

Ron the Hulk

Scripture Reading — Luke 6:43-45

A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart. — Luke 6:45

One hot day my friend Ron invited our family over to swim in his pool. Our kids loved Ron, and he started gently throwing them in. Big splash, big fun. My kids were calling out, “Again! Do it again!”

Suddenly something went haywire. Ron started throwing the kids harder and farther. He began bellowing like an “incredible Hulk,” throwing patio furniture into the pool. He was totally sober, but some kind of “wild” trigger clicked inside, and he was out of control. He was laughing, but there was a scary, fierce intensity about him. As quickly as possible, I got my kids out of the water and tried to calm Ron down.

What was that? One theory: everybody has Hulk-triggers. Like Ron, we may be well-intentioned and act civilly most of the time. But in a flash, our wild side can erupt—opening the way for dangerous behavior that can spring from selfishness, meanness, anger, lust, and more. Even nice, sweet church people can “hit the wall” and turn wild and dangerous to themselves and others.

Considering that we all have a wild side in us somewhere, it’s a miracle that the Holy Spirit is storing good within us, deep down.

So let’s not reduce Christianity to the idea that Jesus died to make us “nicer,” or that sanctification is about being well-behaved. Jesus came to take us from death to life, transform us, and apply grace and light to our deepest, darkest selves.

Prayer

Father, when we feel wildness welling up in us, calm us down and keep us steady. In Jesus, Amen.

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