

**What Are We Willing to Pay for the World We Want to See?**  
**Sunday, September 4, 2022, 10:00 a.m., All Saints Church, Pasadena**  
**The Rev. Mark Chase**

“..... All Saints Church...Any Jeopardy Fans in the house? Because today’s scripture could for sure create a whole category called “things Jesus should not have said” for 600....Or “things Jesus said that he didn’t really really mean...right?” Or, maybe “Things the disciples definitely circled back with Jesus on” or how about “things Jesus said, that we ain’t really tryna do.” Or “I didn’t even know that was in there!” for 400

Beloved This is a jarring text, with many English translations using the word HATE, HATE Your Father or Mother. HATE, your brother or sister, HATE, your spouse and children... Now, to be clear right from the top, I actually don’t think Jesus means for us to literally HATE, or turn our backs, on the people closest to us, Now to support that I could go into the original Greek , especially since that will justify some of my student loans from Fuller Seminary(thanks for the 10k i’ll take it), I could talk about the narrative arch of Jesus’s ministry and overall ethic, but there’s probably no more compelling reason to not to interpret this passage so literally other than, for a good many folks, HATING, and TURNING OUR BACKS, ON THE PEOPLE CLOSEST TO US, IS ACTUALLY THE EASY PART!!!! For some of us our response to this passage would be... “Jesus, you’re commanding me to hate my brother?! I haven’t talked to him in twenty years anyway, DONE!!! JESUS....TURN MY BACK ON MY FATHER.....THANK YOU...See I knew these Christian’s were onto something, Hold on Jesus let me call him right now. Say Jesus, would this extend to, In-laws as well?” If that’s you, don’t raise your hands, just blink! Thank you I see those blinks.

Sadly for the biblical literalists, that interpretation is just too easy and contradictory, for that to be what’s actually at the heart of Jesus’ message. Jesus isn’t handing out a license for resentment, but Jesus is handing out a waiver, for the revolution! Because Jesus knows, that just because he’s gathered the masses, doesn’t mean he’s gathered a movement! And that is precisely one of the reasons Jesus had come, to usher in a movement, called the KIN-dom of God, a movement rooted in love and not Hate, a movement marked by equity, and not empire, a movement held together by peace and not power, and Jesus is smart enough to know that this crowd, however impressive, does not equal, the Kin-dom of heaven! So he exaggerates, in order to make the point clear, He exaggerates in order to expose the difference...and at the heart of the point that he’s making, is actually a question...What are you willing to pay, for the future you’re wanting to see? What are we, willing to pay, for the future we’re wanting, to see?!

COUNT.THE COSTS. And so, if family isn’t your most prized possession, feel free to substitute for anything else, that hits that spot for you, whatever represents security, safety, stability, and solid ground. Jesus says, surrender it! Maybe for some of us this text would tell us “turn your back, on capitalism and it’s crushing disregard for the poor even if it’s working out for us, or

maybe for some of us it's saying, Turn your back, on whiteness and its privileges, and I say that, not just to white people, but to black people, and other people of color as well, looking to assimilate and ascend into whiteness, for protection and provision, for as Dr. Willie Jennings reminds us "Anybody can be WHITE, {or at least, look to whiteness for salvation}." But Whiteness, will not save us, and whiteness itself, cannot be saved! Ahhhh Jesus may be telling some of us, to turn your back, on the patriarchy and its benefits, turn your back, turn your back, on tradition, and the trappings of organized religion....even the organized religion, under whose banner we gather today....

Ohhhh it's quiet up in here; don't worry I won't tell us to turn our backs, on the dodgers, I know where I'm at.

Some of us need to turn our backs, on false notions of what we think masculinity is, that have us living into ideals and lives, that weren't meant for us,

Some of us, need to turn our back, on toxic coping mechanisms, that we've had for so long we think they're a part of our personality, but they are nothing more, than un-resolved trauma, masquerading as our true selves, Yes, some of us, need to turn our back, on our very selves, our FALSE SELF, and our EGO, to follow, the way of Jesus

This also applies to our nation, for I believe, that the Spirit of the living God, beckons America, to turn it's back on it's ill gotten gain, and return land stolen from indigenous peoples, and to pay reparations to peoples of African descent, for generations of torture, forced labor, Jim Crow Apartheid, Mass Incarceration and Anti-Blackness. Don't worry I know it's 111 teen degrees I'm almost done...

But What, Are we willing to pay, for the future, we're wanting to see?

On August 28th, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Strode up to the podium, to give his now historic, "I have a dream speech", a speech by the way, that wasn't going so well, maybe like this sermon, until Gospel singer Mahalia Jackson shouted from behind the podium, "Tell em about the dream Martin, tell em about the dream..."

Then, Dr. King goes off script, and paints a portrait, of a future, that so many back then, and so many till this day, still want to live in...

A future filled with justice, and equity, liberation, and flourishing, a future that sounds much like the Kin-dom of God, a future that sounds like beloved community, a future that would draw a crowd, and perhaps even get a crowd on their feet, to give a standing ovation, but the kind of future, represented by the Kin-dom of God, and the beloved community that Dr. King preached and dreamed about, is not a future ushered in by standing OVATIONS, but is a future ushered in by standing OBLATIONS

We know what an Oblation is, let's ask The Episcopal Church and The Book of Common Prayer, on our denominations website it says an Oblation, is a self offering, an offering of ourselves, our lives and labors, in union with Christ, for the purposes of GOD. Book of Common prayer p. 857)

An offering of our lives, labors, and our our selves, in union with Christ, for the purposes of God...

