



Forgiveness

(Romans 12:17-21)

I had all the best intentions of moving on to Romans 13 to talk about law and order. But the Lord had another course for me to take. Proverbs 19:9, rang true for me this week as I prepared, in which is written, "In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps."

The first indication that I needed to change course was reading the opinion page in Saturday's paper. An article submitted by Edmond Day of Rotterdam, NY, caught my eye, it was titled, "America Is Fast on the Path of Hatred." What struck me about this article is that the very thing needed to quench the hatred is what I was preaching about last week. I asked myself, "Did those who heard the sermon last week understand how to overcome bitterness and hatred?"

Then, no sooner did I finish reading the paper, when checking my e-mail, I was asked to approve a comment for a blog I wrote over five years ago, that the comment might appear on my blog. In it, was written,

I really needed this today. I am grateful that you put this up as it came to me in the middle of a violent situation . . . I am homeless have no friends nor family I can count on, no vehicle and the only stability and security I possess is through Jesus Christ . . . God works in mysterious ways, but oh how I adore the beauty that blooms up from pain, suffering, affliction, addictions etc.

I was curious to read what I wrote so long ago that impacted her so. The title was, "If You Mess with God's Children, You Are Going to Have to Deal with Their Father." This too, was a theme of last week's message.

Today, I want to make sure that you know how to put into practice last's week's message. The only way that you can overcome the natural response to seek revenge, is to know what God will do and what you are asked to do. Last week, I told you what to do. This week, I want to tell you how to do it.

Think about someone who has wronged you. What can you do about the bitterness and desire for revenge? There are three things to be done. 1) Give it to God and let Him avenge the wrong 2) Forgive the person who wronged you. 3) Pray for help and reconciliation. Hopefully, today, you will learn from the Scriptures how to do this.

Our text:

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay, [Deut 32:35]" says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." [Prov 25:21–22] ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

Review

- This is how we are to "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse" (Rom 12:14). This is how to show love to even your enemies, which is not natural, and will set you off as salt and light., (Sermon on the Mount, Matt 5:1–16). Such love will mark you off as a Christian!

Sermon handout: Bible Baptist Church of Galway, Galway, NY, Pastor Wayne R. Brandow, Sept. 27, 2020

Review, continued

- We are not to take revenge but are to leave that in God’s hands.
- Even the phrase “you will heap coals of fire on their head.” Does not refer to a way you can get revenge, i.e. it does not mean, if you want to make your enemy miserable, be nice to them. Instead, it means that acts of love are overwhelming, it is something hatred cannot handle. It is completely disarming and overpowering, i.e. – “I cannot take it, I do not know how to handle it, get those coals off of my head!”
- God is saying that you can overcome evil (hatred and persecution) by responding in love rather than retaliation, which just fuels the fire even more.
- Can you see how this can apply in conflicts around the world (Israel vs Arabs, Blacks vs Whites, Irish Catholics vs British Protestants)? When it comes to national life (societal life) and the interplay among nations there is more to the mix, which we will discuss in Romans 13. There is strength in the sword. Therefore, the admonition in Romans 12:18 “as much as it depends upon you, live at peace with everyone.” Sometimes force is needed to keep the peace, especially with those who do not keep the peace. (That is in the home, classroom, nation, relations among nations) more on this next week.

However, there was something missing in last week’s passage, that is spoken of abundantly elsewhere, and that is the topic of forgiveness. It is practically impossible to do good to one who has wronged you if you do not forgive the offender.

This is what surfaced in Edmond Day’s editorial, “America is fast on the path of hatred” (*The Daily Gazette*, Sat., Sept. 26, 2020, C7). Here is what he wrote with my comments.

Table 1. Article, “America is fast on the path of hatred”

<p>In his book, <i>Killing Crazy Horse</i>, Bill O’Reilly wrote, “I know what it is like to hate,” Cloud states. “I hate those white soldiers who took us from our home. I hate the soldiers who made us keep walking through the snow and ice toward this new home that none of us ever wanted. I hate the people who killed my mother and my father. I hate the white people who lined the roads in their woolen clothes that kept them warm, watching us pass. None of these white people are here to say they are sorry that I am alone. None of them care about my people. All they ever saw was the color of our skin. All I see is the color of theirs. And I hate them.”</p> <p>Samuel Cloud, great-great-grandson of Native American Chief Samuel Cloud, wrote the above. Samuel survived The Trail of Tears when Cherokee Indians were forced to march. Nearly 25% died.</p> <p>There is hate to go around in America today. A Trail of Tears of the soul is taking place. It is not based on skin color; that will be a justification. Past injustices like hate are forever,</p> <p>History’s lesson: hate. The Bible’s lesson, “Hate the sin, not the sinner.”</p> <p>America is entering a cycle of hate based upon false premises. Revenge, false justice is the action of the abused who becomes an abuser.</p> <p>History wins, the Bible loses. The struggle continues between good and evil.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Edmund Day, Rotterdam</p>	<p>This is an <i>insightful</i> piece. (Rather than an <i>inciteful</i> piece, which does no one any good)</p> <p>Day is not blaming anyone. He is just making some observations.</p> <p>It appears that the hatred has carried down to the great, great grandson, who has not been personally wronged.</p> <p>The bitterness of Chief Cloud cycled down through five generations.</p> <p>Here is how our wrong responses can affect future generations and build a lasting enmity between people.</p> <p>What we do affects others!</p> <p>False premises? Not sure, perhaps there are no good whites.</p> <p>Insightful – the abused become the abusers</p>
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Think about Day's statement, "the abused who become an abuser." Here is where compassion is needed. We all feel for the abused, but when they overstep the line and become abusers, (something they likely would not have become if they had not been victimized), it is harder to see.

