

HOLY HELPS

IMPOSSIBLE PEOPLE

“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

Romans 12:18

I like people. I am a people, and people are the only visible beings with whom I can have conversation. I am a people person, I like to be around people, company with people, fellowship with people, minister to people, encourage and help people. I've spent my life serving people. I have tried my best, with the Lord's help, to live peaceably with everybody. I can honestly say that I have never knowingly, purposefully made an enemy. I have discovered from time to time that I had enemies and have tried my best to make a friend of them and in some cases have succeeded.

But I've got to tell you that you cannot live at peace with people who are always at war with the rest of the human race. There are some people who do not want to live peaceably with anyone. They have limburger cheese on their upper lips and to them the whole world smells rotten and they treat everyone in a rotten manner. They were born in the objective case and live in the negative mood. To compare them to a cactus is to do injustice to a cactus. At least a cactus will bloom once a year and smell good for a few days but some people are, well, I might as well say it, stinkers! Compared to them, skunks would be welcomed guests at a dinner party.

I've bent over backwards, gone the extra mile, put up with grumblers and grumpy old men *and* women; shrugged my shoulders when insulted; bit my tongue when lied about, walked away when cursed and on one occasion only smiled when a man literally spit in my face, and I was his pastor! All that to say this: you can't live peaceably with someone who is bound and determined to be as obnoxious as a human being can possibly be.

Of course there will always be differing opinions when two people get together, but that's understandable, because we're yet imperfect, but by God's grace we can come to an agreement or agree to disagree. But I'm not talking about those types of persons. I'm talking about the habitually sour-pusses; the perennial party-poopers; the indomitable hair-splitters; the constant haranguers; the ornery and contrary persons who, I am sure, must gargle with vinegar!

Someone, unknown to me, wrote the following:

“To dwell above with the saints we love,
Oh, that will be glory!”
But to live below with the saints we know,
Now that is a different story!”

I am so very glad that Paul prefaced his instructions to the Christians in Rome with the words: “If it is possible.” Thank you, Paul, for that qualifying phrase! I feel better every time I read those words, because it is not possible to live peaceably with everyone in the world. I would

like to be able to do that but it takes two who desire to live peaceable with one another. "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3)

I am sure that there are some sweet and saintly souls who will say, "Now, you ought not to feel that way." Well, I am being honest. I am not into acting sanctimonious just to give the impression that I am too good to be human. I am a realist. Right here I want to state, in sincere terms, that I have found that most people are nice, kind, decent and peace-loving people. Thank God that few in the pew are in the "Impossible People" category. Until my dying day I will try, as much as depends on me, "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph.4:3) and "seek peace and pursue it." (I Peter 3:11)

Charles H. Spurgeon once said, "I love all God's people, but I don't want anything to do with some of them until I get to heaven!" (From *Daily Bread* 10/21/60) Likewise, Paul said that we should avoid certain people. (Rom.16:17) I feel certain that both Spurgeon and Paul were thinking of some of the persons I described above.

I want to be the kind of person and live in such a manner that, as Samuel Clemens said, "When we come to die, even the undertaker will be sorry!" I wish everybody would feel that way. Then we would not have impossible people.

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