



The message of love defeats evil

Feast of St. Matthew the Evangelist

Eph 4:1-7, 11-13

Ps 19:2-5

Matt 9:9-13

In Psalm 19:2-5 we proclaim, "Their message goes out through all the earth." The psalmist never imagined how possible that would become with today's technology. But – What IS our message in today's world, for today's needs, for today's people?

Look at what Saint Paul says in Eph. 4:1-7, 11-13; here is the core of our message. And why is this message so important to spread throughout ALL the earth? All today's world? Because it puts a stop to evil. It's the world's salvation. We shouldn't be waiting for the Second Coming of Christ to drive out evil. We have a message that's already driving it out! It's power to change the world comes from us, i.e., from how thoroughly we live the message.

Do you ever wonder why God "allows" evil to continue? It's not his fault.

Jesus won the battle against evil 2000 years ago when he died taking our sins to the cross and then overcame death and destruction through his resurrection. He did this because he loves us.

Today we bring that same victory into the world by "living a life worthy of our calling," treating others (ALL others) with "humility, gentleness, and patience, putting up with each other lovingly" through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, "who is the binding force of peace." This is how we defeat evil using the power of Jesus.

Sending military forces against evil leaders and terrorists can bring us some protection and eventual but temporary international calmness, but that sort of victory does not stop the evil of violence nor the demonic sources of evil. Likewise, while putting criminals in prison does stop the evil they were doing in society, it doesn't save them from their sins, nor does it cure the damage they did to others. And the death penalty certainly doesn't stop evil.

In Matt. 9:9-13, we see a man who deserved to be punished. And the people (and their money) needed to be protected from him. During Roman occupation, Hebrew tax collectors made a livelihood of over-taxing their own people and keeping the change. As a successful collector, Matthew was a cheater, a liar, a traitor, and a thief. Do you know any cheaters and liars? Has anyone betrayed you? Were you ever robbed?

Jesus looked past Matthew's sins and found a place in his heart where goodness still existed. If we want to conquer evil, this is where we, too, must look. Inside everyone is a precious gem, the type of person God created them to be when he made them in his own image at the moment they were conceived in their mother's womb.

For this message of love to go out through all the earth and transform it, we have to live it in our everyday lives. Every day! We have to overcome our own behaviors that work against love. We have to live out Ephesians 4 in every situation. And we have to be so good at this that we can authentically invite others to do the same.

