

# Minster Bethel Congregational Church (MBCC)

14/02/2021 — Love Your Enemies

## God's Valentines Gift



Our 2021 fortnightly zoom “Church & Chat”

Have started and all are welcome to the short church reflection with a hymn, reading, (children’s activity), prayer, “thought for the week” and then a time to chat.

Join us next week at 10 am:

Topic: Church and Chat

Time: This is a recurring meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75124173520?pwd=QVB4WUx6QXg3Y3hQc1NQYkxINmozZz09>

Meeting ID: 751 2417 3520

Passcode: Bethel2021

All lockdown services can be found at: [www.mbccs.co.uk](http://www.mbccs.co.uk)

<sup>34</sup> 'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'

John 13:34-35

## Good morning and welcome to this week's thoughts.

Today we start with the Chorus "A New Commandment I Give unto You"

[A New Commandment I give unto You Song Lyrics. - YouTube](#)

A new commandment I give unto you,  
That you love one another as I have loved you,  
That you love one another as I have loved you.

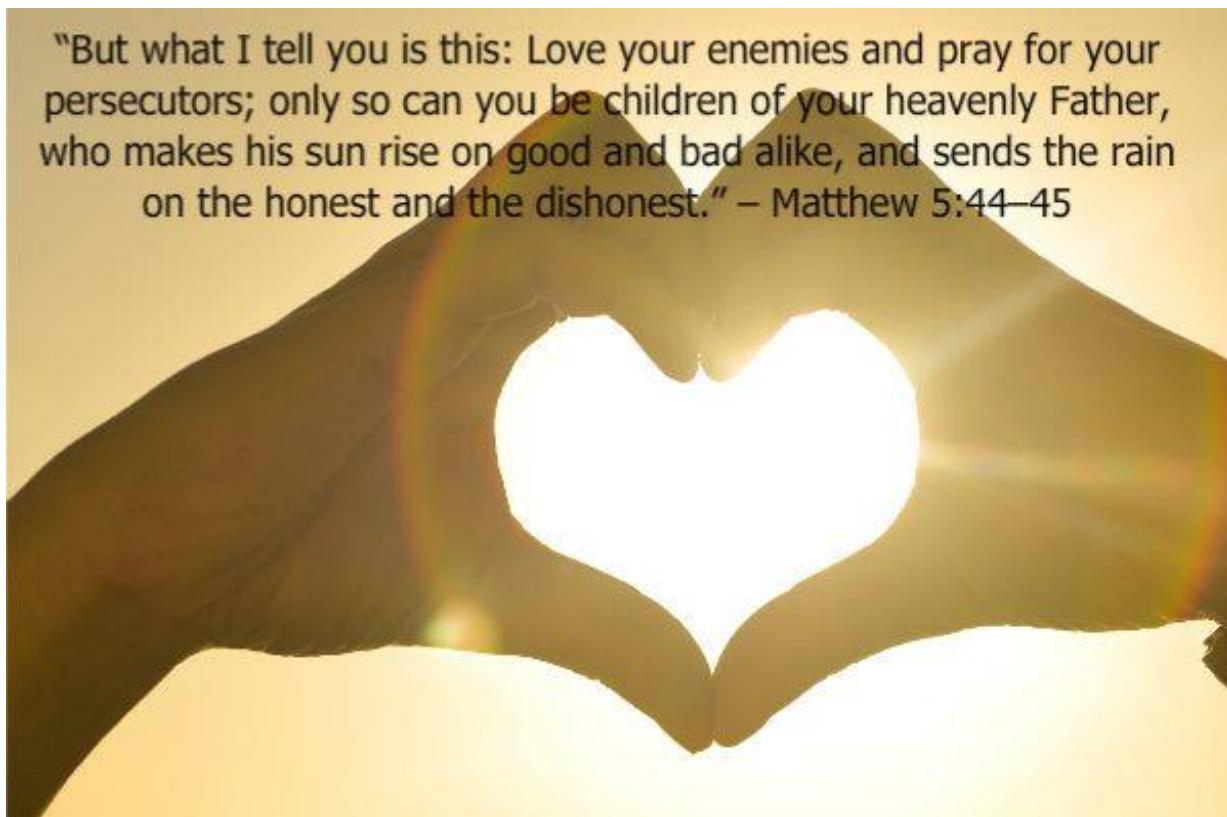
By this shall all men know that you are My disciples,  
if you have love one for another.

By this shall all men know that you are My disciples,  
if you have love one for another.

