

23RD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Wisdom 9: 13-19 Philemon 9-10, 12-17 Luke 14: 25-33

HOMILY

Hate Speech?

When my siblings and I were little, we regarded the word “**hate**” as almost a swear word for which anyone of us heard using it was severely punished by our parents

So what is it that we hear Jesus say today?

Q: Hate speech?

- He himself summons us to love our enemies.
- How come that he is asking you to
 - hate your wife if you have one
 - your children, and your parents?
- What could our Saviour possibly mean by stirring up family conflict?

Jesus is not demanding that we literally hate our family.

- ❖ He is using hyperbole to illustrate **the steep cost of following him.**
- ❖ Hyperbole and exaggeration can be effective rhetorical tools.

They are used by almost everyone at some point.

Of course, it's easy to spot a hyperbole and we don't take it literally.

But sometimes it's easy **to miss this rhetorical tool** when it comes **from the lips of Jesus** in the scriptures.

Jesus is an effective preacher:

He made use of the common language of His day in order to make a point.

We can't take literally each and every saying of his in the New Testament.

In the end, what Jesus demands is a wholehearted, complete commitment, without distraction.

And that's no exaggeration.

- The strong word “Hate” which my parents hated simply means that a Christian must be willing to offend his family rather than offend his God.
- It means that clinging to Christ loosens our grip **even on our most intimate earthly relations.**
- By hating family, perhaps what Jesus means is for us **to refuse to live by those narrow and exclusive ideas of family** when it comes to meeting human needs and contributing to the wholeness of all human beings.
- It also means that our affections for Christ must be of such an intensity and quality that, by comparison, all other loves seem like hate.

What Jesus said about hating our families can be hard to accept and often has been misunderstood.

We may be scandalized by the “hate” speech, but in stumbling over Jesus's plain talk, **we can miss the real scandal** of this text:

- ❖ The throne of our hearts is bombarded by so many rivals claiming to be supreme, but our love for King Jesus must defeat everyone.

Today Jesus is saying, ***“If you would be a Christian, I must have it all.”***