



## The Ark Community

# 106: HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE GOD?

by Tony Palmer (EU)

***"The way we treat the person we like the least, is the way we love God the most."***

I heard this statement in 1994, almost 16 years ago – and I've never been able to get it out of my head. It was my College Lecturer, Dr. Cornè Bekker who said this, who later became my Brother-in-Law.

Read it again... ***"The way we treat the person we like the least, is the way we love God the most."*** Don't just gloss over it. I thought it was a heresy... but Cornè then backed his statement up with another saying, this one more famous, ***"As you did it to the least of Mine, you did it to Me."*** This time it was Jesus speaking... maybe it wasn't a heresy after all..? Think of it, "WHO", right now in your life, are you not loving as much as you love Jesus? Who is the one that causes your hurt or irritation..? And how are you treating them?

What you do to them, you're doing to Jesus... because we determine ***"who is the least"***, because we determine the value of people in the way we esteem them... or not. Mother Teresa of Calcutta was often criticized by certain Church groups because of her way of loving non-Christians unconditionally – She was asked, ***"Why do you love and serve the Hindu people like you do?"*** She answered, ***"I love and serve Christ through all I care for."*** – She was slammed for this... "Christ is not present in the life of a Hindu..!" they told her, but Mother Teresa was living out a 'Jesus saying' – ***"What you do to the least of mine – you do TO Me"***. Our Sister and Mother in the Faith was simply **loving Jesus through all people** – even if they were considered "Void of God" – she loved them as she loved Christ.

In reality, much of this kind of separation and loving people different from how we love God, comes from a dualistic approach to life. **Dualism lives TWO lives.** It separates the natural from the spiritual and thinks that the two don't and can't co-exist. This type of thinking makes us have Sunday faces, or act different in Church as we do in our homes. We fall into the trap of thinking that God is NOT present in certain places... like when we're watching a 'questionable' movie or speaking bad of certain people, maybe when we're being untruthful on our Tax Returns, or not telling the Cashier that she forgot to charge us for the Milk that slipped through... God is always present, whether we experience His presence or not – He is Omnipresent. How can God be omnipresent sometimes? How can an omnipresent God not be present..!

A real danger of living a dualistic life is that it can lead to psychological problems and in extreme cases, even lead to the development of different realities and multiple personalities to live in each reality. God wants us to be WHOLE.

**All of life is sacred.** The secular and the sacred are divinely intertwined. Loving the person I like the least is deeply connected to the way I love my Lord the most. Our Lord told us that if we love our neighbour as ourselves – we will fulfil the Law..! And when a Lawyer asked Jesus, ***"Who is my neighbour?"*** (Because in the Jewish 1st century world – your neighbour only included you Family, and he wanted to limit his loving...) – Jesus answered the question with the parable of the Good Samaritan, stating that **the Samaritan was the neighbour.** This was SHOCKING to the Lawyer, because the Samaritans were Israel's ENEMIES. In previous years of war, the Assyrians, from whom the Samaritans comes from, used to strip the skin off the Israeli children while they were alive..! Jesus told the Lawyer, ***"Your ENEMIES are your NEIGHBORS, and you must love your ENEMIES as yourself..!"*** (paraphrased).

Friends, God wants us to be WHOLE, to live reconciled with ourselves our neighbours, who may even be our enemies... they may even live in the same house with us.

***"The way we treat the person we like the least, is the way we love God the most."***

***"I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use and persecute you; That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."***