

Loving an Enemy

David gives me an example of how to love my enemies. He called the man who persistently tried to kill him "beloved and lovely" (2 Samuel 1:23.) My enemy is not an irritating neighbor, a bitter-tongued boss, or a person of different skin color and speech. My enemy is, as David's was, anyone who stands in the way of doing God's will. As long as Saul was alive, David could not mount the throne of Israel. Saul's death, therefore, was David's life. Yet not once would David make any effort of his own to remove the obstacle to kingship. To love an enemy is the ultimate end in the negation of ambition and desire. To love an enemy is to accept his hindrance as part of God's purpose, to be serene toward him, and to realize that his hindrance, like that of Judas, is only leading to ultimate victory. The natural man fights his enemy. He tries to remove him as an obstacle by doing him physical harm, even death. War is the full-scale display of the natural man determined to have his way. The shallowness of that way of acting is the for every enemy I destroy, ten more arise. The only way I can "conquer" my enemy is to love him. That does not mean that I "like" him; it simply means that I have good will toward him, that I place him in God's hands for disposition, and that I yearn for his ultimate spiritual blessing in Christ. The disciple of Jesus Christ is the only person who can afford to have enemies, because he knows how to treat them. Doing the will of Christ means I will never lack enemies, but I will never lack the support of Him of whom 13 Corinthians, (the love chapter) is a perfect description of. AS I trust God who is perfect love, He will work out that perfect love through me. "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay' says the Lord" Romans 12:19
Isaiah 7:9 "...you do not believe Me? If you want Me to protect you learn to believe what I say....."

Ps. 50:21 While you did all this, I (God) remained silent, and you thought I didn't care. But now I will rebuke you, listing all My charges against you. Repent, all of you who ignore Me, or I will tear you apart, and no one will help you."

(Note: Just because God is silent does not mean He is condoning sin or is indifferent to it. Instead, He is withholding deserved punishment, giving time for people to repent (2 Peter 3:9). God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked and wants them to turn from evil (Ez. 33:11) But His silence does not last forever—a time of punishment will surely come)

And **Ps. 109:1-5** Oh God, who I praise, don't stand silent and aloof while the wicked slander me. They are all around me with their hateful word, and they fight against me for no reason. I love them, but they try to destroy me, even as I am praying for them. They return evil for good and hatred for my love."

From My Utmost: The Sermon on the mount indicates that when we are on a mission for Jesus Christ, there is not time to stand up for ourselves. Jesus says in effect, "Don't worry about whether or not you are being treated justly. Looking for justice is actually a sign that we have been diverted from our devotion to Him. Never look for Justice in this world, but never cease to give it!

If we are devoted to Jesus Christ, we have nothing to do with what we encounter, whether it is just or unjust. In essence Jesus says, "continue steadily on with what I have told you to do and I will guard your life. If you try to guard it yourself, you remove yourself from My deliverance."

Psalm 81:13-14 "But Oh that my people would listen to Me. Oh that they would follow Me, walking in my paths. How quickly I would then subdue their enemies and how soon My hands would be upon your foes."

1 Peter 2:21-23 "this suffering is all part of what God has called you to. Christ, who suffered for you is your example. Follow in His steps. He never sinned and He never deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when He was insulted. When He suffered, He did not threaten to get even. He left His case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly."

Romans 8:12-14 So dear brothers and sisters, you have No obligation whatsoever to do what your sinful nature urges you to do for if you keep

on following it, you will perish, but if through the power of the Holy Spirit you turn from it and its evil deeds you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

Proverbs 30:5 "Every Word of God proves true. He defends all those who come to Him for protection."

Zech 11:11 "...they were watching me and they knew that the Lord was speaking to them through my actions."