We need to help not only the abusers as well as the abused. All people are needy even if they have seared their consciousnesses.

What is truly insightful is that revenge fuels further hatred. Do you want to destroy a relationship? Begin to find fault, begin to accuse, and over time two people drawn together can not only drift apart, but end up hating each other.

Sometimes a person is wronged by a stranger, rape, murder of a loved one, destruction of property or reputation.

The problem stated – holding onto anger, bitterness, and fear because you have been wrongfully treated!

Give it to God and let Him avenge the wrong

What do you do when reconciliation seems like a dumb idea, because the person is a stranger or your friend who has turned into an enemy, and they are continuing to hurt you and the last thing they want is reconciliation? What do you do then?

Are you a Christian? Perhaps my blog. might be of help.

If You Mess with God's Children, You Are Going to Have to Deal with Their Father



The message of Numbers 31 is quite clear. God will execute His vengeance upon all those who harm His people. The wicked may think they are succeeding, but like fish that have already taken the bait and running with it, they are already doomed. It is just a matter of time. People are foolish if they think that they can harm the people of God and God is just going to look the other way. God may wait for wickedness to ripen, but when judgment comes, it comes as a terrible swift sword!

It is here in Numbers 31, we learn of Balaam being behind the events of whoredom with the Midianite women in the sensual worship of Baal-Peor in Numbers 25.

15 And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? 16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD. 17 Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. (Numbers 31:15-17)

After the fury of the wrath of the LORD had been spent, lying dead were Balaam (vs 8), the men and boys of of the Midianites, and the women who caused Israel to sin. It does not pay to afflict those dear to God's heart. In Romans 12, we read that the Christian need not bother himself with judging his enemies. He should deal graciously toward them and as much as possible live at peace with them and let the Lord take vengeance upon any wrong done.

*17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; **I will** repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:17-21)*

May the wicked beware. If you touch his docile sheep, you are going to have to deal with their shepherd. May the righteous find comfort, as the LORD is your shepherd. His rod and staff are a source of comfort. He will watch over you in the presence of your enemies. Surely goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life and you will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Small Village Pastor, August 14, 2015

Notice – Romans 12:17–21 was quoted (our text today)

Forgive the person who wronged you.

Here is where Ephesians 4:25–5:2 comes into play

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

^{5:1} Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

What to put off (get rid of)

In anger, do not sin, get it resolved.

If you let it simmer inside, it will get ugly! BITTERNESS!

Get rid of bitterness, rage, and anger

Be kind, compassionate, FORGIVING

Be an imitator of God who forgives and loves us (the sinners that we are, we need forgiveness)

Examples of Christians who forgave and stunned all who heard! (from John Perkins, *One Blood: Parting Words to the Church on Race and Love*, 99–101).

- **Dylann Roof, the white supremacist who murdered black Christians at a prayer meeting in Charleston, SC**

It happened on July 25, 2015 at the Emanuel African Methodist Church. Roof sat next to the pastor and as they bowed their heads and prayed, he pulled out a gun and shot nine dead screaming racial epithets.

Their relatives at the hearing stood up one by one and said, "I forgive you."

- **Charles Carl Roberts IV walking into an Amish schoolhouse carrying a weapon, shooting 10 little girls, six to thirteen, murdering five of them, five survived.**

It happened on October 2, 2006 in Lancaster County, PA. He demanded the adults and boys to leave. He told the girls to lie down facing the chalkboard and he shot each one. He told them they would have to suffer because God had taken the life of his infant daughter only twenty hours after she was born.

What did the Amish do? They went to the killer's family who were in anguish over what Charles had done, to comfort them. They forgave him. He was obviously mentally imbalanced. There were more Amish at the killer's funeral than non-Amish to support the family.

Wow, how do you forgive the killer who killed your innocent little girl? Only through God's grace,

Pray for help and reconciliation

We must pray because forgiveness is contrary to every natural inclination of man. Yet, forgiveness is necessary, because if we choose not to forgive, we will not hurt the offender. The bitterness will destroy our life.

Why should we forgive?

1. One who is bitter must stifle the voice of conscience. We know we should forgive but instead we blame the other. "I know I should not feel this way, BUT . . . (then one begins to excuse himself).
2. Not forgiving others can lead to bitterness and a selfish stubbornness. What about the cause of Christ and your witness before a watching world? God wants you to seek peace, seek reconciliation, to have peace within your soul.
3. Not forgiving hurts the one who holds the grudge. The poison of bitterness will permeate your life.
4. Not forgiving others, for a Christian, is an abuse of mercy. God has forgiven you, should you not do likewise?
5. Bitterness will affect those you love who are around you. You will create enmity in the hearts of your children, friends, and family.
6. For the Christian, to refuse to forgive is high-handed sinning.

What should you do if the darkness of bitterness is shrouding your soul? Pray! Pray that God would be merciful to you, a sinner. Pray, that He would grant you love for you those you do not have even an ounce of love for.