

Many, many years ago, I was driving up Beechmont Avenue into Mt. Washington. I remember the spot exactly. Its four lanes there and I switched without looking. Cut someone off, they had to slam on their brakes. The horn blew, I could see them shouting something, probably not, "I love you, man!"

What the other driver couldn't know was this: days earlier, I had buried my best friend, who had died of an OD before my eyes. I still remember the failing heartbeat, and calling 911. All that driver knew was that some jerk had cut them off. I hope that in their anger, they did not do the same to someone else later that day.

Today we are at the heart of Christianity. People are going to hurt us. Organizations are going to hurt us. We have two choices. The world says, "Strike back! Be angry! Punish them! Look what they did to you! Give them what they deserve!" When you or I hate our enemy, when we hold bitterness, two things are happening: the first is that we have allowed them to control our behavior—in fact, we have descended to their level. The second is that our enemy is living rent-free in our heads! They have moved on, maybe even forgotten the incident, and years later we are the ones who are still upset. That's one possible response: be angry, be unhappy, continue the cycle of violence.

Our other response is to being hurt is...to be a Christian: "I do not like what you did to me, but I refuse to make you my enemy! I refuse to hate you! I think you must be very wounded to act like

that, and I will not add to your woundedness. This evil will stop with me.”

This is so hard. I suppose it is impossible if we don't have a spiritual life, if we have not been shaped by Jesus. He reminded us that God lets the sun rise on the good and the not-so-good, that the gentle rains fall on the just and the unjust.

And we too will want forgiveness some day. And we will pray “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”