



Seven Last Words of Jesus: On the Cross

Clinton LeFort

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Who is the Enemy

The word used in the New Testament means a hostile spirit or force. The dictionary word for hostility is someone who is “unfriendly” towards you or opposes you. When the Gospel speaks of the hostile person it is referring to those who oppose the Gospel message. St. John says that every spirit should be tested and he speaks about the spirit of the antichrist; that is, those who do not believe that the Word has come in the flesh. Is it possible to find this kind of opposition today. It is very prevalent in the world and in the Church. Today Christians are openly rejected and opposed by many people. On the one hand we can’t elect everyone to accept what they do not understand and faith is something that not everyone has been given; therefore, it would be unreasonable to expect a Christian response from those who are not Christian. Nor is it possible to expect a Christian response from those who say they are Christian only by name and not by choice or life. There are people who love to show that they are Christian when it is easy to be a Christian, but when a trial comes about they choose to go the opposite way. Jesus taught us this when he taught us the parable of the sower who went out sowing. Seeds fell in many places, but those that fall on rock didn’t have deep roots and ultimately died. Some fell on a side path and among thorns and thistles and were choked off. Lastly, those that fell on good soil produced an abundance of good fruit. The soil the word falls on today are people who are choked by many things that distract them from the pure Word of God. Either they are too involved in their profession or too steeped in a worldly life that they forget where their life comes from. This kind of lifestyle can only endure so long before faith is suffocated. When people are afraid to give witness to Christ in their work place because they want to please those who are arrogant or bloated with self-worth rather than the humility and meekness requires of his followers, then they begin to be choked off and die. The enemy of our salvation are those who oppose the Gospel message outright or by insinuating that it is not necessary to believe in order to be eternally happy. For these kind of opposers they are happy with the natural and temporal benefits that the world naturally gives to them. But Jesus didn’t come to allow us to live in the world. He said this is the work of God “that you believe in the One he has sent.” I’ve worked as a substitute teacher in one of the largest school districts in the United States for several years. I can honestly say that there are many people who do not care about Jesus Christ in the school system and that teaching children the natural truths for preparing for a college career is the only thing that interest these people. They will not acknowledge Jesus to you. For whatever reason they are afraid of Christians is unknown to me, but the way I see it is Jesus wasn’t afraid to become man and die for them at the expense of great humiliation and accepting the shame of the Cross for them. This tells me that many people do not accept the Gospel. I believe that this is one reason why Jesus prayed on the Cross: “Father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing.” One way our contemporary opponents of the Gospel confront us is by downplaying the role of God in the world, despite having to say the “Pledge of Allegiance,” which actually does mention God, they have little understanding of who God is in their lives or the lives of others; therefore, it seems to be outside of their vocabulary.

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