**Tuesday 18th August**

Matthew 5:43-45

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy .’  But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 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.

This is such a well-known saying of Jesus that it can be easy to skip over it and lose its utter transformational power! Jesus is saying something absolutely impossible! ‘Love your enemies’. Do you know He really knew what He really knew what he was talking about! Can you imagine what a different world this would be if we lived this way? It would break cycles of pain and hatred that have destroyed nations. If you know the mercy and forgiveness of God in your life, then you know what it is to be undeserving and yet STILL to have love poured out on you, punishment taken away, forgiveness offered over and over, for that is what He has done for us. As His children, He asks us to reflect the character of our Father in our dealings with others. It’s so easy to pour scorn on those we disagree with or to think that people should get their just desserts if they’ve been selfish. But that’s not the way of the Father. I for one am thankful for that. I don’t think Jesus would have said these words expecting us to dismiss them as impossible. In everything that the Lord asks of us, there is grace to enable us to live His way.

*Father, we thank you for the wonderful way in which you have lavished good gifts on us even though we are undeserving. Thank you that you have made us your children. Help us to reflect your character in the way that we treat others. Lord, you know how difficult we find this. Please forgive us for those times that we haven’t lived this way. Would you teach and train us by your in dwelling Holy Spirit how to love those that we struggle with. Shape us more into your likeness. Amen*

