

Rom 12:14, 17-21 - The Christian's Kindness Toward the Ungodly

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>17</sup> Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

One commentary on this section entitled it, "Loving Those You Love to Hate". The only change I would make is "Loving Those You **Would** Love to Hate". Making it say that by nature we would love to hate the ungodly. As Jesus pointed out in the Sermon on the Mount, "you have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'" He went on to say, "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?" Therefore, being born of God and required to be as our Father in heaven, who makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, although we must acknowledge that we struggle to love them, at the same time we must bring our old man, our old nature under control, and thereby love them. As we consider Paul's instruction here this morning we shall see that there is total agreement with our Lord's instruction in that sermon recorded by Matthew for us. Let us ever be mindful, that while we were still enemies of God, Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us. (cf. Rom 5:10)

A. The Christian's Kindness to one another.

B. The Christians Kindness to the ungodly

1. We are to reject revenge.

- a. The command is clear; we are to bless those who hate us, who persecute us, who would do us harm.
- b. This is not to approve the persecutors or the actions of those who hate us
- c. We need to realize that they hate us because they hate God and His Messiah.

(1) Note they hate us "for righteousness sake"

(2) They hate us because they hate Jesus Christ

*John 15:18 If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.*

*Matt 10:22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.*

d. Some aids to help us bless those who persecute us.

*Matt 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, Make sure the charges be false*

(1) Make sure the charges are false - *falsely for My sake*

(2) Keep your mind on the eternal reward - *great is your reward in heaven*

(3) Be mindful you are in good company - *for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

(4) Above all you are in the company of Christ

e. The blessing we give would be in the manner of praying for them.

(1) Praying for their conversion

(2) Never asking God's wrath upon them as a means of getting even

(3) We can pray that God would take note of their actions

*Acts 4:29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word*

*Isa 37:17-20 Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; **open Your eyes**, O Lord, and **see; and hear** all the words of Sennacherib, **which he has sent to reproach the living God**. . . . Now therefore, O Lord our God, **save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord, You alone.**"*

- f. But such prayer is not for personal preservation, but for the protection of the church and the furtherance of the gospel.
2. We are to wait upon God's justice.
- a. We are never to return evil for evil nor avenge ourselves.
  - b. This is not a prerogative given to man
  - c. This belongs to God alone - *vengeance is mine - I will repay*
  - d. We are to respond with Christ-likeness for when reviled, He did not return mocking (1 Pet. 2:23)
  - e. We have the example of Apostle Paul whom we are to follow as he followed Christ

*1 Cor 4:12 Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat.*

- f. If they are not granted repentance, we know their hatred and evil will not be overlooked. - Martyrs under the altar - how long O Lord? - (cf. Rev 16:5-6; Rev 18:6-8 6; Rev 18:20)
- g. The passage that Paul cites is Deuteronomy 32:35. It is a passage that teaches that God will one day balance the books. - *Deut 32:35 Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; their foot shall slip in due time.*
  - (1) It tells us that God is going to balance the books,
  - (2) We do not need to take things into our own hands
  - (3) The key? Keep your heart and mind on eternity.

CONCLUSION: If they are hungry, feed them, if they are thirsty give them drink. - *for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.*

Scripture tells us that when we return good for evil we are heaping coals of fire upon their head.

Two thoughts here in the meaning of those words:

- 1. God will judge double for all their deeds since we respond with good for evil.
- 2. Heaping coals of fire on their head is by some scholars understood as pouring convicting guilt upon them

Being mindful that returning kindness for evil may be a witness that will bring them to conviction and conversion

I have often wondered if the "ox goads" that trouble Saul of Tarsus were the words of Stephen as they were stoning him when he called upon God saying:

*"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin. Acts 7:59-60*

Therefore let us always be mindful that our weapons are not carnal but mighty

*2 Cor 10:3-6 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

Knowing that as God's servants we are not to quarrel but be gentle to all.

*2 Tim 2:24-26 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.*

By such obedience we will "not be overcome by evil, but (we will) overcome evil with good"

May God grant us such grace.