

081323 Increase our Faith to be doers of the Word Luke 17 1:6
 Jesus had just finished giving the Pharisees another opportunity to change the way they perceive life, religion and others to align themselves with the outlook of God on people, possessions and generosity...The God whom they say they serve.....and yet do not do what scripture say.... Then he turns to his disciples

- As we tell the world Christ loves them and forgives them

We bear the message and the same cross...we tell people we love them and we demonstrate it by forgiving them when they wrong us...

This is exemplified in the teaching Jesus gave his disciples in Luke 17

- Where he commands his disciples to arguably practice most difficult “do” or crosses to carry for his disciples.. Your own way!!
- Own way in what? Well in chapter 17 he tells them...Don’t be the cause of people sinning... and killing your way of handling offense! ... because it is something that must be done over and over and over...

*NLT LK 17:1 One day Jesus **said to his disciples**, “There will always be temptations to sin, but what sorrow awaits the person who does the tempting! ² It would be better to be thrown **into the sea** with a millstone hung around your neck than to cause one of these little ones to **fall into sin**. ³ So watch yourselves!*

- **“little ones” would include the young and the young believers...whom were coming to Jesus ...in droves the tax collectors, the notorious sinner...the regular sinner..**
- **Don’t tempt them into sin... by you sinning against them...by living ways in life like the old you...and stumbling them...confusing them...misguiding them...Know this people who intentionally hurt people by lead people into sin ... or sin against them...will get theirs...know it and believe it???**

- So serious is this sin that a person would be better off cast alive into the sea, never to be seen again, than to deliberately cause others to stumble and sin.

... Jesus anticipated this question... **Wow... if that can happen to one of us who hurts a young one or a young one in the Lord...**

What if another believer, disciple or apostle...sins against one of us?

NLT verse 33 "If another believer sins, rebuke that person; then if there is repentance, forgive. ⁴ Even if that person wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must forgive."

1) Watch yourself how you respond to being sinned against....and when a fellow believer hurts you ...sins against you... rebuke them...bring it to their attention....if they repent forgive them...**even up to seven times in a single day...by the same person!!!!**

2) We are mandated to forgive anyone who sins against us...and we can often separate ...ourselves from them...but a believer is held to a different standard... they are family forgive as a practice...even when they fail to live up to the repentance...

3) **Who can do such a thing? Who can carry that cross...listen to what the Apostles response...**

NLT LK 17: 5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Show us how to increase our faith." **"Increase" our faith = " -- add to.**

1. Notice Jesus spoke to the disciples...and the apostles answered for more faith... **notice the disciples...who were many heard this...the apostles who were few owned it** to do these things...the apostles...that is encouraging...they are the 12 chosen...the top of the class...and they cannot do it...on their own ability...

2. The apostles have heard at this time numerous times Jesus speak of their little faith... while also hearing others Jesus spoke to as having great faith...
3. **So it is a huge step in the right direction for them to recognize their lack of faith to accomplish these monumental tasks... own your Call....live what you profess...forgive everything done wrong to you! As you tell others that is what Jesus does for them...**
4. **In otherwords we have some faith...but we need more to accomplish this...resolving issues biblically is super hard ...it is a big cross to carry**

If a brother or sister does sin against us, we should give a private, loving rebuke. Our tendency might be to feel hurt down inside, nurse a grudge, and then tell others what happened to us, but this is the wrong approach (see Matt. 18:15–20). “Speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15) is the first step toward solving personal differences.

Why is this so hard? Because it goes against our nature for Justice and vengeance... The cultural belief at the time of Jesus... is an eye for an eye...and the culture of honor your family.. and shaming you all the way up to disowning... if you dishonored your family... and for many the idea of forgiveness is looked at as weakness, giving approval to the perpetrator.... for numerous reasons it makes sense to our flesh...our earthly nature...to hold a grudge...to nurse our anger...let me give you a few...