1 Cor. 2:16 "...we can understand these things for we have the mind of Christ"

2 Thessalonians 1:1-12 Greetings from Paul ¹This letter is from Paul, Silas, ^{E1} and Timothy. It is written to the church in Thessalonica, you who belong to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Encouragement during Persecution ³Dear brothers and sisters, ^{E2} we always thank God for you, as is right, for we are thankful that your faith is flourishing and you are all growing in love for each other. ⁴We proudly tell God's other churches about your endurance and faithfulness in all the persecutions and hardships you are suffering. ⁵But God will use this persecution to show his justice. For he will make you worthy of his Kingdom, for which you are suffering, ⁶and in his justice he will punish those who persecute you. ⁷And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels, ⁸in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with everlasting destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power ¹⁰when he comes to receive glory and praise from his holy people. And you will be among those praising him on that day, for you believed what we testified about him. ¹¹And so we keep on praying for you, that our God will make you worthy of the life to which he called you. And we pray that God, by his power, will fulfill all your good intentions and faithful deeds. ¹²Then everyone will give honor to the name of our Lord Jesus because of you, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the undeserved favor of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ. ^{E3} **FOOTNOTES:**F1: Greek Silvanus. F2: Greek Brothers. F3: Or of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalms 146:3-10 Don't put your confidence in powerful people; there is no help for you there. When their breathing stops, they return to the earth, and in a moment all their plans come to an end. But happy are those who have the God of Israel as their helper, whose hope is in the LORD their God. He is the one who made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them. He is the one who keeps every promise forever, who gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry. The LORD frees the prisoners. The LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts the burdens of those bent beneath their loads. The LORD loves the righteous. The LORD protects the foreigners among us. He cares for the orphans and widows, but he frustrates the plans of the wicked. The LORD will reign forever. O Jerusalem, your God is King in every generation! Praise the LORD!

Job 3 The thing I greatly feared has come upon me. —Job 3:25

Death, divorce, and disease could be called the three Ds of misery. They slice through life like a tsunami of sorrow, raising doubts and destroying dreams. Recently, a friend and I agreed that the previous year was one that we both would just as soon forget. Each of us had suffered one of the three. Our conversation brought Job to mind. In a short period of time, he lost his children, his health, his wealth, and his wife's respect. Job's distress was so great that he pleaded, "May the day perish on which I was born" (Job 3:3). Job wanted God to erase not just a year, but all memory of his existence! He had enjoyed years of success and respect. Now, he questioned the purpose of living (3:20). Job wanted to die and be forgotten, but instead God made sure his name and story would be remembered forever. Rather than give Job what he asked for, God gave

future generations what they would need—an inside look at the spiritual battle between God and Satan. The result is a God-inspired document about suffering that has comforted countless people. When what we fear actually happens, we know, thanks to Job, that God can use it for good.

Radiant Certainty by Jon Walker “I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.” (John 16:20-22 NIV) There are some days when, frankly, I don't feel much like worshiping God. There are probably more days like that than I'd care to admit. But usually those are days when I'm staring at my circumstances and making faithless judgments about what I see around me. And I struggle with the God-truth that he is in the circumstances that surround my life – all the circumstances. Have you ever considered that heartbreak is part of God's plans for you, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”? (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV) We put so much energy into avoiding the hurt when God would have us embrace it. He wants us to know that he can heal our hurts, even use our hurts for his benefit, and for us to faithfully believe that sometimes the circumstances we think are harming us are actually positive situations God is engineering. God, who is omnipotent, sees the breadth and depth of our circumstances, and he knows his plans for our lives. Thinking, then, like Christ, we can slowly, ever so slowly, begin to understand that avoiding the pain in our lives is actually an act of faithlessness. God calls us to faith in him during difficult circumstances; we'd rather place our faith in avoiding the circumstances. As always, Jesus shows us the way – because he is the Way. Jesus embraced the pain of God's plan for his life, and he did it with full faith that God was still working the plan to bring a “hope and a future” to your life and mine. Christ was so sure that his grief would turn to joy that he showed a *radiant certainty* in God's faithfulness (“Radiant certainty” is a phrase William Barclay uses to describe the attitude of Jesus at the Last Supper). Our Brother Jesus, who is also our King, was heading into a crisis that would cost him his life, yet he was so certain – *radiantly certain* – of God's faithfulness that not one of his disciples even discerned the gravity of the crisis! Jesus was so certain of God's faithfulness that it radiates throughout his whole being. And we, too, can have this radiant certainty about God's hand in our lives. We can say, when it comes to God's faithfulness, “I know because I know that I know.” That's radiant certainty! The cross was Christ's glory, not his penalty – and the same is true of difficult circumstances in our lives.

