

DAILY DOCTRINAL REFLECTION

Evil suffering versus evil doing

In our last Bible class, I touched on the concept of “evil suffering vs. evil doing.” Evil suffering is when you suffer as the object of evil, like someone cursing you. Evil doing occurs when you perpetrate the evil, like you cursing someone else (either in return or simply out of bitterness and frustration of soul).

Evil doing is far worse than evil suffering. Evil doing destroys the soul and the spiritual life. Suffering evil, in and of itself, does not harm the soul. One does not become more evil when he becomes the object of evil suffering. However, one does necessarily become more evil by perpetrating evil. And anytime we perpetrate evil, regardless of the reason, we cut ourselves off from the active life and goodness of God—what an awfully high price just to get back at someone! This does not imply loss of salvation, but it most certainly does imply lack of connection with God’s active life and goodness. Evil is always about privation, some good that should be there is not present—in this case fellowship in God and His concurrent goodness.

So, the next time when someone curses you, either online or in traffic, you might stop and think about your choices: am I going to actualize evil into my life and become more evil by returning evil for evil or actualize the goodness and love of God in my life? We are very mutable and vulnerable beings, and contrary to the common belief that we are what we think, it is more like we are what we actualize. As a matter of fact, we are a living and breathing amalgamation of every choice we have actualized, either for good or evil. This means that change for the better is always slow as well as difficult as it is literally one choice at a time, one actualization at a time. Each choice is an actualization of life with God or life with Evil. We all become what we do, but because we have immaterial intellects and wills, we can change directions, but because our immaterial intellects and wills are tethered to our physical beings the struggle is real and ongoing. With God there is victory, without God there is simply more actualization of evil. The wonderful thing about all of this is that God in His great love has given us freedom to love Him, others, and be perfected in His love, which then becomes the panacea to all the ills of life. What is so wonderful is that He showed us how not to grow in evil and instead grow in His perfect love and goodness.

Matthew 5:43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Life in the goodness of God,

Pastor Don