

Luke 6:27-38

‘But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

‘If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.’

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA)

Reflection

“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” Luke 6:27-28

Like many children, I was often ‘bullied’ because I had red hair. All the usual, carrot top, carrot bottom, match stick any others you can think of I have probably heard them. As I got older and need to wear glasses, all the goggle eyes, four eyes, nerd, geek etc name came out on top of the red head comments, thought they had lessened as my hair slowly became a more auburn colour. You have probably been subjected to it at some point in your life as well.

Most times they hurt, sometimes they were easy to ignore, other times I don’t think I heard them anymore. As we read through the Gospels, we hear that Jesus was regularly bullied. Bullied for his interpretation of what we call the old testament but was the word of God for Jesus, he was bullied because he hung out with the wrong people, he was bullied and charged on false pretences and faced the ultimate penalty for that bullying.

Yet through all of this bullying, Jesus continued to show love toward them. He didn’t retaliate in the classic sense, that is, make rude comments back or call them names, he challenged them to their perception, questioned their own self ‘authority’, challenged them to respond to their forefathers call to worship God as they had promised even back to the times of Jacob, Moses and a whole host of prophets that brought them back to God.

Those he knew he couldn’t do anything with, he moved on. He didn’t try to convince them further. The judgement was left to God for them to face up to.

We heard this morning, ‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.’

I learnt, and still continue to learn, these tenets for our faith. Jesus encourages us to be the best we can for God, not people. When we serve God, we serve people because we are God’s creation. We are called to be stewards of creation and that includes one another.

I wonder how we can change our mindsets when we are ‘bullied’ or persecuted. Sometimes it takes the help of friends and lots of love, but mostly it takes us to believe in God and hold onto our faith through good and bad. It certainly has for me, I pray that you too have found that strength. Amen.