

Two images from the news have had a lasting impression on me. The first was at a “Black lives matter” demonstration, where a black man was seen carrying a white man over his shoulder, and the second of Marcus Rashford , the footballer, giving an impassioned plea to the government to continue giving food to needy children during the summer holiday.

In Luke chapter 14, we read these words.

Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Patrick, the black man, carried the far right protester, not expecting a reward, but simply because he saw someone who may have been killed and he was compelled to act. There was no thanks given. Marcus, having experienced poverty, is now determined to use his influence to help others not expecting reward for himself.

Much of our life involves the expectation of repayment for things we do- I’ll do this for you, and you’ll do something for me. But Jesus in this passage challenges us to bless, benefit and befriend those who cannot repay us for our interest, concern and kindness. By doing so our reward is the blessing of helping someone else and a trust that what we do and how we do it matters to God, Our God promises to remember.

Alan Boesak, who was involved in the anti apartheid movement in South Africa, writes in his book, “Dare we speak of hope”, When we fail to stand with those who struggle, we fail to stand with God.

He lists many ways in which we may stand and so find hope.

“We will walk with Jesus, caught up in the way of discipleship and we will speak the language of hope and life.”

A prayer

Living God, open our eyes to the opportunities you provide us to stand with those who struggle and so bless others in the name of Jesus. Forgive us when we invest all our time and interest only in those who we already know and who can repay us. Use us to bless those from whom we can expect nothing in return. Amen

Song from Singing the Faith 700

For tune only: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GY5buzB5ZlY>

God weeps at love withheld, at strength misused, At children's innocence
abused, And until we change the way we love, God weeps.

God bleeds, at anger's fist, at trust betrayed, At women battered and afraid,
And until we change the way we win, God bleeds.

Gd cries at hungry mouths, at running sores, at creatures dying without cause,
and until we change the way we care, God cries

God waits for stones to melt, for peace to seed, for hearts to hold each other's
need and until we understand the Christ, God waits.

Shirley Erena Murray

Margaret Tuffin