

Living Lent | Day 10

Serving Our Neighbor, Together

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Matthew 5:43–48 RSV

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

In the scripture from Matthew Jesus is quoted as saying: "You have heard it said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy'." As with the man who asked Jesus who his neighbor was, we can ask who is my enemy? I think that for many of us our enemies are those that others have told us to hate. I was fortunate to have a father that considered everyone to be his friend. But not everyone experiences that. When we hear others talking about people from certain places and they talk about "hating those people" we soon get it in out of our heads that we should also hate them.

There is a great difference between 'hate' and 'love'. When we hate someone, we aren't causing them any problem. Hate only affects us. It eats away at our being able to do good. It negatively affects us emotionally and physically. Have you ever seen someone who says they 'hate'? Their facial expression is usually distorted. Their body tenses up. Both cause physical problems. Their blood pressure goes up and their breathing gets exasperated. Chemicals in the body get out of whack.

I am sure that there have been times in my own life where I have experienced this myself. Getting cut off in traffic, having someone go in front of me in line, hearing

someone talking about someone in a bad way – these really get me upset. I want to go and punch them in the nose. And then I remember what Jesus said next: “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” That takes me to the use of the word “love”. I came across a saying a few weeks ago but I don’t remember where. It goes like this: “If you want peace, don’t talk to your friends. Talk to your enemies.” I think that is a fresh way of saying what Jesus was saying. I have had to learn to let the folks I mentioned above go in front of me and not be resentful of them. Just love them. When I have let others go ahead of me, they usually wave a thank you. I feel better and so do they. What a difference it would make if we would all recognize that we are in this life together and support one another.

***Challenge to Prayer and the Exercise of the Privilege of Generosity:
Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ***

Reverend Dr. Albert (Bert) T. Cramer is the Stated Supply Pastor at Jekyll Presbyterian Community Church located on Jekyll Island. Dr. Cramer describes the Church as “a small congregation with mostly retired members, whose mission is lived out through our Christian faith by welcoming all who come to worship.” The body of Christ at Jekyll Presbyterian supports Manna House, Hospice of the Golden Isles, Sparrows Nest, and The Well. In addition, the Congregation supports the Grandmother’s Closet, which is unique in that it makes available, at no cost, medical equipment for home use as well as strollers, highchairs, bicycles, etc. for when kids and grandkids come to visit. That sense of community commitment includes Morningstar as well, a commitment that honors God and provides a way to continue the provisions for the Children that are served there. What an example of serving our neighbor, together!

*It takes a lot of everything to **create home and healing** for the foster children, our neighbors, served at Morningstar Children’s Home.*

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