

Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

Subject: Joy Stealer – Resentment: Hebrews 12:14-15

Others know our values not from what we say, but from what we do. It is how we spend our time that tells others what is important to us.

Jesus said that our actions give away our value system. What we do shows what we really believe (Luke 6:45). Do your actions clearly show you are living by the values taught in the Bible?

Joy in Affliction. In fact, it is this joy while suffering that most clearly distinguishes NT joy from that in the OT. First, there is joy in (or in spite of) suffering because of the great reward in heaven (Matthew 5:12; Luke 6:23), the "inheritance" kept for us in heaven (1 Peter 1:4,6), the "better possession" (Hebrews 10:34). We are to look to Jesus who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross (Hebrews 12:2). Furthermore, we should rejoice that we share the sufferings of Christ, so that we may be glad and rejoice when His glory is revealed (1 Peter 4:13). Second, there is joy in suffering because suffering produces character (Romans 5:3) and steadfastness (James 1:2). But third, there is joy in suffering simply because it is for the sake of Christ and His body, the Church (Acts 5:41; Philippians 2:17; Colossians 1:24; 1 Peter 4:13). Thus Paul can write: "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Corinthians 6:10). Here is the paradox of Christian faith, that our very human grief may be turned into and overcome by joy in the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 7:4).

As we run the Christian race, what is our goal? The writer explained the goal in Hebrews 12:14: Peace with all men, and holiness before the Lord. (Remember "the peaceable fruit of righteousness," Hebrews 12:11.) These two goals remind us of our Lord's high priestly ministry - King of peace and King of righteousness (Hebrews 7:1-2). It requires diligence to run the race successfully lest we "fail of the grace of God" (Hebrews 12:15). God's grace (foes not fail, but we can fail to take advantage of His grace. At the end of the chapter, there is another emphasis on grace (Hebrews 12:28)).

We are encouraged to depend on the grace of God by urging them to look by faith in three directions.

Look back - the bad example of Esau (vv. 15-17). Esau certainly failed to act on God's grace. The account is given in Genesis 25:27-34; 27:30-45. Esau was "a profane person," which means "a common person, one who lives for the world and not God." (Our English word literally means "outside the temple," or not belonging to God.) Esau despised his birthright and sold it to Jacob, and he missed the blessing because it was given to Jacob. (It was supposed to go to Jacob anyway, but it was wrong for Jacob to use trickery to get it. See Genesis 25:19-26.) Afterward, Esau tried to get Isaac to change his mind, but it was too late. Even Esau's tears availed nothing.

What sins will rob us of the enabling of God's grace? These verses tell us: lack of spiritual diligence, bitterness against others (see Deuteronomy 29:18), sexual immorality, and living for the world and the flesh. Some people have the idea that a "profane person" is blasphemous and filthy; but Esau was a congenial fellow, a good hunter, and a man who loved his father. He would have made a fine neighbor - but he was not interested in the things of God.

God's grace does not fail, but we can fail to depend on God's grace. Esau is a warning to us not to live for lesser things.

Bitterness, resentment, envy, and grudges all seem to hang around in the same group. Sometimes it's obvious when these joy-stealers are present but other times it's not.



Resentment - the most Subtle

Resentment is probably one of the most subtle and deceiving of the joy-stealers in our lives. Unlike anger, which is more impulsive and sudden - easy to spot, resentment builds slowly and gradually over time. No one single feeling of resentment is enough to trigger dangerous behavior. But, add up a few or several feelings of resentment over time, and you can have a volatile situation. And because resentment can be masked by an outwardly calm exterior, often it goes undetected by others. Accumulated resentment can lead in time to anger and bitterness - and yes, even to outbursts of rage and violence.



Kick it Out!

The joy-stealer of resentment needs to be kicked out of our lives right away when it's first detected. That's what I want us to look at and learn about today. In our time together, we're going to do a check of resentment, look at a case of resentment, see the cost of resentment, and finally, explore the cure for resentment.

I. A Check of Resentment

We have to learn the meaning of resentment by briefly examining the Greek word from which we get the concept. The English word "resentment" is not actually used in the New Testament, but the Greek word "logizomai" underlies what we refer to as resentment. An example of this is found in a negative context in the great love chapter of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13:5. When Paul talks about God's kind of love - agape - he says that "love...keeps no record of wrongs" or "love...thinks no evil" (v. 5b).

"Logizomai" has its roots commercially in accounting or bookkeeping. It means "to calculate, to charge, or to reckon." Entering a number into a ledger for the purpose of keeping track of what has taken place is meant by the word, "logizomai." When you record the amount of a check or transaction in your ledger or bankbook, you are reckoning.

