

Spiritual Germination

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-4 Kelly: Retreat Planning Mtg - Reasons - Justice Sunday
- B. Slide5 City Serve: Need **Team Leaders**. Mobilizing 30 churches, on 1st weekend of March, performing *community service projects* in our Valley. 1-2pm Agape rm Javier Garcia
- C. Slide6 Introduce up Patrick/Shari Bailey: Ministry Update in PI.
 1. Pat sharing this Wed. *How to stay close to the Lord when the sky is falling.*

II. Slide7 Intro: **Spiritual Germination**

- A. These are not absolute commands **but** illustrations of loving one's enemies **and** dealing with others as one would desire to be dealt with.
 1. They are **stark and concrete examples** of the **general principles** of *non-retaliation, impartiality, generosity, and graciousness*.
 2. The examples are radical and thus intended to shock the audience to consider the radical nature of Jesus' ethic.
 - a) They were not intended to be applied *unthinkingly*. Each rule is balanced by **other scriptural commands**.
 3. **eg.** Eph.5:24 **Wives subject to their husbands in *Everything***. What about if asked to lie or murder? Balance is in Col.3:18 (same context)...**as is fitting in the Lord**.

III. Slide8 **MY WORD IS MY BOND (33-37) Integrity, not oaths**

- A. Swearing Oaths to affirm that what is said is true.
 1. Slide9 (Spurg) ***A bad man cannot be believed on his oath, & a good man speaks the truth without an oath.***
- B. What about in court? Yes, an oath in court is ok. Jesus was placed under oath.
 1. Mt.26:63,64 **I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God. *Yes, it is as you say.***
- C. What is an Oath? Bonhoeffer defined it as...appeal made to **God** in public, calling upon **Him** to witness a statement made in connection w/an **event or fact**, *past, present, or future*.

- D. Slide10 Moses said regarding performing oaths, **When a man makes a vow to the LORD or takes an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.** Num. 30:2
- E. Slide11 By letting your *Yes be Yes & your No be No* this is a reminder that **every word** we utter is spoken **in His presence**, **& not only** those words which are accompanied by an **oath**.
1. One who always **speaks truth & nothing but the truth** there is **no need** of an **oath**
 2. Practice **truthful transparency & absolute integrity** **rather than** swearing oaths or taking vows.
- F. Jesus taught that our **conversation** should be so honest, **& our character** so true, **that we would not need to use an oath to persuade people to believe us.**
1. Words depend on **character & oaths** cannot compensate for a **poor character**.
 - a) Prov.10:19 says, **In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.**
 2. **The more words a man uses to convince us, the more suspicious we should be**

IV. Slide12 **NON-RESISTANCE (38-42)** Going the Xtra Mile

- A. (38) The Law of an **Eye for an Eye**, as administered in the proper **courts of Law**, was founded in **justice**, **&** worked far more equitably than the more modern system of **finer**; **for** that method allows **rich men** to offend w/comparative impunity. (slap on the wrist)
- B. Slide13 This **Lex Talionis** (law of retaliation) is from Ex.21:23-25 **But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.**(context, *woman w/child* hurt men were fighting)
1. This law kept people from **taking the law into their own hands**.
 2. **Martin Luther King, Jr.** later used this phrase in the context of racial violence: **"The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everyone blind."**
- C. (39) **Jesus replaces this law w/an attitude.** **Be willing to suffer loss yourself rather than cause another to suffer.**
1. Our 1st reaction is to **react. To get even. Plan vengeance.**
 2. While the **rights of the innocent** were **protected by the Law**, **the righteous** need not necessarily **claim** their rights.

- a) Instead of retaliating he would do the opposite, and would also commit his case to the Lord who will one day set all things in order.
- b) Slide14 Peter gave a great example of this in Jesus, who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously. 1 Pet.1:23

D. Non-Resistance & Forbearance are to be the *general* rule among Christians (every-time? ok no). They are to endure personal ill-usage w/o coming to blows.

1. They are to be the **anvils** when bad men are the **hammers**, & thus they are to overcome by patient forgiveness.
2. Yet, how many regard this as fanatical, utopian, & even cowardly?
 - a) The Lord would have us to bear & forbear, & conquer by mighty patience.
3. Can we do it? How are we thus the servants of Christ if we have *not* this spirit?
 - a) But this *isn't* Natural. *Exactly...it's Supernatural!!!* It is such an *unnatural* response that **obeying it** proves *we belong to God*.

E. Turning the cheek actually puts one in control.

1. Slide15 **Ghandi** read this verse & put it into practice. He inspired a whole nation to turn the other cheek & it blew the British away. What can you do if somebody doesn't fight back? Eventually, the British got on their ships & went home.
2. Slide16a Cheek Turning involves **faith to stand** & not run. **Love to endure**. And it also means we'll have to **suffer hurt**.
 - a) It is the **strong man** who can love & suffer hurt. It is the **weak man** who thinks only of himself & hurts others to protect himself.

F. Slide16b (40) *Better lose a suit of clothes than be drawn into a suit of law.*

G. (41) The Roman soldiers could demand from them service.

H. (42) **Be generous** - *A miser is no follower of Jesus!*

1. **Discretion** is to be used in our giving; lest we encourage idleness & beggary; but *the general rule is*, **give to him who asks you**.
 - a) Sometimes a **loan** may be more useful than a **gift**.

