Breaking Bread 4

Hello everyone, Verse 2 of the hymn “Break thou the Bread of Life “ goes like this:-  
            Thou art the Bread of Life, O Lord to me,  
             Thy holy word the truth that saveth me  
             Give me to eat and live with thee above,  
             Teach me to love thy truth for thou art love.  
Today’s passage of Scripture from the weekly lectionary will test that sentiment to the full. It’s Luke 6:27-38, where Jesus says, ”Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.”

And, yes, that “love “is the same love as Jesus says in “Love the Lord your God”, it’s the same love as “ Love your neighbour “, and it’s the same love that Paul tells us about in 1 Corinthians 13. It’s agape love seeking the very best for the one to be loved, wanting the very best for the one to be loved, as with your closest friend or a dear family member. Jesus says,” Love your enemies “ as clearly as that— not tolerating, not putting up with, not keeping at arm’s length, BUT AGAPE LOVING.  
We really need to ask God to break open the bread of life for us here and enable us to love the truth of his word in such a way that we can live it out.  
  
I’m not aware that I’ve got any enemies. There are people I disagree with, those whose lifestyle I might not approve of, people who annoy me ( not you I’m sure!), those I’ve drifted away from and don’t talk to any more. I think these all come into this category and the command is to positively love them in the agape sense, old friends, family members, church folk, colleagues, neighbours and, yes, enemies.  
  
The challenge here is enormous and it makes us vulnerable, really vulnerable. How do we do it? I think the clue to meeting the challenge comes in the last line of verse 2 of the hymn, “for thou art love.”  
In Christ, all things are possible, and in the love of Christ, it becomes possible for us to love beyond our natural capabilities and inclinations. I’m convinced that, in Christ’s love, we are called to anticipate life in the Kingdom of God by the way we live here and now. Paul, both helpfully and practically says this, “Let love be genuine...... If possible so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” (Romans 12: 9,18)  
  
We’ve heard quite a bit about breaking bread in fellowship, at Holy Communion, with our friends. Why not Break Bread (or have a cup of tea) with someone outside that circle? Indeed, let’s break open the circle and the Kingdom of God might just break out, by God’s grace.  
          God bless,  
                Graham

*Produced by Graham Wassell on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John Wilkins).  You can find more information on the Circuit Holy Habits Programme on the Sheffield Methodist Circuit website and also the Sheffield Methodist Circuit Facebook page.*