

August 17, 2020

*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Matthew 5:43-48*

I began writing my blog while listening to today's blog with Bishop Curry and Jeff Chu. I've never heard of Jeff Chu and I was expecting much.

As I was writing, the words being spoken in the podcase grabbed my attention. This conversation is very powerful and I encourage you to listen to it. Our scripture today is appropriate for the conversation.

Chu told stories about the Farminary. The farm at Princeton Theological Seminary operated by the seminary and a place where some classes were held. <https://www.ptsem.edu/discover/farminary/overview>

Later in the conversation, Chu talks about Bishop Mary Glasspool and Westboro Baptist Church. Bishop Curry says that they are probably at the opposite ends of the cultural spectrum. Chu talks about the conversation he had with this Bishop who might be considered "ultra-liberal" and the members of this church group who might be considered "ultra-conservative." Although Chu identified with Bishop Glasspool, he didn't minimize the ministry of the people of Westboro Baptist Church.

Chu said this:

"I am reformed. That is my theology. I don't believe in God's eyes I deserve love or am worthy of love more or less than the folks at Westboro Church. I don't believe God's grace for me or for them is more or less. I don't believe that their humanity is worth less than mine because I don't happen to walk around with signs that are horrible. I believe in the eyes of God our sin is equal and God's love for us is equal. ... There are seeds of good in all of us and there is the ability to do harm in all of us. I'm not going to magnify my good and diminish theirs. And I'm also not going to minimize evil and magnify theirs."

Chu urges us to remember that our dignity and our love comes from God. We tend to spend a lot of time looking for dignity and love from the people around us rather than embracing the dignity and love that is freely given to us by God.

This ability to recognize that we were all created in God's image and we are all worthy of God's love can result in our ability to have difficult conversations and walking away agreeing to disagree rather than hating one another.

Note: This is an over-simplification but Reformed Theology is considered any system of belief that traces its roots back to the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century. The Reformers themselves traced their doctrine to Scripture, as indicated by their credo of “sola scriptura,” so Reformed theology is not a “new” belief system but one that seeks to continue apostolic doctrine. Reformed theology holds to the authority of Scripture, the sovereignty of God, salvation by grace through Christ, and the necessity of evangelism. It is sometimes called Covenant theology because of its emphasis on the covenant God made with Adam and the new covenant which came through Jesus Christ (Luke 22:20).