

## **AN ENCOURAGING WORD FOR TROUBLING TIMES #118 (by Rev. Dr. Alice Wolfe, 9/2/20)**

### **“Making Friends Out of Enemies”**

Many years ago, a Rwandan woman's only son was killed. She was consumed with grief, hatred, and bitterness. "God," she prayed, "reveal my son's killer!" One night she dreamed she was going to heaven. But, there was a complication: in order for her to go to heaven, she had to pass through a certain house. She had to walk down the street, enter the house through the front door, go through the rooms, go upstairs, and then exit through the back door. In her dream, she asked God, "Whose house is this?" And God replied, "It's house of your son's killer." The road to heaven passed through the house of her enemy. Two nights later, she heard a knock at her door. She opened it, and there stood a young man. He was about her son's age. "Yes?" she asked. The young man hesitated, and then said, "I am the one who killed your son. Since that day, I have had no life, no peace. So here I am. I am placing my life in your hands. Kill me; I am dead already. Throw me in jail; I am in prison already. Torture me; I am in torment already. Do with me as you wish." The woman had prayed for this day, and now that it arrived, she didn't know what to do. To her surprise, she found did not want to kill, jail, or torture him. In that moment of reckoning, she found she only wanted one thing: a son. So, the woman said to the young man who killed her son: "I ask this of you. Come into my home and live with me. Eat the food I would have prepared for my son. Wear the clothes I would have made for my son. Become son I lost." And he did.

Why would or how could we love this way? Because this is how God loved us:

*"...God demonstrated his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath thru him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" (Romans 5:8-10, TNIV)*

If you're like me, you don't like to think of yourself as enemy of God, but we are—until we realize how much God loves us and we surrender our lives to him. If we don't let Jesus be the Lord of our lives, then we're our own god—which makes us an enemy of God. However, that doesn't stop God from loving us! God loves us unconditionally and sacrificially, and when we receive his love, he helps us to love that way, too. As someone once said: People who love unconditionally do what God himself has done—They make sons and daughters out of bitter enemies, feeding and clothing them, blazing a trail to heaven straight through their houses. Martin Luther King, Jr., said it this way: "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend" (*Men of Integrity*).

Who are your enemies? Who is God calling you to love?

Our world has gone mad. People are hurting and killing each other just because they look differently, believe differently, or behave differently. People arguing about everything, waging war on social media, and killing their friends and family with bitter and angry words. Political debates and arguments are ramping up, and we know it will only get worse until the election in November. However, it doesn't have to be that way..., nor does God want it to be that way. God doesn't want us to conform to the ways of the world, but to be transformed by his love. The world knows what hatred and evil look like; but it needs to know what love looks like. God wants each of us and all of us to choose to love our enemies... so God can transform them into sons, daughters, and friends. Will you?

### **PRAYER:**

Loving Jesus, thank you for loving me even when I was your enemy and didn't love you or chose my will over your will. Thank you for never giving up on me, and thank you for giving your life for me and for all! Forgive me for my sins, and help me love and forgive my enemies and all who have hurt me... Let your love overflow out of me to everyone around me—so that even my enemies will see your love in me—and you can transform my enemies into friends or sons or daughters. Help all in our nation and world to know you and choose to live a life of love. Amen.

### **LIVE IT!**

Take a few minutes to pray and ask God: "Who are my enemies? How can I show God's love to them?" Do what God prompts you to do!