

Day 259 – Friday, December 4, 2020

This is a five-part series. This is the last part.

4 Teachings of Jesus That His Followers (Almost) Never Take Seriously

4. You're supposed to sacrifice yourself and speak words of blessings for those you disagree with the most.

"Love Your Enemies and Bless Those Who Persecute You" Matthew 5:44 ESV

It seems like every week there is a new major controversy taking place within the Church. Most of the time, the situation revolves around one group of Christians disagreeing with another and then taking to the internet to write slanderous posts about the other. If it's not infighting, then it is Christians engaging in culture wars, working to defeat those whom we disagree with politically and socially by painting them as soul-less monsters. But that response is absolutely contrary to the way of Jesus. Jesus calls his followers to love the people they disagree with most and to speak blessings over them when all we really want to do is curse them out. No matter what the situation is or what kind of enemy we have, Christians are called to bless the people who hurt us the most. This includes in theological battles, political disagreements, national wars, and personal conflicts. Christians are called to a radical position of nonviolence and forgiveness, grace, and even blessing of our enemies. There is no way around it. And when Christians chose to ignore these clear teachings, our hypocrisy is glaringly obvious to the watching world.

In this post, I have offered just four examples. There are hundreds of teachings contained in the 4 Gospels of the New Testament, teachings that, if we obeyed, would absolutely flip our lives and world upside-down for the glory of God and the good of all people. What the Church as a whole and Evangelicals in particular desperately need in this age is a return to the plain teachings of Jesus. We need to be willing to set aside our theological debates and meanderings for a season and focus on simply reading, conforming, and obeying the will of Christ, both as revealed in Scripture and as we are led by his Spirit. The world is desperately longing to encounter Jesus through us and for far too long we have been giving them a cheap knock off that we have exported under his name. But it's clear to everyone that what is passing for Christianity today is almost totally divorced from the teachings of Jesus Christ.

My prayer is that we would all turn our faces towards our risen Savior and seek to selflessly follow his commands. I am convinced that the Jesus' way is the only way that will heal our broken world. I am convinced that the whole earth is groaning as it waits for men and women to take of their crosses and follow in the way of redemption. I am convinced that when those of us who call ourselves "Christian" re-orient ourselves in Jesus, the power of God will flow through us in an unprecedented and miraculous way that will bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Oh how I long for that day.

“Those who aren’t following Jesus aren’t his followers. It’s that simple. Followers follow, and those who don’t follow aren’t followers. To follow Jesus means to follow Jesus into a society where justice rules, where love shapes everything. To follow Jesus means to take up his dream and work for it.” —

Scot McKnight

“Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, champagne in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming “WOO HOO what a ride!” (Hunter S. Thompson)

Sincerely,
Fr. Jim Kaptein