

## Bible reading Matthew 10:40-42 Even a cup of cold water

THIS WEEK WE EXPLORE HOW WE REPRESENT JESUS.

In this week's Gospel reading we get a glimpse into God's economy, where those who give to others are rewarded by their heavenly Father, even if they give just a cup of cold water to someone who needs it.



## Bible notes



Having spoken generally to the crowd, Matthew now tells us that Jesus' attention turns to the Twelve, and the tone becomes even more solemn. In many ways this is a second commissioning of this band of close followers (the first being in 10:10ff). In three proverbial sayings, Jesus outlines the call on the lives of his followers.

First, because they are sent by him, those who welcome them will be welcoming Jesus and the God who sent him. So, the Twelve and those who come after them are not offering their own thoughts on what life is about; rather they are bringing the message of their Lord. Second, Jesus talks about his followers as prophets and righteous ones. We are those set apart for the task God has given us; and so, as we speak his word, we are being prophetic; as we offer the way of discipleship, we are showing the way of the righteous (though quite what the reward is here is slightly obscure). Third, those who offer hospitality to the messengers of Jesus will be blessed.

There is encouragement at the end of this discourse: some people are receptive to our message (vv.40-42). This recalls the hospitality enjoyed by the disciples from people of good will (see vv.11-13). Such hospitality could be costly for those offering it – so, it is indication that their interest in the message goes well beyond the casual. Who are the prophets and righteous ones that Jesus refers to here? We are, when we take God's word and new way of righteousness to anyone who'll listen.

## EXPLORE

Use an internet search, or a local library, to find as many different ways as you can of offering a greeting someone – e.g. high 5s, shaking hands, hugging, verbal greetings in different languages, BSL greetings. Can you try some out (you may need to pre-warn someone)? How does it feel to greet and be greeted? Can you remember some for future use?

## Pray

Fold a piece of A5 card in half, greeting-card style. Draw/colour the front to make it look like a door. Inside the door card write 'Jesus is with me wherever I go'. Then, inside the card list places you will go during your week – as many as you can think of. Look at the card every day and pray for the places and the people associated with them this week.

## MAKE

Companies, charities, clubs, nations and more, all have symbols and logos that represent them to the wider world – images that speak of the history, or character, or purpose of the organisation or group. What symbol or image might speak of what God has done in and through your community, or your own life? Cut a circle of card (approx. 5cm in diameter) and make a badge with your very own Christian symbol or logo.



## First impressions

- What small gestures can you make that could prompt people to think about faith?
- When or where have you felt able to talk about your faith?
- What opportunities do you have to represent Jesus this week?

## A prayer of adoration

God, you are the open arms of acceptance, the warmth of a hearty welcome, the joy of a sincere smile. We cannot see you, and Jesus walked the earth long ago, yet we know by faith that he embodied your welcoming presence in his dealings with your needy children. We worship and adore you for all that you are.

**Amen.**

## REFLECT

A cup of cold water is a sign of welcome in a hot and dry climate; in the UK we tend to offer cups of tea! How might you welcome God? Play some gentle music (instrumental is better, as words may distract). Light one or more candles. Watch the candles for a while then close your eyes. Say, silently or aloud, 'Welcome God'. After another short silence, acknowledge or recognise God's presence by saying, 'Thank you for being here with me'.