So what does this mean to me? · God's faithful character – You will develop this radiant certainty in God when you learn to trust in his faithful character. Your daily worship of God is irrevocably tied to your faith in God. · Praise God anyhow – You must choose to praise and worship God every day, no matter what the circumstances of your life. Developing a radiant certainty in God begins with simple steps of faith and obedience. · Respond to God, not your circumstances – When faced with a painful or difficult circumstance, ask God, “How do you want me to respond to this?” Keep your eyes wise for the “Why me?” traps that lay about your circumstances. · You can be radiantly certain of this: Difficult circumstances are opportunities for you to intentionally focus your faith in God and to see what he will do to give you hope and healing.

This Thing is From Me 1Kings 12:24

My child, I have a message for you today; let Me whisper it in your ear, that it may cover with His glory any storm clouds which may arise, and smooth the rough places upon which you may have to tread. It is short – only five words – but let them sink into your inmost soul; use them as a pillow upon which to rest your weary head: “This thing is from

Me.” Have you ever thought of it, that all that concerns you, concerns Me, too” for “he that touches you touches the apple of My eye.” Zech. 2:8 I would have you learn, when temptations assail you, and the “enemy comes in like a flood,” that this thing is from Me; that your weakness needs My might, and your safety lies in letting Me fight for you.

You are very precious in My sight (Is. 43:4). Therefore it is My special delight to educate you. Are you in money difficulties? Is it hard to make both ends meet? This thing is from Me, for I am your purse-bearer, and would have you draw from and depend upon Me. My supplies are limitless. (Phil. 4:19) I would have you prove my promises. Let it not be said of you, “In this thing you did not believe the Lord your God.” Dt. 1:32 Are you in difficult circumstances, surrounded by people who do not understand you, who never consult your taste, who put you in the background? “This thing is from Me.” I am the God of circumstances. “You did not come to this place by accident; it is the very place God meant for you.” Have you not asked to ‘be made humble’? See, then, I have placed you in the very school where this lesson is taught; Your surroundings and companions are only working out My will.

Are you passing through a night of sorrow? “This thing is from Me.” I am the “Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” I have let earthly comforters fail you, that, by turning to Me, you may obtain everlasting consolation. 2 Thess. 2:16,17

Has some friend disappointed you? One to whom you opened out your heart? “This thing is from Me.” I have allowed this disappointment to come, that you may learn that: The Best Friend to have is Jesus; He will hear you when you call, He will keep you lest you fall, The best friend to have is Jesus.”

I want to be your confidant. Has someone repeated things about you that are untrue? Leave them to Me, and draw closer to Me, your shelter out of reach of the “the strife of accusing tongues” (Ps. 31:20) “For I will make your innocence as clear as the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun.” (Ps. 37:6)

Have your plans been upset? Are you bowed down and weary? This thing is from Me. You made your plans, then came asking Me to bless them; but I would have you let Me plan for you, and then I take the responsibility; for “This thing is too heavy for you, you are not able to perform it all by yourself” Ex. 18:18 You are only an instrument, not an agent.

Have you longed to do some great work for Me, and instead been laid aside on a bed of pain and weakness? This thing is from Me. I could not get your attention in your busy days, and I want to teach you some of My deepest lessons. “They also serve who only stand and wait.”

I want you to learn to sing: “I am not eager, bold or strong, All that is past; I am ready not to DO! At last, At last!”

Some of My greatest workers are those shut out from active service, that they may learn to wield the weapon of prayer. (praying without ceasing.) Are you suddenly called upon to occupy a difficult and responsible position? Launch out on Me. I am trusting you with “the possession of difficulties,” and for “This thing the Lord your God shall bless you in all your works and in all you put your hands to. Dt. 15:10

This day I place in your hands this pot of holy oil; make use of it freely, My child. Let every circumstance as it arises, every word that pains you, every interruption that would make you impatient, every revelation of your own weakness, be anointed with it! Remember, “Interruptions are Divine instructions.” The sting will go as you learn to see Me in all things. Therefore “Set your hearts to all the words which I testify among you this day, for it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life, and through “this thing: you shall prolong your days in the land.” Dt. 32:46