

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time - C - 2019
1 Sam.26.2,7-9,12-13,22,23///1 Cor.15.45-49///Luke 6.27-38

→today's gospel reading is one that no one likes to face...because in reality it really is a good examination of conscience for how we treat people....and it's not about how we treat those we like...but moreso about those we don't like and the people who don't like us.

→we hear *“do good to those who hate you...bless those who curse you...pray for those who maltreat you....turn your cheek to those who strike you....give to all who beg from you.....and expect no repayment in return for doing any of this...*

→these are not comfortable words to hear...

→[you know] throughout Scriptures there are many things about Jesus and his teachings that are attractive...but I would have to say this passage isn't one of them.

→we love it when Jesus blesses the children, when he promises us eternal life, even when he asks us to love one another...but when he asks us to love our enemies and to pray for those who mistreat us...that is a different matter...that is a difficult teaching to swallow.

→[you know] when someone dislikes youyou have two choices to consider: you can dislike them back or you can refuse to dislike them..

→when someone hurts you, you can respond one of two ways: you can hurt them back or you can refuse to hurt...

→and what is difficult is that this teaching **goes so** against our human nature because we live in a world...in a culture...that fosters us to not to pass up any opportunity or chance to get even...to settle the score...whenever someone has wronged us in any way...

→ "she didn't speak to me this morning"....she's such a snob

→ "he didn't listen to my side of the story last week"...he's so uncaring, insensitive

→ "the check out clerk cheated me and gave me the wrong change at the grocery store"....they're so stupid

→ "my client bought some products from another distributor"...that's loyalty for you!

→ ...day in and day out, [sometimes without even realizing it] we decide each other's worth and value...we easily judge and pass indictments on each other

→ [a] story is told about a group of American GI's during the Korean War...that proves this point...

--one day the GI's decided to hire a young Korean boy to clean up around the barracks and to prepare meals for them.

→ the boy who they hired had a delightful personality...always upbeat and easy going.

→ no matter what the soldiers did, he only smiled and continued to do his work...to the point that his upbeat nature began to bother the soldiers...

--so one day...they decided they would compete to see who could make the boy angry by playing practical jokes on him...

---one time they nailed his shoes to the floor of the barracks...but the boy simply took out some pliers and pulled up the nails...he smiled and kept on with his work.

---another time, they put a pail of water on the door so that, when the boy came in the room, the water fell on him and completely drenched him...but he dried himself off, smiled and continued his chores.

→in the end they tried one practical joke after another but never got an angry response...

→so finally feeling embarrassed about the whole project, they decided it needed to stop...so they called the boy in and they said, *“you have such a wonderful personality, such a forgiving nature, that we are not going to do any more practical jokes on you”*

→the boy said, “no more joke?”.... “no more” they said.

--“no more nail in shoe?” “no more” they said

--“no more water on door?” “no more” they said

--“good” the boy said, “then no more spit in soup.”

→you see...this is the kind of world we live in...and why the words of Jesus today are so challenging.

→when we are hurt...we usually hurt in return....when someone dislikes us....we dislike back....when someone approaches us with violence...we usually respond with greater violence...

→and it is to this tendency that Jesus speaks to in today's Gospel reading

PAUSE

---our gospel reading today is very powerful and straightforward....so straightforward that it is almost haunting

→it is a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount....and just like last week Jesus tells his listeners...what it means to be a follower of Christ...what it means to be a Christian person

→in essence today's reading gives us the basic moral principles for living the Christian life
...////and very similar to the beatitudes from last week, today's reading continues to reveal to us the plan of what it means to be a Christian person

---in the same way that an architect follows blueprints

---a lawyer follows the rules of law

---a doctor follows the rules of medicine

Christianity, life in Christ's body ---also has a plan, a rulebook, a code of ethics if you will and today Jesus is telling us **this is the way it is...**

→*love your enemies: do good to those who hate you....bless those who curse you and pray for those who maltreat you*

→*give to those who need: do not demand repayment, give when asked*

→*be compassionate, do not judge, do not condemn, forgive those who hurt you*

-----////PAUSE////-----

.....→pretty strong words when you think about it and even stronger words to put into practice
→and yet that is what J. is challenging you and me to do because that is what we have said we would do as members of his body

→[and so] perhaps we need to ask ourselves...if we like the results we are getting by responding to hurt with more hurt...to violence with more violence...to spitting in soup because of practical jokes.

→are we content with the outcome from following the principle of “getting even” every time we have been wronged.

→or as Dr. Phil would say.... “and how’s that been working for you?”

PAUSE

→the gospel teaching today, [as I see it,] is powerful, straightforward, plain and straight to the point

→and it is equally hard, challenging, and very difficult to accept and live

----some might even say it is impossible

→but before we dismiss this teaching as something that is undoable....should we admit that the present way of life [of always getting even] seems to be getting us nowhere...

And perhaps God has noticed that as well...

maybe God **has** noticed how we are with one another

how we misuse the world, misuse each others feelings and take advantage of one another

.....maybe...God has noticed how we seem to be uncaring at times, and self-centered

and so maybe ...just maybeits time that we also take notice

and more importantly...perhaps maybe it's time to stop spitting in each other's

soup.