

+WEEKLY REFLECTION

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All for Jesus

Matthew 10:32-39

I once met a lady at the church door after morning worship in one of my parishes. I had referred to today's text, but it wasn't one of the set ones for this morning.

'I can't believe that's in the Bible', she said!

'I can assure you Jesus said it', I promised. It isn't what we expect to hear if we are being truthful. It strikes an unusual note for those who would have Jesus simply in the meek and mild category.

So, what is going on? Jesus is using a rhetorical device for certain. In other words, he's exaggerating a point to make it emphatically. I don't suppose for one minute that he means that he wanted to break up families, just that he realised the gospel will do that.

In truth, many of us will know the experience. We may have family members who simply cannot or do not share our faith. For certain, when I announced that I was going to study for the priesthood several friends of mine couldn't deal with it, though I have to say that was not true of my family.

Similarly, we don't have Jesus cast as a warmonger and yet he clearly advocates taking up a sword here. After all, this is the man who healed the ear of Malchus, who was part of the group who arrested him when Peter struck him.

Today, Jesus reminds us that our primary call once we accept the responsibility of being his disciples, is that we follow him and the good news as our primary responsibility in life. Best case scenario this leads to our family being blessed by that and nurtured in the faith themselves. However, we can never allow our family ties to make us go back on our promise to follow Jesus.

By the same token, following Jesus can lead us into situations of conflict but it must always be our hope and our prayer that the true peace of God, his Shalom, will reign on earth in and through us. We seek to serve the Prince of Peace, and we cannot allow even the closest of relationships to stand in the way of his followers being All for Jesus.

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