



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Homily by Father Chris Comerford
February 24, 2019 The 7th Day in Ordinary Time

Reading I I Samuel 26:2, 7-9. 12-13, 22-23

Psalm 103:1-13

Reading II 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

Gospel Luke 6:27-38

Homily

David had his chance. He snuck into Saul's camp. Everybody was asleep. Saul's sword was by his head in the ground. David had his chance. Saul was terrible to him. He became his enemy and they were embattled against each other. One of the men with David said, "This is your chance. You are going to be king. Get rid of this guy." And David said, "No. I am not going to kill the Lord's anointed." Even though Saul didn't live the way he should, Saul still had this important place—he was the anointed one. It is a great lesson for us, particularly when we hear the Gospel today.

If you were like me and if you were listening close, you might want to get up and walk out when you heard this Gospel. What? Get up and walk out? Did you really listen to what Jesus was telling us? This is not easy. "Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who hate you. Pray for those who mistreat you."

We are good at saying, "I do all those things."

Oh, really. There aren't people in your life who when you think of their names you tense up. All you have to do is think of their names or be their presence. That happens to most of us. There are people we struggle with, especially people who have done something to hurt us, even more, to hurt someone else that we love. That is where I have to struggle. When I know someone has hurt someone else who is important to me, that person is often the person I struggle with. And there may be some people who see me as an enemy. Hopefully not intentionally, but it still has happened. There are people in which relationships need to be strengthened and this is a challenging way to do it—to do good to those who hate you? To bless those who curse you? Pray for those who mistreat you?

This is a great challenge that Jesus is giving us today. And this is often the opposite of what we want to do. Usually when somebody is our enemy, we want to avoid them and avoid any connection with them whatsoever. I don't want to think about them, I don't want to talk about them, I don't want to see them. But what is Jesus saying? Love them. Do good to them. We go through this and He keeps going: Give them the other cheek. If they take your coat, give them your tunic. If someone takes what is yours, do not

demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you—the Golden Rule. But Jesus goes even farther.

So often we interpret the Golden Rule as: If you don't want somebody to do bad to you, don't do bad to somebody else and it becomes about avoiding the bad things.

But we don't always see it as treating other people with love and respect and doing the positive things. Sometimes we struggle with doing good things for the people we like, and the people we love. And he is asking us to do these nice things for the people we don't like? It is such a great challenge. The problem is that we keep this on an emotional level. It is really more there than on the actual level. "It is how I feel about them." And that is where it gets caught up because the emotion gets in and we become tense, we become angry. And then we react, and what happens? We think, "They haven't done anything nice for me, so don't ask me to do anything nice for them." Such a challenge when Jesus presents this idea of showing acts of kindness and acts of love to all people—to put that first is a challenge.

"Be merciful as your Father is merciful. Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven." If we have to make it personal this is how we do it. Jesus is saying, "Don't expect God to treat you differently than you treat other people." We really should go beyond these things, and it is a challenge.

What is our usual reaction when somebody does something to us? When somebody hurts you, go on Facebook and tell everyone what he or she did to you. Isn't that the first reaction that most people have, and the reason most people do this is because they want sympathy? This can be a real challenge. When people post their reactions on Facebook I wonder if they realize what they have just done by putting this information out publically? It is tough because we are quick to judgment. What are media pollsters doing; it is about getting the news out fast. We have seen this recently on a national level, haven't we, where a story comes out, or only part of a story. And right away, condemnation and judgment takes place and good people have fallen into this.

An example of this was the reaction of the high school kids in Kentucky. That is why it is good to wait until you know the entire story. We use to believe in "innocent until proven guilty;" now it is "you are guilty until you have proven yourself innocent." It is a challenge. Hopefully that is not going to be that way with us.

As Christians we are called to higher standards. Now you may say, "This is impossible. There is no way I can do this. You don't realize how bad that person hurt me." Humanly it is. I think that is the message Jesus is giving us. This is only possible with the grace of God. We need his help. We need to reflect what God has shown to us. And since He offers it to us, he will give us the strength to be able to live this out.

Sometimes a person will come into confession and say, "Father, I don't really have any sins to confess. I don't know what I did." For someone like that, this is a good Gospel to

read because the message in the Gospel is that it is often hard to love those who are difficult to love. It is amazing but it is possible. Let's pray to take this to heart. Let's pray to be about acts of love and not acts of anger and vengeance. Let's open our hearts so we can truly be disciples of Jesus by following him is this. He lived this out. He showed us how to do this. Let's truly seek to be about positive things that we can do, even to our enemies.

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