

Last weekend, there was some type of MMA fight which is mixed martial arts fighting. I don't follow it but while skimming headlines, something caught my attention. I ended up reading the article to see what all was going on and copied a quote from the person who is in charge.

He was speaking to the winner of the main event when he said, "It's awesome you love Jesus; love Jesus all you want. You just don't have to do it publicly." Evidently, the winner mentioned something about Jesus although I never did see what he said. I copied the quote and pasted it on an open page on my computer and left it there for the week as I kept going back to it throughout the week.

First off, I agree that it is awesome if you love God. I think it is great and also agree that you can love God all you want. But here is where I disagree with that quote. He said that you don't have to do it publicly and I think you do.

If you believe in God and live in the promises that we receive through Christ Jesus, then why wouldn't you share that publicly? As we live in God's promises, we are set free from what binds us here on earth. We are set free from the bondage of sin because we receive forgiveness as we go to God with a repentant heart. We don't have to worry about death because we have the promise of eternal life for all who believe in what God accomplished through Christ.

As we share, I also don't think that we are called to thump people over the head and say you must believe this way or that way or else because as you read the gospel, you never heard Jesus say that. In fact, today's gospel reading takes place in his hometown and when they did not listen Jesus just left. He didn't destroy them with fire, he just left and went on to another town.

That is the thing about God. HE doesn't force us to believe. We can trust in HIS Word or we can ignore it. It is that free will that we have. But that doesn't change the fact that God loves all people and desires that all be saved. God wants to be in a relationship with all people but HE just isn't going to force people to believe in HIM.

We do love God publicly, even when some don't want us to. God is not private. Our faith life is not private. We are called to respond to God's love for us by inviting others to experience God. We are called to help others as we are able. We are to live in God's forgiveness as we forgive those who hurt us. All of this is in response to God's love for us and they are all public action.

So it is awesome that you love Jesus; love Jesus all you want. And it is done publicly and I encourage you to live out your faith in a public way without worrying about what others might think.