

Bruised reed

I was reading Matthew 12:18-21;

18 *"Behold! My servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.*

19 *He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.*

20 *A bruised reed He will not break, And a smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory;*

21 *And in His name Gentiles will trust."*

In verse 18, *"He will declare justice to the Gentiles"* and verse 21, *"And in His name Gentiles will trust"*. The Gospel was preached to the Jews and the Gentiles together, and I see Jesus ministering to them both, as He spoke to everyone regarding the Kingdom of God. As the lady said; *"Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from children's crumbs."* (Mar 7:28)

This is in contrast to the Old testament when healings were very specific, even amongst the Hebrews. Full revelation was also not given to the Hebrews as He spoke in parables to them.

"But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." (Luk 4:25-27)

It seems to me that Jesus had to get the message out, without upsetting the people so much that they would kill Him, before the proper time by the Roman way of crucifixion.

I was pondering the meaning of "A bruised reed" and "a smoking flax" and turned to my Oxford English Dictionary. "A bruised reed", can be an unreliable person or a person set in their ways. "A smoking flax", can be a person smoldering with discontent or hatred.

Reading the text with the people context, means that Jesus only preached to the people and didn't try to influence them by judgement and correction directly. This morning I read in Luke 6:37-42 *"Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven"*, and the other verses regarding trying to bring about change in others. These two sets of verses complement each other nicely.

I think as Christians we discover the truth and then want to convert everyone else, to our way of thinking or understanding of the truth. People will think whatever they want, and sometimes regardless of proof. By trying to force change in them, we often achieve completely the opposite result. Christian acts of charity, generosity and selflessness, speak louder than words and are far more convincing demonstration of our faith to others.