Today’s Thought

Stanley Hauerwas is a prominent American theologian that has written volumes in the last 50 years. Here at the sunset of his writing he has brought together thoughts from many of his works under the title “Jesus Changes Everything.” It will be interesting to dialogue with Hauerwas and his provocative and often unorthodox views on Faith.

Turning the Other Cheek

Hauerwas notes that “some Christians explicitly say that turning the other cheek doesn’t work anymore, that we have to fight back now.” But Hauerwas makes it clear that “turning the other cheek has never worked, if by “working” we mean creating a nice life for us and our children that is free of suffering and sacrifice, a life that fits neatly into the cultural expectations and political categories of our moment.” (p. xii)

Hauerwas goes on to say, “to deprive Christians of suffering is to tell them that they cannot follow Jesus to the cross.” He understands we often “use whatever means necessary to avoid the cross.” On the other hand, he writes, “Jesus is the Kingdom enfleshed, and he demonstrates this, surprisingly, through his utter vulnerability.” (p. xiii)

Hauerwas dares (and dares us) to take the scriptures seriously enough to be disturbed by them. He has seen that “most of us Christians, particularly in the west, often contort the teachings of Jesus to fit into our own quest for the good life.”

Certainly turning the other cheek is not a popular and often used sermon text these days. But Hauerwas uses it to step on my toes, reminding me how this consumeristic culture has been woven into my perspectives and lifestyle choices. Ouch!

What do you see and/or think after reading his thoughts?