



*Devotional for Day 23, Thursday, March 19
Dennis DiMauro, Lutherans for Life*

Intention:

We pray for the strength to love those who do not love us.

Scripture:

But the Lord said “You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in the night and perished in the night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left, and much livestock? Should I not be concerned about that great city?”

—*Jonah 4:10-11*

Reflection:

God doesn't value people and things like we do. Jonah loved a shade tree more than an entire city of sinful people. We love our dogs more than a terrorist. We love our cars more than a beggar on the side of the road. And sometimes, we love our money more than a child growing in a desperate teenager's womb. But God isn't like us. Genesis 1 tells us that humans were the capstone of God's creation.

We were created on the sixth day after God had completed the land, the stars, the plants and the animals.

Therefore, His love for us is greater than His love for a plant, an animal, or any other created thing.

And the book of Jonah tells us that He loves even the most sinful people and seeks to bring them into His merciful arms. And it's a love that seeks to touch all of his created children: that desperate teenager, the baby growing in her womb, even tyrants and terrorists.

So it's up to us to imitate God's merciful love by helping and praying for those who persecute us, and those who don't love us back.

Prayer:

Gracious God, loving our enemies seems like one of most difficult things you could ask of us.

Please remind us that this is how you love and that if you ask it of us then you will give us the grace to do it. This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.