

**Pray**

Today we are going to be thinking about  
**How we can love our neighbours in Hungerford**

But first I want to set this passage in the context of  
**our vision for St Lawrence's** because my thinking has been developing

and I want to suggest that our vision is

**1 To Love God**

**2 To Love one another in the church**

And **3 To Love our neighbours**

And you can think of this vision as being cross shaped

**1 We are called to love God** - which a vertical relationship

God loves us and we love him back again

Represented by the vertical part of the cross

**2 We are called to love one another in the church**

Which is like one of horizontal the arms of the cross

And we do this - **By eating together,**

**By serving the church and**

**By sharing the stories of God**

If you like church like a training course in LOVE

**3 We are called to love our neighbours**

Which is the other horizontal arm of the cross

And we love our neighbours exactly like we love one another

**By eating together**

**By serving the community and**

**By sharing the stories of God**

So there are three things for us to do

**1 Love God = weekly worship + Daily devotions**

**2 Love one another in the church**

**3 Love our neighbours**

And today's is all about **HOW we love our neighbours in Hungerford**

So now let's turn to our passage for today

**1 Let's be different from the world**

Jesus said in Matthew 5

***13 'You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.'***

The Apprentices of Jesus are supposed to be **becoming more like Jesus**

That is why the diocesan vision statement is

**Becoming more like Jesus For the sake of God's world**

The followers of Jesus are supposed to bear **the fruit of the Spirit**

We have been given the Holy Spirit

And the character he produces in us is **like the 9 segments of an orange**

**Love joy and peace, patience kindness and goodness, faithfulness.....**

and so when we grumble that is sin that is not part of the fruit of the spirit

and so Yes we are supposed to **Love God**

to get our vertical relationship right

and also we are supposed get our horizontal relationships right

**to love our family**

Our spouse, our children and our parents

And we are supposed **to love one another in the church**

By eating together and serving each other and sharing the stories of God

And we are supposed **to love our neighbours**

By eating together and serving the community + sharing the stories of God

And the truth is this **love in action is very attractive**

And in our life times we have seen it

**In Mother Teresa and in Billy Graham and in Nelson Mandela**

**1 Let's be different from the world**

Lets be all God designed us to be

## 2 Let's be deeply involved in the world

Our passage says

<sup>13</sup> *'You are the salt of the earth....*

<sup>14</sup> *'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.*

<sup>15</sup> *Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.*

At the time of Jesus - Salt was used to **stop meat from rotting**

It was long before the invention of the fridge

And so Salt was used as a preservative – to stop the rot

And so - we the followers of Jesus – **It is our job to stop the rot in society**

**So Let's be involved in the world**

1 The Bible tells us that **creation is inherently good**

On the sixth day of creation - God looked at what he had made

and saw that it was Very Good

2 sadly the reality is that **People's selfishness has spoiled the world**

and there are a lot of broken relationships as a result

3 The good news of the gospel is **God has provided a way out**

and we are here today because **we have decided to live the way of Jesus**

4 we are now on Gods team and **We are restoring Gods original design**

**Let's be involved in the world** - so that we can stop the rot in society

**and turn the world the right way up again**

And over the years Christians have done this again and again

Eg 18<sup>th</sup> Century William Wilberforce got black slavery abolished

Eg 19<sup>th</sup> Century Lord Shaftesbury brought great social reform to the UK

eg 20<sup>th</sup> Century Martin Luther King challenged Racism in the USA

But now we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**What is the rot in our society? What do we need to reform or abolish?**

And I want to say many

**Church members are deeply involved in Hungerford**

We have church members working in **Boots and Tesco's and Smallbones**

We have church members running **Chain** and serving as the **village agent**

We have people working for **Natural England and Defra**

And Jay works in **cyber security**

**Many Church members are deeply involved in Hungerford**

**And if you have a suggestion**

About How we can stop the rot in society

Then I would love to hear your suggestions

**2 Let's be deeply involved in the world**

### **3 Lets talk about the good news - Lets talk about things of God**

#### **Jesus said**

<sup>14</sup> *'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.*

<sup>15</sup> *Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl....*

<sup>16</sup> *In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

I want us all to have the confidence to **talk about the things of God**

There is loads of Good News in the life of the church

And most people are totally fed up with all of the bad news

It is even giving us mental health issues

**So lets talk about the good news – lets talk about the things of God**

So you will hear on the TV - **there is a problem with social isolation**

And yet every school in Hungerford came here for their Christmas concert

And the church was filled 4 times over

And so **None of those parents need to feel socially isolated**

Now is the time to make suggestions for **the Freedom of Hungerford**

And so I looked up the previous winners

24 people have been given the Freedom of Hungerford

And at least **8 of them have been regular church goers**

And that is very good news

It means that **churchgoers are >3 times more likely to serve the town**

**Than non churchgoers**

**so Lets Talk about the good news, Let's talk about the things of God**

So I have made three points this morning

#### **1 Let's be different from the world**

Lets live the character of Jesus in love and joy and peace

#### **2 Let's be deeply involved in the world**

As you are already doing

#### **3 Lets talk about the good news - Lets talk about things of God**

People want good news so lets give them some!

**Pray**