

Westfield Sermon notes

Title: Fishermen Disciples

Readings: Exodus 3:1-15 / Matthew 16:21-28 / Romans 12:9-21

Preacher: John Longbottom

Date: 27th August 2017

This sermon can be found at: <http://www.westfieldurc.org/worship/sermons>

Sermon Notes / Comments:

- There is no harm in a bit of rivalry when it is good natured, it inspires you to do better, but when it becomes nasty it can destroy both the rivals.
- St. Paul writing to the Christians in Rome said there was only one thing worth competing for and that was who could be the kindest. Outdo one another in showing honour he wrote.
- When Rivalry becomes dangerous is when two people set out to take revenge for perceived offences
- Jesus said have you heard it said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, do not resist an evil doer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek turn the other also.
- And St. Paul told the Romans, never avenge yourselves but leave room for the wrath of God.
- I will revenge says the Lord, getting your own back is called tit for tat
- It has been widely said that a universal end for a policy of tit for tat will be when we are all dead.
- St. Pauls ends his letter with a chapter on loving behaviour. This is how a Christian should live. Let love be genuine, hold fast with what is good. Love one another with mutual affection. Serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering. Persevere in Prayer.
- Later on Paul continues to remind the Romans of some of the things Christians should do: Contribute to the needs of the saints, extend hospitality to strangers, bless those who persecute you (bless and do not curse them), rejoice with those that rejoice, weep with those that weep, Live in harmony with one another, do not be haughty associate with the lowly, do not pay anyone evil for evil. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with all.
- Then he turns to the subject of revenge. Imagine the congregation of new Christians that Paul was talking to where many race all different social levels, Paul being very practical, advises them that it is easier said than

done. But because they are Christians they are willing to take up their cross and have a go. People will then notice them.

- How we behave as Christians in the outside world will affect how those outside view us.
- John tells a story about his neighbour who, when he was young was very poor and only had one set of clothes and went to church one morning but they would not let him in because he did not have a best set of clothes!
- Sometimes we don't realise what a big effect we do have on people we meet.
- Today we live in a very different society to them.
- Many think that revenge is ok, but people will only learn if we Christians set them an example of a better way. And that depends on you and me.
- Everyone who goes to church is noticed and looked at by our neighbours to see if there is any of the old self in us.
- The teaching of Jesus about how we should live will only change society if it is proclaimed by the loving example of Christians (you and me)
-

Questions / thoughts and areas for discussion

- Read through all the passages mentioned in the sermon.
- Have a look at the lists of characteristics of being a Christian above. What do you struggle with?
- How do you do with competing 'who is the kindest'?
- What areas do you think in Christ is negative to the outside world?
- How can we be more loving?
- What have you said in the past that is not showing you or your faith in the best light? Why not say sorry to the person, if appropriate, and to God?
- What could you do this week that would shine God into the life of someone?

Please note these are Mark's thoughts, comments etc on the sermon and may not be the Preacher's!