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The High Spire

"A going Church for a coming Lord"

August 2010

Pastor's Message

Hot Coals: Part 2 (Romans 12:19)

Paul begins by ruling out all attempts at revenge: "Do not take revenge, my friends." There are no exceptions, no pleas for extenuating circumstances, no maybes, no ifs, ands or buts. Revenge and retaliation are forever ruled out for the believer in Christ. The next few verses give us three reasons for ruling out all attempts at revenge.

1. Because revenge is God's Work

Leave room for God's wrath, for it is written, "It is mine to avenge, I will repay." It was John Kennedy who said, "Don't get mad, get even." That represents the wisdom of the world. And if we are truthful, that's the way

most people, even many Christians, operate. With one slight correction: We get mad, then we get even.

By contrast, Paul says, "Let God handle the revenge. That's his special ministry." Have you ever thought vengeance as a "ministry" of God? Well, it is. Vengeance is one aspect of God's justice. It's his way of balancing the scales of life.

What happens when we try to take vengeance into our own hands? The answer is, we almost always mess it up. We're either too harsh or too soft, we strike fast or too late, or we attack the wrong person or we say the wrong thing, or we just end up making things worse and not better. Too many times we're like Bruce Willis in one of those Die Hard movies. We just load up our guns, run into the room and start firing. Our motto is: Kill em' all and let God sort 'em out later. And if we accidentally hurt some innocent people, well it's a tough world and sometimes people get hurt.

The most fundamental reason not to take revenge is that by our clumsiness we may block God's work in another person's life. We just want to get even, but God wants to bring that person to a place of repentance and reconciliation. God has a better view than we do and he has a higher goal. Vengeance is his specialty.

God of David and God of Goliath

Think about it. He's the God who kicked Adam and Eve out of the Garden, the God who caused the Red Sea to dry up for the Israelites and then drown the Egyptians. He's the God who opened up the ground and swallowed the sons of Korah and the God who struck Miriam with leprosy. He's also the God who delivered Goliath into David's hands and the same God who caused David's infant son to die because of his affair with Bathsheba.

He allowed Peter to walk on water and then Jesus rebuked him to his face and said, "Get behind me, Satan!" He worked miracles in the early church but killed Ananias and Sapphira when they lied about their giving. He sent the gift of tongues to the church in Corinth but sent sickness and death to the congregation because they were getting drunk at the Lord's Supper.

He's God. He sees things we don't see, he watches the motives of the heart. He knows our thoughts before we think them, our words before we speak them. He knows what we're going to do before we do it and he knows the reason why.

Revenge is his special ministry to mankind. You can never do it as well as he can. But you can mess things up by trying to take vengeance on your enemies.

So leave it to the Lord. He's far better at it than you will ever be.

Christmas in August

Christmas in July is more common, but we here at Jackson Street Baptist Church are doing Christmas in August!

If you would like to take part in the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child, simply follow these directions:

Use an empty shoe box (standard size please).

Determine whether your gift will be for a boy or girl, and the child's age category: 2-4, 5-9, 10-14. Print that information on the top of the box.

Fill the box with a variety of gifts that will bring delight to a child. Use the following gift ideas...

Toys: small cars, balls, dolls, stuffed animals, kazoos, harmonicas, yo-yos, jump ropes, small Etch A Sketch, toys that light up or make noise (with extra batteries), slinky, etc.

School supplies: pens, pencils and sharpener, crayons or markers, stamps and ink pad sets, writing pads or paper, solar calculators, coloring and picture books, etc.

Hygiene items: toothbrush, toothpaste, mild bar soap (in plastic bag) comb, washcloth, etc.

Other: t-shirts, socks, ball caps, sunglasses, hair clips, watches, flashlights (with extra batteries).

Do not include: war related items such as toy guns, knives or military figures; chocolate or food; liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items such as snow globes or glass containers; aerosol cans.

If possible, please donate \$7 or more for each box you prepare to help cover shipping and other project costs.

Place a rubber band around each box you prepare and give them to Diana Harris.

Thank you for your generosity.

DOV MINISTRY

The DOV Ministry will once again be putting together school kits and backpacks for the upcoming school year. If you would like to help out with donations for the kits, contact the church office.

