

Why Do I Have To Be The Christian?

We've all been there. We're in a situation where we have been wronged, but instead of retaliating we turn the other cheek, because we think that is what Jesus would do. We teach our kids that's what Jesus would do. I remember my brother and I were fighting over some toy and my mom yelled to us boys would Jesus fight over a toy, we both said no—then my brother leaned over to me and whispered: you be Jesus this time. Christians are to be kind, giving, and as we heard today in the scripture lessons we are to love. Somehow being Christian has come to mean being pavement or carpet—something that people walk on all the time. We think that being Christian means we always must give up, give in, turn the other cheek or let someone else have their way before we get ours. Is that really what Jesus had in mind when he said, “As the Father loved me, so I have loved you, abide in my love.” Jesus was loving and did preach non-violence, but he also called the Pharisees and scribes a brood of vipers—to their faces. That wasn't very loving. He also called them other choice names like hypocrites, and whitewashed tombs. Jesus was not tactful at all when it came to calling a sinner sinful, and pointing out when someone was doing something wrong. Was it loving when he called Peter Satan? Was it loving when he got upset with the disciples and said to them “O you of little faith,” or called them “a faithless and perverse generation”? Somehow, we have forgotten that Jesus was not without backbone, or nerve, and he didn't pull punches when it came to sin or faith. And he did love them—by them I mean the disciples, the Pharisees, the scribes, and sinners. Today somehow, we've gotten the idea that being loving means keeping our mouths shut and our head down.

Let me ask you something—If you saw a child running toward a cliff, you would try to stop him or her, wouldn't you? That's being loving. Doing nothing would be the unloving thing to do. If your child that is say three or four years old came to you and asked for matches, a funnel and a glass jar would you just automatically say sure just be careful with that stuff. Wouldn't you want to know what they were up to –and if it was something dangerous like making a firebomb, wouldn't you say no don't do that? Doing nothing would be unloving! Loving means being concerned and maybe even a bit nosy.

Using children as an example is a no-brainer nobody wants to see children get hurt. What is more difficult is deciding to say something to an adult who committing serial unrepentant sin and is old enough to make their own decisions and take responsibility for them. We make it hard on ourselves too. If someone is rude or mean to us, we think we must take it because we are Christian. On the other hand, if someone comes to us and lovingly tries to tell us that we are serial sinners, then they are being judgmental and nosy and should mind their own business. But who is being more loving, the one who ignores rudeness or the one who tries to stop a friend from eternal damnation?

Our culture has been sliding down a slippery slope of acceptance of sin for a long time now. I don't know that we can stop the momentum, but I for one think that it our Christian duty to stop ignoring sin, and start trying to save sinners. The title of my sermon today was “Why do I have to be the Christian?” and the answer is, because Jesus commanded me to. Being loving doesn't mean being indulging—it means being concerned for your neighbor's welfare both now and in eternity.