**The reading today is Matthew 5: 13-48**

[Matthew 5:13-48 NIVUK - Salt and light - 'You are the salt of - Bible Gateway](#)

"But what I tell you is this: Love your enemies and pray for your persecutors; only so can you be children of your heavenly Father, who makes his sun rise on good and bad alike, and sends the rain on the honest and the dishonest." – Matthew 5:44–45



Last week at our “Church and Chat” and in our thoughts for the week we explored the beatitudes. This week we continue with the sermon on the mount as we think about Love and what it really means as we celebrate St Valentine’s day.

There are so many lessons in these few verses:

1. Verses 13-16 “Salt and Light” teaching about us about not becoming useless but shining God’s Light through us in all that we do.
2. Verses 17-20 “Obeying the Law” teaching about keeping to the laws referring to the 10 commandments but recognizing that laws are there to be kept and that this is the way to the kingdom of heaven
3. Verses 21-32 teaches more on some of the commandments teaching about relationships and how to treat others.
4. Verses 33-37 teaches about keeping promises, and even better not to make promises but to be honest.
5. Verses 38-42 teaches us to turn the other cheek and go the extra mile for others.

However today we are looking at the last few verses:

#### **Love for enemies!**

*<sup>43</sup> ‘You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbour<sup>[1]</sup> and hate your enemy.” <sup>44</sup> But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup> If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? <sup>48</sup> Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

What do we know about Heaven?



Heaven is a great fascination to many people. Everyone wants to know if there’s life after death, and if so, where will that life take place. Even people who don’t believe in Jesus like the idea that when we die, there’s a better place for us.

Heaven has especially been a big topic in music the last couple of decades. Led Zeppelin sang about a “Stairway to Heaven,” and Eric Clapton said that there will be no “Tears in Heaven.” The heavy metal band Warrant told us that “Heaven Isn’t Too Far Away,” and 80’s star Belinda Carlisle told us that “Heaven Is a Place on Earth.” Today we’re going to discover that Warrant and Belinda Carlisle might have been more right than they knew! Just as Jesus prayed for God’s will to be done, “On Earth as it is in Heaven,” we can bring Heaven to Earth.

Heaven is a real place, according to the Bible. It’s the place Jesus left when he came to Earth, and it’s where he lives now while he prepares a place for us. The Bible tells us that Heaven is a place of eternal life. There’s no sadness, no anger, and no sin. There is only love!

Heaven is something all God's children look forward to, but that doesn't mean we can't experience a little Heaven here on Earth. If Heaven is a place full of love, without any hatred or sin, then we can bring Heaven to Earth by loving others, including the people we don't get along with. Heaven is a place where there's no more hatred, no more rivalry. It's a place where we will learn to truly love our enemies.

Jesus taught us to love our enemies, knowing that if we did, we could bring a little Heaven to our world, right now!

We all have people we love in our lives. We have parents, siblings, spouses, grandparents, friends, and neighbours who are kind to us, people who love us and have loved us from the start. It's easy to love those people back because we know they care for us.

But what about the people who rub you the wrong way? What about the person who isn't easy to get along with? The one you have nothing in common with? What about the people you consider enemies, and the people you try to avoid because they're just different?

Jesus says if we only love the people who love us, we're no different than anyone else in this world. Everyone loves the people who love them; God's people love everyone, even their enemies. Loving our enemies is a way to bring Heaven to this world because in Heaven, there is only LOVE!

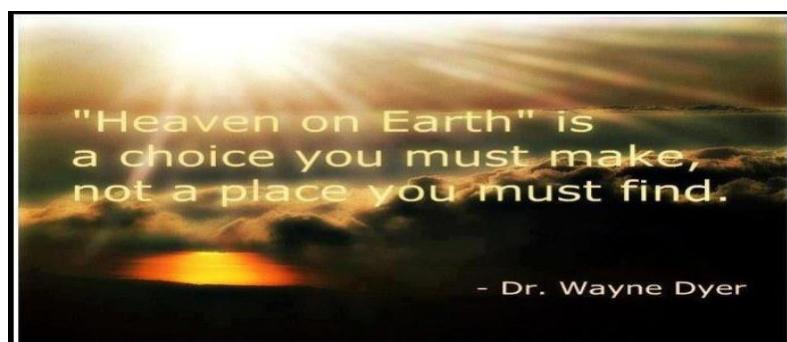
I'm sure all of you have come across someone who is hard to get along with. You've all seen people who keep to themselves, people who are always whispering, giggling, and making fun of others, people who are unkind, break laws, belittle others and make you feel worthless. For whatever reason, these people choose hatred and meanness over kindness. They don't seem to get along with everyone.

