

Do Unto Others: #1 “Kindness”

Sunday, September 1, 2024

Luke 6:27-38

Rev. Dr. Chris Keating

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Jesus is leveling with the people: life will be hard. You will live in a divided and fractious world. There will be people who will do more than merely resent you. They will abandon you. They will hurt you with words and with their hands. They will lack mercy.

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That is the bad news. Jesus' words to his congregation emerge from his understanding of their daily, lived experiences. The world will hate you, Jesus has said. And more than a few in the crowd were likely to have muttered, "ain't that the truth."

Ain't that the truth: we work hard, only to find out that others have found ways to skirt the rules. Ain't that the truth: we spend our lives trying to be good people, only to be brought short by illness or pain, deceit. Ain't that the truth: we have extended mercy to people, only to have been taken advantage of, or cheated, or hurt.

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Ain't that the truth: life in the corrosive, toxic soup of this world is hard.

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To show kindness, we must learn to do the things that God does: love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." Now, it is a mistake to suggest that Jesus is calling us to be passive in the face of abuse. It is also a mistake to assume that being kind means going along to get along, and never standing up for what you believe. Instead, kindness emerges from a heart that has been changed by grace. Kindness emerges from gratitude.

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