

Exodus 22

²¹ You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. ²² You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. ²³ If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry; ²⁴ my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children orphans.

²⁵ If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them. ²⁶ If you take your neighbour's cloak in pawn, you shall restore it before the sun goes down; ²⁷ for it may be your neighbour's only clothing to use as cover; in what else shall that person sleep? And if your neighbour cries out to me, I will listen, for I am compassionate.

1. This week we have been thinking about hate. Do you think it is ever ok for a Christian to hate someone or something?
2. Given what you know about the ancient world and how inhumane it could be, do you find anything in our Exodus passage surprising? Why?

Matthew 5

³⁸ 'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰ and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹ and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. ⁴² Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³ 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

3. These are familiar words, but the actions described in them are perhaps less familiar. Do you think our society tries to live up to Jesus' words here? Does the Church?
4. We discussed on Sunday the different logics of the 'Kingdom of Darkness' and the 'Kingdom of God'. The former is based on the idea that similar people to us are good while different people are bad. How does Jesus' teaching differ from this?
5. We spoke also on Sunday about politics. Should the Church comment on or engage in politics? If so, should it be a priority, or are other things more important?