



Daily Reflections

March 18, 2019

Scripture

Luke 6: 36-38

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

"Stop judging and you will not be judged.

Stop condemning and you will not be condemned.

Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Give and gifts will be given to you;

a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing,
will be poured into your lap.

For the measure with which you measure
will in return be measured out to you."

Our Scripture Reflection

The number one complaint made against Christians by atheists, agnostic, adolescents and progressives of all stripes is: We are too judgmental. But when we look at what is expected of us by the Gospels, especially when the Gospel mandates come into conflict with contemporary thinking and living, what are we to do? After all, are we not called to be witnesses to the way of Jesus? To be a faithful witness I must:

1. Practice what I preach. Hypocrisy is my biggest enemy. I must cleanse my own faults.

2. I must judge in the face of immorality and injustice. I must always critique the evil I see by the good I believe.
3. I must judge what is bad with mercy and love.
4. My goal must always be to win over the sinner as my brother or sister. If love is not the guiding force of all my actions then I lose all credibility.
5. Pray, pray, pray, before during and after I act.

Food for your Journey

Lewis Smedes, in his article, "Who Are We to Judge?" (Christianity Today, October 1, 2001), says that "Common sense suggests that if no one ever judged other people, there would be no real human community. In a sinful world, no community can exist for long where nobody is ever held accountable: No teacher would grade a student's performance; no citizen would sit on a jury or call a failed leader to account. And, when you come to think of it, nobody would ever forgive anyone for wrongs he had done; we only forgive people for what we blame them, and we blame them only after we have judged them.

"I would suggest that, in our day and age, we need more -- not less -- judgment. Modern Americans suffer from a fear of judging. Passing judgment on the behavior of fellow human beings is considered an act of medieval, undemocratic intolerance." Biblical traditions may challenge our own food production and consumption. Respect for the animal's life led to the elaborate kosher system, including the most humane ways to slaughter (cf. Muslim halal). Today, very few people have killed the animal that they eat, any more than they have grown the wheat in their bread, and the way in which animals are raised and slaughtered in our culture often is far from humane or respectful. An egregious example is the delicacy foie gras, produced by thrusting a tube down the throat of a duck and force-feeding it for weeks before slaughtering it and removing the liver. Is faith compatible with foie gras?

--Thomas W. Mann, "Not by word alone: Food in the Hebrew Bible," Interpretation, October 2013, 356.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear God, Sin and evil seem to have the upper hand so often. So often I look the other way, remain silent or even participate in sin so that I can fit in and be accepted. But Lord You created and redeemed me to be different. You consecrated me through my Baptism into Jesus. Help me to live always as Your son or daughter. May the way I live my life be a "gospel" for others.
Amen