

Matthew 5:43-48 "The Crux of It All"

Read Matthew 5:17-20, 43-48.

1. Verses 43-48 mark the conclusion of this section of the Sermon on the Mount (from Matt 5:17-48). What do you think Jesus meant by saying that he came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets? How does his teaching on anger, lust, divorce, etc support that?

Read Leviticus 19:9-18.

2. What does God say about love of neighbour in this passage? Who constitutes a neighbour in this passage?
3. How did the Israelite people understand 'neighbour'? Do you think that was justified given their context?
4. How have you felt about the verses mentioning 'enemies' or 'hatred' in the Psalms? (e.g. Psalm 139:21-22; all of Psalm 59) What have you done with these verses in the past?
5. Why does Jesus say that we must love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us? Why is this important?
6. In her sermon Karen described the process of forgiving and loving our enemies as one that involves dying to self, and that it feels like death. Can you relate to this? Would you agree with this description?
7. Karen spoke of entrusting our pain to God, knowing that he will hold it carefully, and deal justly with all sins, both those done to us and those we have done. Is this a comforting thought? Why or why not?
8. Have you had any positive experiences in praying for your enemy and seeing either yourself, or them, or the situation transformed? Share as you feel comfortable.