



40 DAYS FOR LIFE®

*Devotional for Day 38, Friday, March 31
Carmen Pate, former 40 Days for Life board member*

Intention:

Pray that those standing in peaceful vigil will extend mercy and grace to others as they remember that Christ did not treat us as our sins deserve.

Scripture:

You have heard it was said, 'you shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

— *Matthew 5: 43-44*

Reflection:

Perhaps it is obvious by now that not everyone thinks this campaign is a great idea! In fact, those on the front lines standing in peaceful vigil are perhaps being cursed and hated for what God has called you to do. Because we are all fallen creatures, our natural response may not be as Christ-like as we would hope it would be.

So, how do we keep our natural response in check, while allowing the Holy Spirit to empower us to love, bless, do good, and pray for those who hate us or would do us harm?

Consider first the Holiness of God. It seems that sin has clouded our ability to think clearly about God's nature. We

simply don't have a clue of how outraged God is by our sin, what an insult sin is to His person, or how sin fires the flames of His wrath. Praise God that He didn't leave us in our depravity destined for His divine wrath!

Ephesians 2:4-5 says, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sin, made us alive together with Christ; by grace you have been saved."

Because of God's mercy and grace towards us, we who receive Him receive eternal Hope. Those who curse you, hate you, spitefully mistreat you and persecute you need that same Hope. That is the only way we can ever expect them to behave differently. Ask the Holy Spirit to love them -- through you -- so they are drawn to the Hope that is in you, that is Christ Jesus.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, may we reflect your character of grace and kindness to those who hate us and curse us. Guard our hearts and our tongues as we respond in love to words and actions meant to rile us or cause us harm. Let others see the Hope that is Christ in all we say and do. In His precious name we pray, amen.