1. **Vengeance...is a basic expression to balance the scales. the desire to “get even,” or return harm for harm. Or at least get justice**
2. **Vengeance might be understood, at least from the wounded person’s point of view, as moral instruction, to “teach the offender a lesson”**

3. Vengeance can also be motivated by the goal of saving face. Revenge is an attempt to change the belief-attitude structure of the offender so that the offended person comes to be perceived as someone who should be respected and not trifled with in the same way again.
4. Vengeance can even be motivated By responding to the initial offense with even
5. more aggression, by giving a stronger message to the offender (and by standerswho might have witnessed the offense about his or her own value or self-worth.
6. Thus... Vengeful people. ruminate on the injustices and the harm they have suffered to keep themselves focused on the goal of “balancing the scales,” harm for harm “teaching the offender a lesson let them experience the suffering they caused me,” or “saving face...if I let you off the hook I will feel weak...look like a wimp... I will make you pay”
7. The more one ruminates the more vengeance rises up

So They Apostles are right to ask for more faith.....they understood the immensity of what Jesus was demanding they live like...There response in their hearts...no way it can be done...it is way to hard...we can hardly even believe it can be done...Quite the cross to bear!! **We want to own it help us!!!**

And Jesus' answer....

*NLT LK 17: 6 The Lord answered, “If you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could **say** to this mulberry tree, ‘May you be uprooted and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you!*

- **Jesus' response in verses 6- a little faith is enough... faith is not the problem ...obedience is!... the do part!! Owing the cross you have to bear....then picking it up and carrying it...is the issue!! Speak the truth to yourself...**

- using (a figure of speech) **The mulberry tree** is amazingly strong and tall up to 35 feet or more with an extensive root system. It was supposed the tree could stand in the earth for six hundred years and ancient rabbis said the untangled roots would stretch out for 600 miles.
- There are times when you and I do face deeply rooted issues in our lives we would dearly love to see magically removed.... but these issues are like this kind of tree...tall, strong, deeply rooted, and extensively entangled...and almost all of them are rooted in trauma.....and we want some kind of justice for this wrong doing...
- **They appear to need more than a little faith...but Jesus say it is enough if coupled with action...** Mustard seed faith...a tiny seed of faith
- **His demands to those who follow him were to be walked out in Faith by carrying the cross...killing our way of handling injustices done to us... and following Jesus ways and methods..... the disciples were not to be only the bearer of Christ's message, but to live the message."**
- **He is regularly moving us away from the places we would rather stay... and moving us to places we would rather not go....**
- **One last part to this command... You have to own the role of practicing this daily! a little faith exercised daily with forvieness is enough for you daily...to kill a little root**

******Then Jesus puts this command in perspective...don't think you're a martyr to do this or even heroic! Its your job! Listen**

NLT LK 17: 7 "When a servant comes in from plowing or taking care of sheep, does his master say, 'Come in and eat with me'? ⁸ No, he says, 'Prepare my meal, put on your apron, and serve me while I eat. Then you can eat later.' ⁹ And does the master thank the servant for doing

what he was told to do? Of course not. ¹⁰ In the same way, when you obey me you should say, 'We are unworthy servants who have simply done our duty.'"

- **Jesus wanted His disciples to know ...to obey what I told you to do ...one day at a time...is simply your duty...and I will give you the faith to do it**
- **a servants Job is to serve his or her master....if I am the master you are to serve that is not heroic...it is the right thing to do**
- **so if I as your master tell you to not stumble people, and to forgive...you are not heroic if you do that ...you are simply doing what is right and good for you in serving me, yourselves and others...**

God is regularly moving us away from the places we would rather stay... and moving us to places we would rather not go....

- **Often what we consider horrible and it is...yet is also God's way of blowing on the sails of our lives to move us into position to be testimonies of Him to a world that suffers but know not where to look for help or how to overcome hurt and pain inflicted upon us...never thinking the answer is forgiveness...**

Forgiveness is the way to unburden oneself from the constant pressure of rewriting the past. It frees us to move into the future...

- **Until I am willing to let go of seeking Justice and revenge for past hurts, I stay locked into a victim mentality.**
- **Forgiveness starts us looking ahead, otherwise we get continually mired in the bog of our own making...**
- **So forgive yourself and anybody else you need to and get on with your life....**

- **but what if it is horrific....?? Jesus does not say you can only have to forgive lessor sins...or even only those who repent ...in fact when he was being murdered on the cross...he asked his father to forgive those who murdered him.**

NLT Luke 23: 34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.. **Not only murdered but stole his clothes**

There is always the how to....How I forgave my daughter’s murderer...