It would be easy to answer their unkind actions with unkind actions of our own. We can ignore them, talk behind their backs, or be unkind to them in return. That's worldly thinking, and that's the kind of thinking that doesn't belong in Heaven.

Heaven is a place filled with God's love, and when we learn to love those people who don't get along with us, we bring Heaven to Earth!

What's more, God wants us to reach out to those we don't know, the ones who may be new or different. God wants us to be loving and kind to the shy, to those with the special needs, to the homeless, to those that are different and to everyone we meet. We are all God's children, and God can use us to share his love with those who truly need him in their lives. In this way, we can bring Heaven to the world by introducing our peers to the one who is preparing Heaven for them and for us!

Jesus prayed, "Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." He wants that to be our prayer as well. Jesus wants us to bring his love to people who need him while we are here on Earth. Heaven is a real place, and one day, those who love the Lord will go there. But that doesn't mean we can't have some Heaven here on Earth. Let's commit ourselves this Valentine's day to being God's love on Earth. Let's spread love to everyone we meet so that others can see Heaven is real in us.



## **Our second song this week is “Love Shine a Light”:**

[Love Shine A Light - YouTube](#)

Love shine a light in every corner of my heart  
Let the love light carry, let the love light carry  
Light up the magic in every little part  
Let our love shine a light in every corner of our hearts

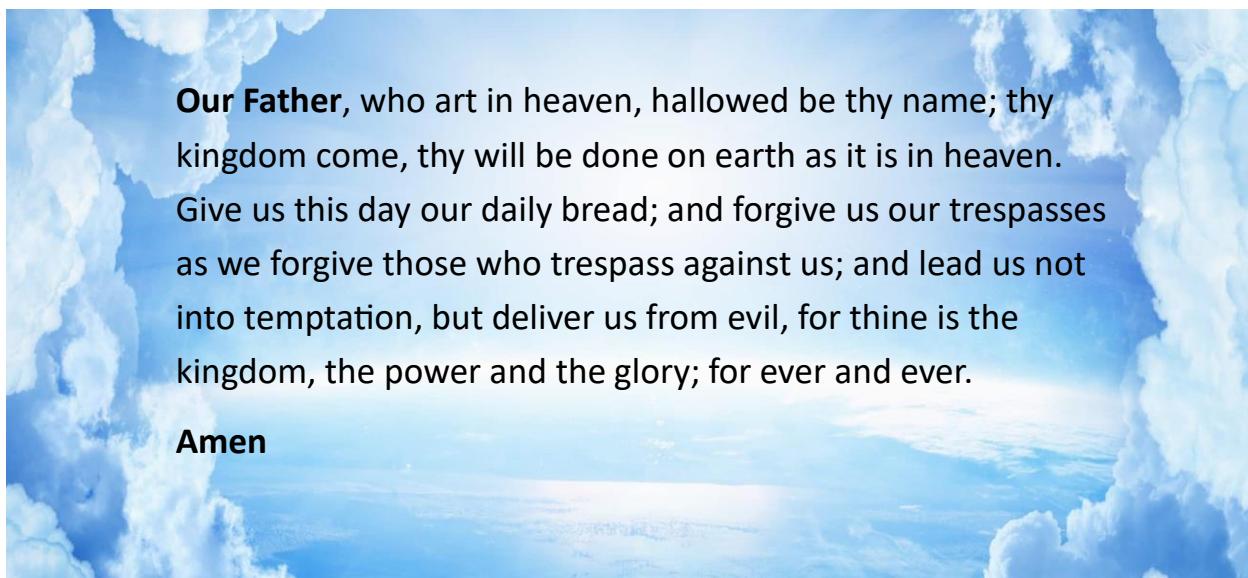
Love shine a light in every corner of my dreams  
Let the love light carry, let the love light carry  
Like the mighty river, flowing from the stream  
Let our love shine a light in every corner of my dreams

And we're all gonna shine a light together  
All shine a light to light the way  
Brothers and sisters, in every little part  
Let our love shine a light in every corner of our hearts

Love shine a light in every corner of the world  
Let the love light carry, let the love light carry  
Light up the magic, for every boy and girl  
Let our love shine a light in every corner of the world

And we're all gonna shine a light together  
All shine a light to light the way  
Brothers and sisters, in every little part  
Let our love shine a light, in every corner of our hearts

## **Today's Pray is the Lords Prayer:**



**Our Father**, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory; for ever and ever.

**Amen**

