

Jesus often talked about aspects of love. We are going to consider a few of them – one from each of the Gospels

**1. READ Luke 6:27-36**

Twice Jesus says, “love your enemies” and each time follows it by saying “do good” to them (v27 & v35).

- i. Why might Jesus require His disciples to actively “do good” to their enemies? What does that achieve?
- ii. What do you think the reward is that Jesus speaks of in v35?
- iii. Have you ever done something good to someone who has disliked/hated you?

**2. READ Matthew 10:34-37**

In Matthew 5:9 Jesus said “*Blessed are the peacemakers*” but here He says that He had not come to bring peace but a sword that will divide families.

- i. Many cults require their followers to sever themselves from their families. Is that what Jesus is also teaching here that His followers must do?
- ii. How might the teaching we have just read in Luke (which is also found in Matthew 5:43-48) help us when dealing with the actions referred to in 10:36?
- iii. Have you ever experienced family conflict because of your faith?
- iv. In verse 37 Jesus taught His followers not to place their love for their family above their love for the Lord? Why is this important and what happens if we do put ‘family first’?

**3. Read Mark 12:28-34**

- i. The Message paraphrases v30 as “*The Lord your God is one; so love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy.*” How would you paraphrase v30 and in what ways can it be demonstrated?
- ii. What does it mean in practice to love our neighbour as ourselves? (v31)

**4. Read John 13:33-35 and John 15:12-17**

- i. Up to now Jesus had talked about loving enemies, loving Him, loving God and loving neighbours but now He calls His disciples to love in a new way – to love “*as I have loved you*” (13:34). He said this before He had gone to the cross so in what ways had Jesus loved them over the previous 3 years that He wanted them to emulate?
- ii. Jesus also wanted them to love in the same way as He was **GOING** to demonstrate love to them – through His giving of His life for them (15:13). Whilst some people have actually given their lives for others – in what ways can we **sacrificially** give our lives in love to others – without actually dying?
- iii. In 13:35 Jesus says that the demonstration of our love towards one another is the visible evidence to others that we are His disciples. Do you think people consider FBC to be a loving Church? If so in what ways? If not, why?
- iv. Are there any ways in which we as a church could be **more** loving than we are? If so, why not identify one new expression of love that you as a group/individual could intentionally put into place within the life of the Church and then another one that you could put into place with those ‘outside’ of the Church.

**Please remember that there is a Church Members’ Meeting on Wednesday 31 January at 8pm where we will be working together on the vision for the church. If you are a church member please can you attend as your thoughts will be valuable in helping to discern the way ahead.**