Tables Turned, Tables Spread, Table Manners

I. Intro:
   A. Story - A farmer had been pestered by a carload of people who delighted in climbing his orchard fence and eating his apples without asking permission. One day, as he walked up to them, one of them smiled sheepishly and said, "We hope you don't mind that we took a few of your apples." "No, not at all," said the farmer, "and I hope you don't mind that I took some of the air out of your tires."
   1. We love retaliation…it’s our nature.
   2. We’d rather Get Even rather than Get Justice.
      a) Do you ever struggle with “getting even”? Loosing your temper? Retaliation? Going too far? Loosing control?
      b) Do you find yourself reliving/rehearsing a certain hurtful situation over/over in yur mind?
      c) Then, how then do you feel after a road trip down that miserable memory lane?
      d) How many can relate to Paul in Rom.7:19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.
   3. Lets glean from how Esther choose self control over self advancement.

II. TABLES TURNED (9:1-17)
   A. Remember in 3:7, the Pur(die) landed on the 12th month (Adar) on Fri the 13th (ok, I made up Friday)
      1. An edict where all the people throughout the kingdom could destroy, kill, & annihilate; man, woman, & child; & plunder the Jews possessions.
      2. But as the NIV says, but now the tables were turned! - And they can attack also.
   B. SELF CONTROL is greater than SELF ADVANCEMENT
   C. But...they don’t “go on the attack”. They simply defend themselves.
   D. They don’t “plunder”. They simply defend themselves.
   E. (6) 500 men - They attacked right under the king’s nose, in the capital of Shushan.
      1. Remember, their hero Haman had fallen, & now what, lose out on all the Money they could plunder…no way!
   F. (7-10) During the feast of Purim they’d read all 10 names in 1 breath, as they all died together.

G. So, what’s the key to choosing Self defense/control rather than self advancement?
   Choosing Getting Justice over Getting Even? Choosing Restraint over Retaliation?
   1. The answer to this is easy, but applying it...is a lifetime project.
   2. The answer? Self-Control
a) It describes those who have *mastery over their inner desires* (both sensual & emotional)
b) “The *holding in of passions & appetites.*” (LKGNT)
c) How is that done? By bearing *the fruit of the Spirit.*
   
   (1) *Fruit* = that which is produced by growth. (maturity)
   (2) *Of the Spirit* = indicates the source or cause of the fruit. (God, not you)
d) They say *self control* is like brakes to a car...without it, a crash is inevitable.¹

4. Remember, they didn’t call for war on these Gentiles, but it was called upon them.
   a) They were simply ready for them. Like the *Yom Kippur War* in 1973 which was when Syria attacked Israel on the Holy Day of Yom Kippur. Their thinking was that they’d catch the Jews at home relaxing & not ready.
   b) But, this was there demise. Since they were all at home(explain), one phone call to a soldiers home & they were able to contact all family members on active & inactive duty. Result - They were able to force Syria back to almost Damascus.

H. **FEAR is greater than THE SWORD**

I. You’ve heard *the pen is mightier than the word.* Well I think *fear* is also.
   1. Deut.2:25 This day I will begin to put the *dread* and *fear* of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall *tremble* and be in *anguish* because of you.
   2. Paul nailed one of our problems in our world today, when he said in Romans, *There is no fear of God* before their eyes. Rom.3:18
   3. Many say, like Pharaoh, *Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice.*
      a) But, what have the unbelieving seen in us...to make them *fear/respect/revere* the Lord?

J. **RESTRANINT is greater than RETALIATION**

K. (6) 500 men - They attacked right under the king’s nose, in the capital of Shushan.
   1. Remember, their hero Haman had fallen, & now what, lose out on all the Money they could plunder…no way!

L. (7-10) During the feast of Purim they’d read *all 10 names in 1 breath,* as they all died together.

M. 75,000 – That’s approx 600 men per province.
   1. The Jews were so outnumbered – Which speaks to their *faith, courage & Gods mighty Sovereign hand.*

N. But they did not lay a hand on the plunder – 3 times (10,15,16)
   1. Remember it was in Saul’s *taking of the plunder* (from this *same clan*) that got him in trouble & made him lose his kingdom in 1 Sam.15.

¹ Charles Swindoll, Esther
They weren’t going to learn that lesson over again.

2. They were allowed to plunder but they simply wanted to save their lives…not improve them w/their goods.

a) I just heard Rick Warren say, “The Good Life is not about looking good, feeling good, or having the goods; but being good & doing good.”

b) Some Lawyers push their clients to go for all you can get rather than seek what is just/fair.

c) When someone strikes you & then you strike them back, you fall into a viscous cycle, ever to be broken (like the Hatfields & Mccoy feud).

d) Self-control must step in & take control of the situation. You must gain mastery over vengeance.