Daily Vacation Bible School

This year our Vacation Bible School will begin on Sunday, August 8th at 6:00p.m. till 8:30p.m. through August 12th.

If you would like to help out, please call the church office.

The A B C'S of friendship

A friend:

Accepts you as you are

Believes in you

Calls just to say "Hi"

Doesn't give up on you

Enjoys every bit of you (even the unfinished parts)

Forgives your mistakes

Gives unconditionally

Helps you

Invites you over

Joins you, even during hard times

Keeps you close at heart

Loves you for who you are

Makes a difference in your life

Never judges

Offers support

Picks you up

Quiets your fears

Raises your spirits

Says nice things about you

Tells you the truth when you need to hear it

Understands you

Values you

Walks beside you

Xplains things you don't understand

Yells when you won't listen and
Zaps you back to reality

I am my church

My church is composed of people like me. We make it what it is.

It will be friendly if I am.

Its pews will be filled, if I help fill them.

It will do great work, if I work.

It will make generous gifts to many causes, if I am a generous giver.

It will bring other people into its worship and fellowship, if I bring them.

It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, and a church with a noble spirit, if I, who makes it what it is, am filled with these traits.

Therefore with the help of God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all the things I want my church to be.

Healthy families include grandparents

Christian families strive to include grandparents in significant family activities. Not just reunions, weddings or anniversaries but when grandchildren participate in such things as recitals, dramas, school sporting events, graduations, birthday parties, family day trips and the like.

Why are grandparents greatly important to the raising of children? Dr. Terry Brazleton, an expert on child development, says grandparents are important to a child's sense of roots. Grandparents are storehouses of information about family history. They help the child to understand how he or she fits into the family saga and who the heroes and heroines of the family have been. For truth's sake—Jesus said the truth makes us free—even knowledge of a family "black sheep" can be

told as a lesson to guide children toward more Christlike behavior.

Dr. Brazelton suggests parents prepare children for visits to grandparents who live at some distance. He tells parents, "Use videotapes, phone calls, stories to keep grandparents close." Tell stories about your own childhood.

The Bible points to another contribution of Christian grandparents. Paul wrote to young Timothy these words: "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you." (2 Timothy 1:5). Faith, too, can be a wonderful heritage from grandparents.

The power of the Bible

A generation ago, Halford Luccock was a bright, witty teacher of preaching at Yale Divinity School. He was also the author of many books and articles. In one article about the influence of the Bible upon history, he pointed to the initials of The New Testament: T.N.T. It is indeed TNT, he said, a document which stresses the explosive ideas of freedom and equality. That is why the Bible is always feared by dictators. The Bible inspired the Magna Carta and the Declaration of Independence.

Compelled to be compassionate

Sometimes the needs of the poor, the refugees, those afflicted by floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, wars, famine and the like seem enormously overwhelming in scope and severity. The needs often appear so great that we may feel rather helpless in the face of them. And the needs seem to be increasing. We are told that there are now six billion people crowding the earth and more on the way. Mother Earth, the environmentalists tell us, is already taxed to provide enough food, enough

trees for shelter, enough clean fresh water, enough oil and coal to make electricity and so on. An Internet service, *Religion Today*, reported in 2000 that some 6 million children die each year mostly due to hunger-related causes. Worldwide, some 32,000 children under 5 die daily for lack of food. Considering all these needs, what are Christians to do?

In Matthew 25 we find Christ telling us how we will finally be judged. Judgment, Jesus indicated, would center on how we meet the needs of the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, those without adequate clothes, those who are sick or imprisoned. Christ's word was, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it unto the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40)

The model for Christian compassion was and is Christ himself, the one who fed the hungry, healed the sick, accepted the rejected, offered comfort to those who had lost a loved one, blessed children, and provided the way out of darkness for those trapped in confusion and sin. Writer Robert C. Roberts puts our Christian mandate for compassion in these words: "When a person acknowledges that Jesus is the Lord, he no longer has any choice about how far to go in identifying himself with weak, suffering or sinful people. Because there is no person too lowly for his Lord, there is none too lowly for him either." We are compelled by the compassionate Christ to follow in his steps.

Real generosity is doing something nice for someone who'll never find it out.

Life is a mirror: If you frown at it, it frowns back; if you smile, it returns the greeting.

Please make me the kind of person my dog thinks I am.