- **Our Sarah was threatened to be murdered by her estranged husband a week before she was murdered...she forgave him...even after filling a report with the police...I have thought and nursed the idea of I should have flown out to San Antonio Texas immediately that day and waited for him and killed him....**
- **Ten years previous she had met Ricky in Afghanistan where they were both serving during the conflict. He a Ranger in the Army and she a medic in the Navy and a surgical tech in the thoracic unit...with a specialty in chest dealing with in the chest wounds...**
- **Bottom line fell in love and when they came back married. Having three sons in eight years...**
- **He was deployed seven times to combat and experienced severe PTSD...to the degree he was unavailable emotionally to his wife and sons...to the degree Sarah could not live like they were any longer and sought a divorce.**
- **The divorce was within weeks of being finalized...when he lost all ability to cope with this loss...reverting back to his training on how to deal with an enemy.**

- **Fast forward to Sunday Jan 21 2018... 615 in the am as I m getting up to get ready for Sunday services...my wife who was already up...was talking to Sarah on the phone putting it on speaker phone that I might join in...Sarah who hd spent the night in a motel as it was getting more and more difficult to do child exchange as it was here husband morning to pick up the 20 month old to have him for the day. He already had the other two overnight at his apartment. He would return all three in the late afternoon.**
- **It had become so contentious that the exchange would be facilitated by police at 9 am San Antonio time...two hours ahead of our time.**
- **She had gone home to change and get ready for church and the exchange...she arrived about 830...as she entered her home...and put he toddler down, she entered the kitchen. She said to us over the phone someone has been in here...as all the cabinet doors were open...**
- **We immediately told her to get out ...get out of the house...then we heard steps and her saying don't touch me, don't touch me, hearing the phone drop to the floor and her steps as she ran to the front door to get away...then we hear pop pop pop...**
- **I immediately grabbed my phone and called 911 here to get 911 there...her mom was screaming in the phone her name...and I was begging God to let her live...I felt his presence but the answer was no...we would not know this for a number of hours..**
- **He did not kill the children...but ended his own life as the police were in pursuit ...hours later....the 20 month old witnessed bot killings and suffer a blown out eardrum as he was sitting behind his dad when he put the gun to his head...**
- **I replayed the gunshots a million times in my head for the next number of months...it was my waking up thought daily....as**

much as I tried I could not stop replaying it...along with all the other emotions that came with it...

- We immediately flew out that day...and were awarded custody of the boys 12 days later
- Our lives were shattered the boys lives were shattered... the boys never went back to their home or school or to neighbor friends...
- our son died 5 years prior from an overdose...And once again the horrific was allowed to happen...

• *****The central challenge for us followers of Jesus is giving up the expectation of Knowing what God is doing and where he is taking you ...and still trust him enough to handle it his way**

- **Often what we consider horrible and it is...yet is also God's way to move us into position to be testimonies of Him to a world that suffers similarly but knows not where to look for help**

God is the shot caller....i am a servant...whose duty is to follow his will one day at a time by faith through obedience...and that means forgiveness..

So one and a half years later ...I forgave Ricky from my heart...as Jesus would have me....

- I forgave him for having the audacity he could play God ad take our daughter's life ruining her future and his...robbing her of seeing her children grow and enter adult hood. Robbing her of seeing and experiencing their marriages children all of it. .
- I forgave him for putting such a unimaginable lifelong wounding and sorrow on their children... Sarah' sister and us...
- I forgave him For destroying our retirement years as we now must raise a new family.
- I forgive him for making us all carry this loss, deep sadness, hurt and never grief everyday of our lives...and giving us PTSD as we heard our beloved being murdered...

...Now. After I forgave ..

How? What I noticed within a week...I no longer replayed the trauma in my head.... but I get free from carrying the burden of hate, a grudge, continual ruminating on what happened, and nursing thoughts of vengeance...being preoccupied with the past so I am not fully emotionally available in the present...I was free...and i was more relaxed, present and a sense of being comfortable ...in my mind and body...I was ok even in being not ok **as I am not free of the suffering of this loss...and the consequences we must live with of this sin perpetrated against us...**

.....this scripture came true to me in a way, deeper way than I had not known before... a depth of comfort was now part of mylife...and I could rejoice knowing I will see her again, what A comfort

NLT 2 Cor 1:3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. ⁴ He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. ⁵ For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.

Bonus...I can help others as God has opened many doors to serve others who have suffered similarly...yet have no where to turn for hope.....

and like the apostles we are all on his mission and he choses to expand our mission in living our walk while helping others know God and carry their cross...until we get to heaven...and the cross is removes and gloriousness of how we have helped others is fully revealed!!

Like Jesus said this is not heroic on our part it is simply doing what a disciple does as we follow Jesus...man and woman up!

End