

TOUGH SCRIPTURES

1. HATE FATHER, MOTHER, WIFE AND CHILDREN

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Luke 14.26 seems to be an awful verse.

It states the words of the Lord Jesus, "If any man hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Take the father and mother. One of the commandments is Honour thy father and mother (Exodus 20.12). Husbands are told to love their wives (Ephesians 5.25).

We are to have a loving attitude to our children, to be diligent with them (Deuteronomy 6.7), to train them correctly (Proverbs 22 6) and to nurture them (Ephesians 6.4). We have a duty of care towards our brothers and sisters, to the stranger (Deuteronomy 10.19), your neighbour (Matthew 22.29) and each other (John 13.35). Love for your brother should not be feigned or false (1 Peter 1. 22).

With this in mind, the word hate in Luke must mean something other than the usual meaning of the word. To hate is to despise and detest.

This has to be read in context of the parable of the great supper and the excuses people made not to attend. One had just bought some ground, another five oxen and another had just got married. The great supper was in the Kingdom of God, that is to say heaven, and it refers to those who reject salvation and give excuses for not accepting the invitation of the Lord and slight not only salvation but eternal life. A parcel of ground, five oxen and a wife were vastly more important than being saved and having eternal life.

Laurence E Porter points out that the Old Testament often combines love and hate where it clearly means to love less. (Genesis 29. 15ff, Deuteronomy 21.15ff etc).

It does not mean that a man must despise and detest his family with hatred but that in the matter of his eternal salvation he has to consider his own destiny.

The word hate is used figuratively.

The Lord Jesus came not to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil them (Matthew 5.17). He would not speak against the Old Testament and the epistles back up the teaching of the Lord.

Luke 14.27 tells us that each individual has to take up his cross, his burden that is, which he will bear as a Christian. Christians are persecuted. It is not an easy road.

This whole passage talks about our attitude to God and to others. We must not allow family to deter us from salvation. Nor does it say we are to be evil to them but to prefer God who can grant us eternal life. In this we should be willing to love our family somewhat less. We must put the Lord first when our salvation is involved.

Does that make sense?

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