust into our hands.
Praise the Lord who blesses us with happiness.
Give thanks to the Lord that we can share it with others.

Praise the Lord for being patient with us.
Give thanks to the Lord that we are taught patience
with each other.

For all God's blessings to us,
seen and unseen, known and unknown,
we give thanks and praise.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Help me to be forgiving
when others are unfair or unkind or unfriendly.

Help me to show a generosity of spirit
in the way I respond to others,
for that is how you treat me.

Amen.