

Making Room to Love Your Enemies
Mark 14:43-51

Dec. 11, 2011

Story of Rwanda:

Could you forgive a person who murdered your family –husband, wife, children, mom/dad/siblings?
 After a plan shot down with president of Rwanda/Burundi, Over about 100 days,
 One million slaughtered in revenge – Hutu vs. Tutsi - neighbors/within churches until finally stopped.
 That is the question faced by the subjects of “As We Forgive” a documentary about 2 Rwandan women
 who come face to face with the men who slaughtered their families in the 1994 genocide.
 THEN -40,000-50000 people admitted participating in murders jailed. Then later released
 by govt (overcrowding) into same neighborhoods! Victims and killers living in the same
 neighborhoods- never before in history -- country of 9-10 million. Size of NYC.

Scripture references

⁴³ Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” ⁴⁵ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. ⁴⁶ The men seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁴⁷ Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁴⁸ “Am I leading a rebellion,” said Jesus, “that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? ⁴⁹Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” ⁵⁰ Then everyone deserted him and fled.

⁵¹ A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, ⁵² he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

“Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? Matthew 26:52-54

Colossians 1

²⁴ Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Phillipians 1:

²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him,

Romans 8

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Summary

From ancient times till now we live in an exceedingly violent world. This violence claims many victims and as servants of Christ, how we respond either reflects the kingdom values Jesus demonstrated and exemplified or our reactions can reflect the very violence around us.

We are called to a life of radical forgiveness, both of ourselves and of other people just as Christ has forgiven us.

1- Suffering as a result of being wronged by others is a key, though unwanted, part of the gospel.

Matthew 5: ⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

²³ “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

2- Suffering, if we allow God to shape us through it, will produce a brokenness that will lead to a meekness of Spirit. Meekness is power under control. *Jesus*, who was God himself, and had access to legions of angels,, came as a meek Savior so that the world might be saved.

3- Doing as God does, forgiving the undeserving, not only makes us more like Him, but brings us closer to Him.

“**Forgiveness is the final form of love.**” Reinhold Niebuhr

4- God first calls us to receive His forgiveness for ourselves.

Small Group Discussion

- 1- **Read the passages listed above and discuss. What strikes you? What is puzzling? How is God speaking to you through them?**
- 2- **Share your reactions to Jesus’ comments in Matthew 26**
- 3- **What does the bible mean when it refers to the sufferings of Christ that we are invited into?**
- 4- **Share an experience with forgiveness (giving or receiving) and how it changed you (or didn’t).**
- 5- **Is there a large or small “sword” that you carry, representing a grudge you hold against someone for a hurt you’ve received? What would it mean for you to “put your sword back in its place”?**
- 6- **What is your experience with receiving God’s forgiveness as well as that of others?**

Pray for each other Then pray this prayer aloud while thinking of the person God is calling you to forgive.

A Prayer for Your “Enemies”

Compassion Meditation

William Meninger adapted by Pete Scazzero

Dec. 18, 2011

May you be happy -- May you be free.

May you be loving, may you be loved.

May you know the fulfillment of what God has planned for you.

May you experience God's deep, profound love for you.

May you receive and grow in the fullness of the graces Jesus has won for you.

May Jesus Christ be formed in you.

May you know His peace that passes all understanding.

May all good things be yours.

May Jesus' joy be in you and may that joy be complete.

May you know the Lord in all His goodness and compassion.

May you be protected from the evil one amidst every temptation that comes your way.

May the Holy Spirit fill and permeate your entire being.

May you see His glory

May you be forgiven of every sin.

I forgive you (or 'will try to forgive you') of every wound and hurt with all my heart.

May God's goodness and mercy follow you all the days of your life.