TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Daniel Balch /Opening Prayer by: Jerry Mallernee

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Bobby Rader

#2 We Praise Thee O God
#450 Give Me the Bible

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary
#366 By Christ Redeemed
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#162 All Hail the Power of Jesus Name
Sermon: "Conformed or Transformed"
Romans 12:1-2

#912 Burdens are Lifted at Calvary
#414 Anywhere with Jesus

Closing Prayer by: Craig Girard

We will be viewing the series
The Chosen at 5:00 p.m. in the
fellowship room

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

June 12, 2022

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Do Not Resist

This is a follow-up to last week's article, where we simply listed a number of passages from the NT on employing violence against enemies. It's essential that we address this topic because so many Christians look at the violence in our society and propose to meet it with more violence in return. And while that may well be necessary in some cases—and it might even be defended with Scripture—the problem is that many advocate embracing that proudly, proactively as a solution rather than turning to it sorrowfully as a last resort. Is that consistent with the teachings of Jesus?

I would encourage you to go read those passages cited last week. But the short answer to that question is no. The place to start is in the Sermon on the Mount, specifically **Matt 5:38-48:**

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." **(Matthew 5:38-48)**

We have a couple of relevant admonitions here that we can sum up briefly as: 1) do not resist an evil person and 2) love your enemies.

As far as not resisting an evil person goes, the word that is employed implies armed resistance. The idea, then, is to not resist an evil person with violence. After all, Scripture is clear that we are to resist evil in general. This is about HOW we resist it. But what Jesus calls for is not passive acquiescence—it is action! It's just that the action runs counter to expectations:

1. *If anyone slaps you…* To be slapped on the right cheek—when most people are righthanded—implies a backhand, a gross insult. Under the Law of Moses, if someone struck you, you were entitled to monetary compensation. But if they backhanded you, that was doubled! Instead of striking back or exacting a fine, however, Jesus says turn the other cheek.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Joe Edd Stifflemire has a blood clot and will be having additional test run.

Susan McCain is at her daughter's house and is continuing treatment for her illness.

Ken Coleman is recovering from covid. He will be having test done after recovering from covid.

Russell Godby is recovering from a broken leg.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Frank & Tina Garcia, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Gary Nielsen, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Gayle Coleman

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders meeting Monday, June 13th at 5:30p.m.

We will have a meal on Wednesday, June 15th at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, June 16th at 8:00 a.m.

VBS

VBS is July 18-21st from 6-8 p.m. We will have classes for all ages (including adults). For more information see Abbey Perkins.

The corrected directory has been placed on the bulletin board. Please double check it to make sure your information is correct.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

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2. *If anyone would sue you…*The tunic was the undergarment, roughly equivalent to a shirt. The cloak was the outer garment: essentially a coat, but also used as a blanket when sleeping and even a temporary cover from the elements. The Law actually prohibited you from taking it from an Israelite! (**Exod 22:26-27)** So a person is being sued for what is legal, but Jesus goes further: abandon your rights, allow yourself to be humiliated.
3. *If anyone would force you to go a mile…*Roman soldiers could compel this, requisitioning people to forced labor for the military. So we are called to imagine a soldier demanding transport over a mile—Jesus says voluntarily go two. It's the opposite of the violent, Zealot approach.
4. *Give to the one who begs…*This can, of course, be taken to ludicrous extremes. Augustine rightfully pointed out that is says to give, but not necessarily give what they ask. The point is that there is no expectation of being repaid or exacting interest.

The upshot of all these admonitions is that disciples of Jesus will not respond to injustice with vengeance, but with grace, compassion, and mercy. We will embody justice in the Kingdom of God. And those virtues are powerful enough to subvert and reverse injustice.

The command to love your enemies is less complex. The hard part here is not understanding it but doing it. To love our enemy is to will their good and to work for it; that is radical stuff! This is not just a platitude about being nice to grumpy people. It is a challenging demand to those who might wish us harm—a demand that Jesus and his follower took seriously. That is why we see it practiced over and over again. Jesus forgave his enemies at the cross **(Lk 23:34);** Stephen did the same at his execution **(Acts 7:60).** Paul counsels the same response **(Rom 12:14)** as does Peter, even appealing to the example of Jesus **(1 Pet 3:9).**

How does that square with the rest of the NT? It is unambiguous and univocal in its teaching. Consider the passages from last week's article. We find a consistent witness against violence and a call to follow the example of Jesus: to accept suffering rather than to inflict it.

So how can we justify meeting violence with violence? If we can at all, it is an example of what some Christian ethicists call *hierarchical absolutism.* That is, we have commands in tension: we are commanded to love our enemies, to do good to them, to not resist them with violence; on the other hand, we are commanded to love our neighbors and to do justice and protect those who are innocent.

Might there be occasions where our love of neighbor trumps our commitment to non-retaliation? We might argue that love of neighbor is our primary commitment; after all, it is the second great commandment. So, confronted by an evildoer, we might respond—if necessary—to defend, protect, and vindicate that neighbor, even with lethal force. That is an arguable position (though, of course, the attacker is our neighbor, too). When that happens, we do not choose the lesser evil, but we choose to do good—and there is no sin. We must weigh which is the greater command.

But the point is, we must realize that there is a real conflict here. If there are exceptions, they are exactly that; we must not use the exceptions to replace the rule itself. They do not change the thrust of Jesus' teaching or our primary focus: in general, we are not to retaliate, not to use violence, to love our enemies even to the point of death. Wherever we come out on this issue, we must be sure we at least think it through rather than adopting violence as a first response.

Bryant Perkins