

## **Lent Day 33**

Friday March 23, 2018

### **Reading:** John 17:1-12

<sup>11</sup> I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.

### **Reflection**

Man, can I hold a grudge. I remember as a kid using it like a super power against my (single) mother. We would get into a disagreement and I would just cloud over, get quiet and wait. I'm sorry to say adulthood wasn't much better. Of course, that was with the people I cared about. For the people I didn't care about they were just mentally cut out. We could be in the same room but they were invisible to me, unless I was annoyed enough to let them know my disdain for them.

I'd love to say that behaviour ceased once I became a Christian, but it didn't. There has been fellow Christians who have rubbed me the wrong way which has led me to mentally separate from them. There have also been Christians who have hurt me or people I love who I have separated from with ongoing hostile feelings. I've been angry and I've held onto those feelings as a grudge. Now, 9 out of 10 people would tell me that was perfectly natural. After all, you can't let people walk all over you and Facebook is pretty clear what you've got to do with the toxic people in your life. Unfortunately for me, Jesus is the 10<sup>th</sup> person.

It's hard for us to read because we read through the lens of individualism, but Jesus, and scripture in general, is always concerned for the community over the individual. This passage is a good exception. Jesus prays for his disciples knowing that they will be without him, so he prays for their protection from the Father and that protection looks like unity. Holding grudges, particularly against other Christians, is completely out of place for the Christ community and will result in our exposure to harm.

I've been thinking about this a lot lately. We will all one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of ourselves, word and deed. Scripture is quite clear: if we do not forgive each other we will not be forgiven. If we insist on our rights to have justice and punish others God will do the same to us. We can't have our cake and eat it too. We can be in the wrong but apply for forgiveness, without offering forgiveness to those who wrong us. Our community is to embody the reconciliation of God with humanity, but when we hold a grudge we deny the gospel.

Fortunately, the list isn't very long, but I've begun the work of reconciliation with those I have held grudges against. I've also been working on not clouding over in conflict. It's not easy — these old habits have become second nature — but it is the good discipleship work we've been given.

### **Prayer**

We stand under your name O God, help us to embody your character of mercy and grace. Forgive us for holding our grudges in the midst of enjoying your forgiveness. As we do the work of reconciliation, fill us with your Spirit for it is hard and humbling work. Amen.