We are to be Standing, OBLATIONS

Beloved, the future we ALL WANT TO LIVE IN, WILL COST US NOTHING LESS, THAN OUR VERY SELVES!!! We can't want a future, and we can't live in a future, that costs us nothing!

And I would widen this, because beloved, you don't have to be a christian, to be of service to Christ, you don't have to be a christian, to fulfil the purposes of God, You don't have to be a Christian, to usher in a liveable future...God partners with, whomever God pleases,

And we all have an opportunity, rather, a responsibility, to work and put in for the cost, of the future we say we want to see....That's everyone's responsibility, Christian or not, if we want a liveable future for all of us, we gotta pay the costs.

Pull up a chair I'm gonna get personal, did ya'll know, that our Beloved City of Pasadena, has a Vision Statement, a Mission Statement, and a set of Values, listed on it's website. I didn't, but I googled it, and it popped up....

#### City Vision

Pasadena will combine world class events, science and technology, arts and culture, history and architecture with great neighborhoods and opportunities for all.

#### City Mission

The City of Pasadena is dedicated to delivering exemplary municipal services responsive to our entire community and consistent with our history, culture and unique character.

#### City Values

- Responsiveness
- Honesty and integrity
- Accountability
- Excellence
- Open, clear and frequent communication
- Innovation
- Diversity and inclusiveness

That's a beautiful vision, mission, and values, that if we lived into, would create a beautiful future, for the city of pasadena...But what are we willing to pay, for the future we're wanting to see...?

The City of Pasadena says it values accountability, but have time and time again, attempted to avoid paying the cost of true accountability, in the murder of Anthony McClain, by the Pasadena Police Department, nearly two years ago today. And most recently, just a few weeks ago, has avoided accountability, in an incident involving an elementary school janitor, being held at gunpoint (less lethal weaponry or not), for simply showing up to work, and doing his job. And instead of accountability, our Mayor, reserved his outrage for the way the Principal of the school responded! Our Mayor, was More outraged, at the response to injustice, than the actual injustice itself! More outraged, by Pointed Words, than Pointed Weapons. If the vision for Pasadena's future is marked with accountability and integrity, then starting with Mayor Gordo, we've gotta pay the costs of true accountability...Pasadena says it values great neighborhoods, and communities for ALL, but instead of putting money and resources into all of it's neighborhoods, puts up police surveillance equipment instead (exclusively in Northwest Pasadena), to the tune of 600 thousand dollars of shot spotter technology (a technology that has proven to be flawed, biased and ineffective), a city that has a vision of great communities for all, is steadily becoming a city that you can't even live in, unless you are ALL but RICH!! As a city! Our elected and appointed officials, have to look at our vision and values, and ask themselves, what are we willing to pay, for the future, that we posted on our website, that we say we're wanting to see. And you say Chase, don't be so hard on our pasadena government, but let me borrow the words of Dr. King, one more time, who said the church, is to be the conscience of the state, so I'm so glad, that a small part, of Pasadena's state conscience, just happens to be, So. Close. By! HOWDY, NEIGHBOR...

Jesus says to the crowd, and to this crowd, thanks, but no thanks. I'm not looking for standing OVATIONS, i'm looking for Standing OBLATIONS.

And here's one of the great markers of a standing oblation, the cross....in many denominational and theological settings, the cross has been stripped of its context, But To find yourself carrying a cross in the day of Jesus, meant that you had ended up on the wrong side, of the Roman Empire, So to carry our cross, in this day and age, means that we will inevitably at times find ourselves, on the wrong side of the empire, in opposition to it, and in it's way and, ironically, just maybe, on the opposing side of family and friends who want to preserve the empire. Once again, To all the biblical literalists, this is literally what it means to pick up YOUR cross. Still down?

What, are we willing to pay, for the future we are wanting to see. YES, it is costly to follow the way of Jesus, the way of beloved community, the way that leads to a future we can all live in. But if we count the cost, and do a cost benefit analysis, as Jesus asks us to, It turns out, that as costly as it is, we actually Can't afford NOT TO...

If we want to live, on an earth that's still liveable, the 100 companies, responsible for 71 percent, of all Global emissions, have to pay the cost, and we have to do what we can, and not give in to despair, to make them pay the cost, for an earth, we can all still live on...

If we want to live, in a country that is racially equitable and just, and not torn apart by another civil war over White Supremacy, than as a nation, we have to pay the cost of telling the truth about our history, and making reparations, to Black Americans

If we want to live, in a Pasadena, that is still affordable for everyone, If we want to breathe air, that is still breathable, if we want mental health services, and systems of care for everyone..

Than we have to count the cost, and pay for the future, we all want to see, and I know that sounds heavy, and I know that sounds hard, and even at times it might sound and feel impossible...

Ahhhhh But ALL SAINTS CHURCH, I've got some Good News, for as costly as the future is, we have a heavenly co-signer, a holy co-labourer, who made a substantial down payment, you see on our own, this would all be too costly, no matter how much we put in, but All Saints Church, I'm so glad, that a man named Jesus, gave the first Standing Oblation, he counted the costs, and counted us, worth it! And he offered his very self, as a down payment, to get the future started. And he isn't asking of us, anything he wasn't willing to pay, himself...And the same Spirit that enabled and empowered Jesus, is enabling, and empowering US! To co-create the future, that we would all want to live in...

To the praise, and glory, of our great healer Jesus, Amen!