

We Are All on The List

Intro. This gospel is a good example of how as Catholics we do not read the Bible literally. Most Christians do not believe the Lord is telling us to cut off a healthy part of our body he created. In our cultures and traditions, we have many ways to tell the stories our lives: literature, music, history and poetry. The Bible is similar. The Old Testament has histories like the books of Exodus and Judges; the Psalms are songs for worship, which include notes for what instrument should be played. In the New Testament, The Lord used parables, examples from daily life and hyperbole *-exaggeration-* to make his point. He did not mean to literally cut off our hand or foot or pluck out our eye even if it is the cause of our sin. He meant *cut off the opportunities* of sin from our lives, the *near occasions of sin*. Sometimes

that includes people as well as things. For our eternal life, we are better off without them.

I. Apparently, the disciples had a list. Strangers and outsiders were not on it. We hear from John who rarely speaks up, complaining that someone not in the “Apostles Club” was trying to heal people. The nerve! I imagine the Lord grabbing his head as if he is having a migraine headache because of these guys. They thought they were protecting the Lord, but they were also protecting their hope to keep the power of God for themselves. Moses had a similar experience with Joshua. God expanded his leadership group; two men didn’t go to the meeting tent where God was giving out the spirit. But the spirit of God had no trouble finding Eldad and Medad in the camp. Moses understood Joshua was concerned for his leadership, but maybe jealous too.

His response was what any good leader would say:

“I wish *everybody* would get the spirit!”

Concl. A gift from God is useless unless it is used, not put on a shelf to look at. The Spirit of God is given to us in Confirmation. The question is if we accept it and then *do* something with it. We are to be prophets of God’s Word to all people, and heal the hurts of others, *especially* if they are not of our group. We are good at separating ourselves into different groups; making lists of who is in and who is out. We try to limit or suppress the power and progress of others and increase that of our own group. When that happens, the Spirit of God can pass us by. We seem to prefer, “Whoever is against us, is *not* for us,” to the more positive, “Whoever is not against us, is *for* us.” The quotes are from the gospels of Matthew (12:30) and Luke (11:23). In

both those gospels the Lord is talking to his *enemies*.
In this gospel, the Lord is talking to his *friends*,
telling them not to fight with someone who is doing
good things just because he isn’t part of their group.
They did not have a right to limit God’s power.
There is no “Jesus Franchise.” It is not something we
can buy online. We do not own the rights to healing
or the Holy Spirit. *It is God’s free gift. We are all*
on “the list” for the Spirit *even* if we miss the
meeting.

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