

Love Who?

“If your enemy is hungry feed him...”

Romans 12:20 (NIV)

The young man came from an abusive home. His father took every opportunity, it seems, to beat up on his son. The person speaking to me stated that as far as he was concerned his father was dead. Now that the victim had grown up he totally ignored his aging father. He did not wish to hear from him or about him from any family member.

Finally the abusive father died. The son was informed of the date and time of his father’s funeral but refused to attend.

Certainly those of us who have never had to endure such torment as children cannot understand the horrors of those years for the victim. We shake our heads in bewilderment as we hear of what he endured.

The father had tried to reach out to his son prior to dying but to no avail. The young man was adamant that there was no reconciliation possible. We wonder if the dad was remorseful and wished to confess his sin. Sadly the family does not know what would have happened if the two men had indeed met.

What did make the situation even more sorrowful was the fact that the victim professed

to have his own sins forgiven through Jesus. The son had benefited from confessing his sins but apparently decided that what Jesus had given him, he would not extend to his father.

In Matthew 5:44 Jesus said, “Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” I refrained from asking the abused person what blessings he had given to his father or what good deeds he had done in return for the abuse he endured over the years. The young fellow was not in the right frame of mind to hear what Jesus had said.

However, it is in such tragic situations as this victim was in that the love of Christ can shine the brightest. Our Christianity is certainly stretched to the limit when we are called on to be kind to such abusive people. Yet, as followers of Jesus we are called on to find that amazing grace that will help us do good even to such a terrible enemy.

Corrie Ten Boom and her family suffered terribly in a German concentration camp because they had hidden Jews in WW 2. She told the story

of meeting one of the German guards years after the war was over. She instantly recognized him as one of the men who had so miserably humiliated her and the others in the camp. He came to shake her hand at the door after she had given a speech about her experience in the concentration camp she and her sister were interned in and in which her sister had died. After a few moments of deep internal struggle she reached out, shook his hand and forgave him.

The love of God that is poured into our hearts as Christians can enable us to overcome our hatred for those who abuse us, and give us the willingness to forgive the ones who have hurt us the most in life. If you have been abused, consider the teaching of Jesus to act in kindness toward anyone who has harmed you. Seek to pray for them. Ask the Lord to work in their hearts so that they will someday experience the forgiveness that the Lord has given you. This is the will of the One Who prayed on the cross for His executioners, “Father forgive them they do not know what they are doing.”