**“Love Enemies?”**

Psalm 26

Jeremiah 15:15-21

Romans 12:9-21

Matthew 16:21-28

Pentecost 14

“From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

Since 1882, growing segments of the United States have been purposefully honoring the **labors of laborers** by setting aside a day for that. The **work of people** **(humanity)** is given a **day** in every year … yet, honestly, most all of us give our work our **whole lives**. We educate in **preparing for it** and we quickly adopt the **habit of it** by, even while in school, prepping for the full-time version of it by getting part-time versions of it in jobs. And then (when of some certain age of accomplishment of it) we **retire from it all** … yet never fully … just changing the scenery of it, maybe. The **efforts** (**labors)** of human life **IS**, mostly, our **main thing**. It ought to be called (for so the many) a “**religion of first focus**” **…** a **cultural expectation to be that as much as it is a choice for it** **…** but it’s **what we DO** and, often, **WHO WE ARE that’s DOING IT**. We say, for instance, that “**I am** a teacher”, not I **do** teaching or “**I am** a pastor” or “**I am** a business person”, getting **identified** by **what we do**. “**I am** a mother raising a family”, a “father being fatherly” or “I am a husband being as a husband’s expected to be” or “a citizen **doing what I must**”. What we **DO** is, in action, what we **ARE**.

**Text**

And that’s true of all things noticeable, but not all things are noticeable by **what they look like**. And looks aren’t, always, **supposed to match what’s expected**. For instance, **loving** doesn’t mean some **natural like for those likeable**. **Loving** means, really, **loving enemies** … the un-noteworthy **DOING** **OF** **unexpected (and unnatural) things to that degree** and **without, mostly, any notice**.

Last week we heard **Peter** **unnaturally (super-naturally)** **cosmically identify** God’s Son (so complimented by Him for stating the super-natural confession that’s what God’s Church stands on in a faith about **Who** Jesus is as the Divine Son from Heaven. This week (and right after the work of last week’s profession) the same guy (the “hero” of last week) Jesus called “Satan” … for **DOING** **the work (the labors) of Satan**. What got commented-upon last week in the **extraordinary labor of Peter** **for** **Good**, different labors (for evil and Satan) Peter got condemned for in discouraging the **essential work of God in Christ Jesus to** **love every enemy who’d need that done … all the way to His own death.**

**And supernatural doing (like that) is** **the ESSENTIAL LOVE**. What’s demanded of us along with, even, the Lord Himself who actually submitted to it is the **extraordinary (not natural) ACTIVITY and WORK that’s beyond (well beyond) understandable common sense**, deliberate and habitual and reactive **FOR ENEMIES** such that it looks like nothing more than a **natural course of activity** and, yet, **isn’t … not natural, but super-natural**). Jesus would **die**, but then **let Himself be killed**, heading to Jerusalem to **submit Himself to it** for **ENEMIES** **…** **to** **ENEMIES** … **for** **ENEMIES**.

“**Be** **genuine**. Abhor the evil; hold fast to the Good. **Be** **zealous**” in **automatic impractical caring action**. “**Serve** **the Lord**. **Rejoice** **in hope**, **be patient** **in tribulation**, **be constant** **in prayer**. **Contribute**” fully, **“seek” to be “hospitable” to even those who make no sense to be “hospitable” to.** **“Bless” your “persecutors”**, **“weep” with those weeping who you don’t like**.

**Jesus** **DID all those things … with perfection … and DID THEM ALL THE WAY TO THEIR FINAL DESTINATION HE DID** **…** **FOR ENEMIES** who He never said He particularly “liked” **…** just **LOVED, so LOVED IN ACTION** **…** **ENEMIES** the Father had always said were “evil to the very core of our hearts intentions”. For **THOSE / “US”** the first verse of our Gospel reading stands as testimony that has to be proclaimed, otherwise it would never have been noted upon this earth, of what He would **actually DO (GOD WOULD), to LOVE UNNATURALLY** **as far as any senses humans have to notice it**.