2. Our spirit is to be one of *readiness to help the needy* by gift or loan, & we are *not likely* to *err by excess* in this direction. :)

V. Slide17 **BEYOND NON-RESISTANCE (43-47) Love Does**

- A. Slide18a **hate your enemy** - This is a *parasite* to God's word (like head lice). *It is nowhere in OT*
1. The verse is Lev.19:18 **Do not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.**
 2. Slide18b **It was a rabbinical inference towards outsiders** which Jesus repudiates bluntly. [backstory: they considered their neighbor as *only* a fellow Israelite or a proselyte/Gentile convert; *not* Samaritans, *not* Gentiles]
 3. Jesus here *destroys* the distinction between **neighbor & enemy** all together. Jesus is the 1st to draw these commands together...*love of God & love of neighbor* into a beautiful *symbiotic relationship*. [sum/together - biosis/living]
 4. The OT also taught the love of enemy Prov.25:21 *If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. Also Ex.23:4,5 If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, & you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.*
 5. Slide18c/d In Jesus' time *their question wasn't how to treat a neighbor but instead who is my neighbor?* Insert *Good Samaritan Story* here (Lk.10).
- B. (44) NIV omits parts (not in *Nestle-Aland* text) they believed is was inserted from Lk.6:27,28. Either way it's *Inspired* because it is there in Luke's account.
- C. We are not to merely *cease to hate*, & then abide in a *cold neutrality*; but we love where hatred seemed inevitable.
1. Slide19 Here **love** is used 1st time in Sermon on the Mount. **And** it sums up the whole of the Sermon.
 2. The only way to overcome our enemy is by **loving** them.
- D. Jesus Defines our enemies as: Those who *curse us, hate us, & exploit us selfishly*.
1. Since Christian Love is an **act of the will** & not simply an **emotion**, He has the right to **command us** to **love our enemies**.

- E. How do we show this Love? by blessing those, by doing good, by praying for.
1. Slide20 When we Pray for our enemies we find it easier to love them. *It takes the poison out of our attitudes.*
 - a) Jesus is calling us not just to do good things for our enemy, like greeting them and helping supply their needs; he is also calling us to WANT their best, and to express those wants in prayers when the enemy is nowhere around. Our hearts should want their salvation and want their presence in heaven and want their eternal happiness. So we pray like the apostle Paul for the Jewish people, many of whom made life very hard for Paul, *My heart's desire & prayer to God is for their salvation.* John Piper
 2. What if they don't respond rightly to this? (uhh...bless them, do good to them, pray for them)
- F. Slide21 Remember that Love asks nothing in return, but seeks those who need it.
1. Who needs love more than the one who is consumed w/hatred for us.
 2. Who in other words deserves our love more than our enemy?
 3. Where is love more glorified than where she dwells in the midst of her enemies (Bonhoeffer)
- G. But this isn't Natural. *Exactly...it's Supernatural!!!* [Note: This is a good marriage counseling vs.]
- H. (45) Jesus lists reasons for this admonition.
1. It is Godlike (45)
 - a) The Father shares good things w/those who oppose Him.
Love is like the *sunshine & rain* that the Father sends so graciously.
 2. It is a Testimony to others (46,47)
 - a) *Even a dog will salute a dog.* (Spurg)
 - b) Slide22 What do you do more than others...is a good question...to the whole subject of christian love. *Ask yourself the question.*
 - (1) God expects us to live on a much higher plane than most people of the world, who return good for evil, & evil for good.
 - (2) As Christians we must return good for evil as an investment of Love.
 3. Love is a mark of maturity (48)
 - a) This proves we are *sons of our Father* who does the same.

b) Rom.5:8 **While we were still sinners** (His enemies) **He died for us.**

VI. Slide23 **MATURATION (48)** [Maturation - *the action or process of maturing*]

- A. **Perfect** ≠ **sinlessly perfect**. (yet that is our goal)
- B. Slide24 **Teleios** = Totality, whole, w/o blemish. Fully developed. Mature in mental & moral character. **Full development, growth into maturity of godliness.**
1. We **spiritually** don't grow all at once, **as** we don't **physically**.
 - a) 1st we're a baby, then child, then young adult, then adults. **Be adults.**
Be grown up. Be Mature in these areas discussed.
- C. It's moving from **ignorance** (baby stage), **to self centeredness** (child stage), **to God & other centeredness** (young adult). **to intentionality & strategy** (parent stage).
- D. Slide25 **Maturity** to me is when a person **moves from church & their christianity** being all about **them**. Them enjoying the service, appreciating the worship song selection, getting ministered to, being fed, them **getting**. **Maturity moves to them giving.**
1. Them identifying their gifts to be used for the edifying of others. Them doing their all to make sure others are getting something out of the service (eg. nursery helper, so parents can here message w/o distraction). Them giving of their time, talent, & treasures. Them connecting to God & others & **not waiting** for someone to connect them. Them self-feeding & **not waiting** to get fed. Them moving from just doing to **being**.
 2. Them deciding their **yes means yes & no means no**. Them turning cheeks, them suffering themselves to be defrauded, them going the 2nd mile, them giving or loaning to those in need. Them loving enemies & not just friends. **Them blessing, doing good, & praying for not so nice people.** Them showing love & greeting even evil men/women. **Maturity's mark is emblazoned upon one who is growing & not remaining stagnant in their faith life.**
 3. It is moving from **being needy**, from seeing all what I can get, to noticing that **there are others whom I can serve.**
 4. **The final and real act of maturity is when one comes alongside to disciple someone, helping them to learn how to form there life around Jesus.**

Love like Jesus. Minister grace to all people like Jesus. They are then parenting new believers. They are **mature** disciples.