

“Just Peace”

Grove Presbyterian Church

October 3, 2010

New Testament Lesson Matthew 10: 34-40

And this is the same fellow who said, “Blessed are the peacemakers?” Now he’s telling them that there’s going to be scant peace for them. It won’t be easy, there will be swords.

For James, it will be the sword quite literally. James, Jesus’ cousin, among the first to say yes to him, will be beheaded for Jesus’ sake. I wonder if he remembered the irony of these words as the sword sliced down onto his neck.

There is a price to pay in the demand for justice, for wresting the world inside out to fit what is right by God., for breaking the cycle that perpetuates tribal violence and revenge and hatred by loving your enemies, praying for them, letting go of pride and power and that sick manipulation of others to instead serve them and sacrifice yourself for them.

We know exactly where hatred and self-justification leads us. How about changing our ways? How about us first becoming the change we demand of others?

Which requires this radical love to do this, this uncompromising devotion to God. For if you adore your comforts, your plans, your expectations, your reputation, even your family more, how could you ever be free and bold to do the dirty work that you have to do?

The perversion of this radical obedience to God is what leads to honor killings or shunning by Amish. How, for these sick souls, God’s law is more important than even your daughter should she, given your idolatrous standard of pride, shame you.

But Christ came to break such cycles and operate by grace rather than rules. Hence the danger, hence the chance. Love Jesus more than the law.

Yes, Christ demands a radical obedience to him before all things, for he himself knew from personal experience how even love of family can interfere with what you have to do. The incredible twist is, however, if you really love them, you do what you got to do

What infantryman would ever leave his wife, say goodbye to her on the tarmac, and be willing to be shipped overseas to be killed in action if he loved her more than his duty? Yet (and here’s the greater love): because he loves her, he does leave her and he does his duty for her sake. May the cause be necessary and worthy.

These Twelve should have known how tough it would be to be worthy of their Jesus, for when they each agreed to follow him, they already experienced lack of peace. Their inner restlessness, their own struggling souls is what led them to listen and follow.

Yes, then he turned their lives upside down. Yes, he welcomed the outcast, the terrorist, the prostitute, the greedy to belong to him; but, yes, his love also required they change their ways. No patsy Jesus this. Yet, getting clean maybe they began to experience a real inner peace in their souls for the first time in their lives. Just peace.

The Way of God in the world achieved inside/out first before justice can happen outside/in. There's the Jesus difference.

We go from these Twelve to our Seven...

Commissioning of Nicaraguan Team