Logizomai

Here are a few uses of some form of the word, "logizomai:"

-Romans 4:8, "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

-2nd Corinthians 5:19, probably one of my favorite verses in the Bible, says, "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them." The word is used to our benefit when it describes how God does not enter into His ledger a record of the sin of the person who is in Christ.

-2nd Timothy 4:16, "At my first defense, no one came to my support but everyone deserted me..." then Paul says, "...may it not be counted against them."

Love Keeps No Record of Wrongs

There are a lot of situations in life in which record keeping is absolutely indispensable. But when it comes to daily close, personal relationships that are supposed to work it is not only unnecessary but it's downright harmful. God teaches us that love does not keep a record of the wrongs that have been done to it. Love looks for an opportunity to erase the record of wrongs, to forgive and keep a clean slate.

II. A Case of Resentment



We find more than a few sad cases of resentment in the Old Testament Scriptures. One that comes to mind is King David. We find David on his deathbed as he brought Solomon, his son, before him and gave him some instructions. David, in his memory, had nurtured resentment over the actions of Joab, one of his military commanders. Joab had killed two commanders in the army on the basis of his own grudges and resentments, and David had not forgotten it. David had remembered Joab's actions for years but had never avenged the deaths of his two commanders by killing Joab. So David called Solomon in and gave him some very resentful counsel. Look at 1st Kings 2:1-6:

David's Resentful Counsel

"When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son. 'I am about to go the way of all the earth,' he said. 'So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, and that the Lord may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' 'Now you yourself know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me - what he did to the two commanders of Israel's armies, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He killed them, shedding their blood in peacetime as if in battle, and with that blood stained the belt around his waist and the sandals on his feet. Deal with him according to your wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down to the grave in peace.'"

Not a Great Inheritance

David had nurtured his resentment for years and finally decided to act on it by passing it on to his son, Solomon. That's not the sort of inheritance the Lord wants us to leave our children.



Like a Cancer

The trouble with resentment is that it's never dormant, static, or inert. In other words, it doesn't remain the same. Resentment is like a cancer that grows ever so slowly, attaching itself to other things and eating away at the insides of the person who nurtures it - it metastasizes. And, like cancer, ultimately other things near it become involved. In the case of resentment and bitterness, other people become involved. There are some people who think, "If I want to be bitter and resentful, that's nobody's business but my own." But look at what God tells us in Hebrews 12:15:

No Bitter Root

"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

A Weed in the Garden of our Souls

That verse points out that bitterness is something that can linger just below the surface and when it comes up it can hurt others in the process. Regardless of how harmless and subtle you or I think our resentments might be, they're not. Resentment is like an evil root that is slowly, steadily growing. It's only waiting for the opportunity to poke its ugly head above the ground. It's like a weed that will spring up in the middle of the garden our souls and choke the joy out of our lives and our walk with Jesus.

III. A Cost of Resentment

Hypertension & Heart Disease

Experts agree that the person who nurtures resentment pays a high price to do so, both mentally and physically. As I have mentioned earlier in these studies, doctors are documenting more and more instances in which anger, bitterness, and an unforgiving spirit are the causative factors in physical diseases. As to the negative physical impact, S.I. McMillan, in his book "None of These Diseases" (Fleming H. Revell, 1963) says the estimates vary from 60 to 100 percent that hypertension and heart disease are influenced by the stress brought about by lack of forgiveness, grudges, bitterness and resentment.

Prisoners & Slaves

Mentally we can be imprisoned by our bitterness and resentment. When we choose to hold a grudge or be resentful we think we have put another person under our control by our unwillingness to forgive. Pay close attention here though, because in reality, it is really you and I who end up becoming prisoners and slaves of our own resentments. We become the incarnation of our bitterness. Our life tends to orbit around the thing to which we refuse to let go.

Camel and Coat



I found out something interesting this past week as I was preparing for this message. Did you know that animals are capable of holding grudges? I read that camels exhibit all the earmarks of hanging onto resentment and what it can do. It is capable of building up a pressure cooker of bitterness and resentment toward human beings. And when the lid blows off, it's even violent. In the Middle East, when a camel driver senses trouble, he takes off his coat and gives it to his camel. The camel rips the coat to shreds - jumping on it, biting it, and tearing it to pieces. When the camel feels vindicated, he stops and the two of them continue on with their work.



Poison to our Souls

Is there someone's coat you wouldn't mind trampling on or tearing to shreds? Perhaps you've considered a few other things. No matter how much we might shrug off the seriousness of resentment and revenge, the truth is that it is like poison to our souls. In fact, it has been said that resentment is a poison we choose to swallow hoping that someone else will die. But the persons most affected by it are you and I. And then it also affects our relationship with the Lord. We have to learn a constructive way to tackle the joy-stealer of resentment, which we will do in part 2.