And then He said: “**You** **DO THAT ALSO …** **with crosses ALSO THAT EXTREME**. It’s why we have to know ourselves as **ENEMIES OF GOD** **originally**, since the expectations have always been that high / that super-natural, yet expected of those who **LOVE GOD FIRST, TO THEN LOVE ENEMIES BECAUSE OF IT**.

**“If anyone would come after Me”, Jesus said, “let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it**.” **Dying to ourselves and living on behalf of, and for, GOD and even ENEMIES** is **EXPECTED … and it’s what Jesus did, as the Creed reminds us, “FOR US MEN AND FOR OUR SALVATION” … not His**. **Dying to self He did. Dying to self we’d need to fully do**, **gaining in that Him Who did it FOR US / the Savior Who SAVED ENEMIES NEEDING IT THAT WAY**.

And it will begin to spread upon **ENEMIES STILL** the **saving “coals”** of **DIVINE (NOT EARTHLY or NATURAL) but SUPER-NATURAL SALVATION**.

**Application**

Which is what those “coals” heaped upon our heads **DO / ACTUALLY BESTOW (AND “HEAP” UPON HEADS)** every time **our simplest and unbeknownst-by-us supernatural “heroics” to even ENEMIES** happens **because of our link to a cross that we NOW ALSO HAVE (THE LORD’S AND, ALSO, OUR OWN IN PARTICULAR)**. We (as that expression goes that the Book of Romans uses, as does also Proverbs), “heap burning coals” upon a heads to accumulate as we **ACTIVELY, AND ETERNALLY, SUPER-NATURALLY LOVE PEOPLE (FRIENDS ALL THE WAY TO ENEMIES OF OURS, YET ALL ENEMIES OF GOD UNTIL MADE “ACCREDITED FRIENDS” BY HIM**).

“**Coals**” are **REALITY CHECKS**, but eternal realities aren’t the things earthlings recognize naturally. **Who’d guess** that **we’re born EMEMIES OF GOD** without a **reality check of Law saying (SPECIFICALLY) that “all have sinned and fall short of God’s glory”, “I was a sinner from my mother’s womb”, “no one is righteous, no not one”, we NEED SAVED**. **Who’d know** that we **can’t SAVE OURSELVES** (as if something like **SALVATION** was necessary at all) was **what WAS NECESSARY** without the **“coals” of God’s explicit Word clarifying what could be only hinted-at by natural failures**.

Peter was, just, expressing the “**natural**” when “he took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him” about **the PLANS**, “saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord! This shall never happen to You’”. He missed, though (for the moment), the **PLANS** that **included the “resurrection”, and them who’d see it and SUPER-NATURALLY UNDERSTAND IT**. Easter, then Pentecost, followed as **DIVINE ACTIONS** Jesus knew clearly **through THE CROSS**. “There are some standing here” (all except for Judas is the “some” He referred to) “who will not taste death until **SEEING” (THE SUPER-NATURAL / DIVINE SEEING) OF “THE SON OF MAN COMING IN HIS KINGDOM”** (the “**IT IS FINISHED AND, WITH IT, the birth of His Kingdom even of the Church on earth anticipating His second coming and enjoying that Kingdom YET-while-not-FULLY**).

**For that (with us)** let’s remember the eternal demand of God to **pray for it in us**: “Thy Kingdom come”, Lord God, which means that **we know that** “the Kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, yet we pray in this petition that it may come to us also”, and it “comes when our Heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead Godly lives” (**ACT**) “here in time and their in eternity”, and “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven” **knowing that** “the Good and gracious will of God is done” **among us reflecting Him** “even without our prayer when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God’s name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. **This is** His Good and gracious will.”

“Heavenly Father, Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, and as Your Son did upon this earth. In +Jesus’ name. Amen.”