

# The golden rule



Lord our King, may we return your great love for us by showing love to others, especially those whose views or lifestyle are different from ours, who are difficult to get along with, or who are marginalised in society. Amen.

## Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

Often I'm asked which is my favourite animal or bird on our smallholding, and I usually give a very quick answer that depends on what I'm doing at the time. Watching a pig eat a tomato and get pips in its eyebrows and juice all over its face and front legs

is magic – you can't be gloomy after that! Sheep smell lovely and want to rub their faces on your trousers and nibble the cords of your waterproof coat. Poultry are inquisitive and want to join in with whatever you're doing, including standing in a freshly dug hole where you thought you'd plant a tree. It's so hard to make a choice!

But then why do I have to make a choice? Instead I can rejoice in their differences, handle the awkward times with patience and love them to bits – a bit like God in All Saints' and All Souls' tide. 🐷

“Our love to God is measured by our everyday fellowship with others and the love it displays.”

Andrew Murray (1828-1917), South African writer, teacher and pastor

Becky Mynett *reflects on* Matthew 22:34-end

Today's Gospel reading includes what has become known as the golden rule: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” This principle is found in all major world religions and is widely subscribed to by many people who have no religious faith. Jesus says that this saying (which is part of today's Old Testament reading from Leviticus) is the second great commandment. The first comes from Deuteronomy: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is an exemplary answer. The Pharisees, who were known – and respected – for their adherence to the law and for their zeal for the coming of God's kingdom,

could not possibly find fault with it. But they have misunderstood the nature of the kingdom of God. They were hoping for the rule of a king descended from the great King David, who would overthrow Israel's enemies once and for all. They believed that by following the law and avoiding anything or anyone that would make them unclean, they were submitting to God's kingship. But the Gospel is more radical than that. The Messiah is not merely a king, and belonging to the kingdom is not dependent on following the law or avoiding unclean and sinful people. They, and we, need both to love God and to love our neighbours (including the sinful ones) as ourselves. 🙏

## The Bible through the week

by Richard Greatrex

*Continuing our look at the Bible readings for the coming week, from Monday to Saturday.*

Monday's Gospel (Luke 13:10-17) shows Jesus healing a woman who has been bent double for eighteen years. In Friday's reading (Luke 14:1-6) he heals a man with dropsy and, knowing that the lawyers and Pharisees are watching his every move, he meets them head on. Surely it is compassionate on any day of the week, he says, to rescue a child or an animal from

drowning, or to set someone free from a crippling illness? That stumps them.

That's not to argue with any of the Ten Commandments. It's sensible and magnanimous that time for rest and recuperation should be enshrined in the Law. But a compassionate deed should never be confused with work. When compassion becomes a chore, when our busy schedules don't allow us time to turn our attention to those in need of healing, it's time to ask God to reset our compassion button, and remind us of the joy to be found in reaching out to help others. 🙏