

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time: 2/24/19

Forgive your enemies and pray for those who persecute you

It's another wonderful weekend. This week, God's word invites us to love our enemies and pray for those who treat us badly. This is another reason why Christianity is a call to walk on the 'narrow path'. It is not easy to assume all the demands of it. How can we seriously love those who hate us? How can we wish them any good if they are coming after us? We sure need the grace of God to abide by the saving word!

Let's look at the first reading, which recounts the story of David and how he came upon a sleeping enemy, Saul, and decided to spare his life. Saul had grown so jealous of David that he was looking to kill him. He did not want to see him again on the surface of the earth. What was David's crime? Very simple: he killed Goliath and the women made David a song that 'Samuel had killed his thousands and David had killed his ten thousand. That is all! Rather than Saul showing appreciation to the young man for what he had done for Israel by killing the common enemy, Goliath, and overcoming the Philistines, he rather became jealous of him and sought to kill him. Saul grew restless, and toxic from within as he hatched wicked plans to destroy the young man.

David, on the other hand, shows us what we can do when we are at the receiving end of someone's jealous and envious attacks or when we have to endure some hatred of some kind. David shows the power to FORGIVE the enemy, an alternative and godly path to follow. David came across his enemy fast asleep. His commanders

told him to strike him once, but he chose a different path, he chose the path of forgiveness and mercy. He chose trust in God's word.

This must not seem so un-relatable. It's a tendency that could be found in families, at the workplace, in every profession, and sometimes in Church. Why is it that he is the only one who does everything? Why is that she is the only one people speak well of? If you are a parent, or a teacher, or a pastor, or a leader watch out for these. It's a natural human feeling to unconsciously feel a little jealous and envious towards others. What is unchristian is when such feelings begin to determine how we treat one another, including the tendency to throw others under the bus and make others feel worthless. In Christ Jesus, we have become the new man...recreated in God's image and saved by Christ on the cross.

Let us make a conscious effort to forgive one another as God has forgiven us in Christ

A story to go with...

Here is a famous story about a foolish man who heard that Buddha taught that you should never return evil for evil.

One day, the man met Buddha and decided to see if Buddha practiced what he preached. The man began heaping all kinds of verbal abuse at the great teacher, shouting at him and calling him a stupid fool. All the while, Buddha listened patiently. When the man run out of things to say, Buddha asked him, if a man declines a gift from another to whom does the gift go? The man replied scornfully, "Any fool knows that the gift goes back to the giver!" Buddha said to him, my son, you have

just given me much verbal abuse. I decline to accept your gift. The man made no reply. Then Buddha said further: A man who slanders a virtuous person is like one who spits at the sky. The spittle does not soil the sky, it only comes back to soil the face of the man who spit.

A person gets back from life exactly what the person give to life.

Let's close with a prayer:

Lord help us to know that you are with us throughout all the changing scenes of life.

Remind us that if we sow mercy, compassion and love we shall reap the same. Lord, help us to forgive those who hurt us and pray for those who make life difficult for us.

Through Christ our Lord, Amen!

Praised be Jesus Christ, Now and Forever!