(1) General Robert E. Lee was asked what he thought of a fellow officer in the Confederate Army who had made some derogatory remarks about him. Lee rated him as being very satisfactory. The person who asked the question seemed perplexed. "General," he said, "I guess you don't know what he's been saying about you." "I know," answered Lee. "But I was asked my opinion of him, not his opinion of me!"

O. Here’s 3 things to do when tempted to retaliate.

1. Remember you’re different from the world.
   a) Rom.12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. - Conformed [Don’t be squeezed into the worlds mold]

2. Remember you’re a member of God’s family.
   a) You’re a member…not the head of the family (Christ is).
   b) So our role is not to take charge like Saul, but to take direction like Samuel.

3. Remember the Lord is your Defender.
   a) Sum up: You’re different. There’s a head over you. God’s your defense.

P. There are 2 roads in life: the road of Forgiveness & the road of Retaliation.

1. Which road did Jesus take to the cross?
   a) Because he took the road of forgiveness, what was the fruit of it? [the salvation of the thief; the Roman Centurion; oh & salvation to the world]

2. Which road should you travel on?

Q. (17) In vs.1 the Tables were Turned & now the Tables are Spread.

R. They rested - They sought Peace not Punishment!

1. If peace is your goal, that makes it easier to keep your perspective when confronting an enemy.
2. “Do make it a habit of getting even with people...not those you think wronged you, but those you know who helped you.”

III. TABLES SPREAD (9:18-32)

A. PURIM

B. Vs.28 is a key to why we should celebrate something...Remembering.

1. Instead of mourning what could have happened they celebrated what God had done.
   a) Many live their lives in this mode. We call them pessimists (Trendency to see the worse).
   b) They say when Robert Fulton gave the 1st public demonstration of his steamboat one pessimist started chanting, “He can’t start it, He can’t start it.” Suddenly he fired it up & startled the man. The man stared for a moment then started chanting...“He can’t stop it, He can’t stop it.”
   c) 2 men, 1 being a major pessimist: 1st man said, what a beautiful sunny day. Ya, but it will probably burn my grass. 1st man said, what a beautiful rainy day. Ya, but it will probably wash away my garden. 1st man decided to take his pessimist friend duck hunting. He shot a duck & thought this will impress the man. His dog walked on water to go fetch the duck...the pessimist responded, dumb dog can’t even swim.

(1) Celebrate what God has done!

C. MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

D. What happens if we do not erect monuments? - 4 things:

1. Our Focus will be in the wrong direction. On the bad, the hurt, the sin.
   a) Phil.3:13 forgetting those things which are behind.

2. Our Feelings will be in the wrong direction. Depression, Grief, Bitterness, anger, hatred
   a) God wants to turn our sorrow into Joy.
   b) Ps.30:5 Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.

3. Our Forgiveness will be lacking.
   a) Because we’ll keep bringing it up in our minds “for another walk in the park.”

4. Our Former lessons will be forgotten.
   a) As the philosopher George Santayana once said, “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it.” And I add, “& relive it, & relive it, & relive it!”

E. Why are Monuments/Memorials important?

1. They help us to reconstruct our lives.
   a) After a: death of a loved one, Job loss, Divorce, infidelity, torn family, hurt from a church member or church, a friend hurt you.
b) You only have 2 Options: remember the hurt, or remember the healing God brought!

2. They also help us to remember what God has done.
   a) Ps.77:10 And I (Asaph) said, This is my anguish; But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the LORD; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will also meditate on all Your work, And talk of Your deeds.

3. They often help us to learn & understand why the trial (i.e. lessons from them)

4. They teach us to forgive.
   a) Think about this. How would we know how to forgive, if we never had the opportunity to forgive, which only comes by someone offending or hurting you?

F. Our Forefathers understood this concept. When they reach our New England shores, they didn’t look at the loss, death, disease, or the burden of where they came from, but instead they set up a monument of Thanksgiving!

1. Imagine us celebrating on that 4th Thursday in November, Happy “Loss, Death, & Disease Day!”

G. What Monuments/Memorials will you pass on to the next generation?
   1. Do you have a story of God’s Faithfulness to pass on?
   2. Declare your own Purim for your family – What would it be centered around?
   3. Build a monument to God’s Grace in your life.
   4. Erect a Mental Monument. (i.e. It was on this day I choose to no longer hold this grudge against so & so)

IV. TABLE MANNERS (10:1-3)

A. 3 things to learn from Mordecai’s story:
   1. God uses unexpected people at unexpected times.
      a) God moves David from being a shepherd of a few sheep to king of His nation.
      b) God takes Moses, an 80 yr. w/a criminal record, & uses him to pull off the Exodus.
      c) He uses a Harlot to hide his spies (Rahab); a rebel prophet to spearhead an evangelistic crusade in Ninevah (Jonah).
      d) He used a Pharisee & murderer to pen most of the N.T. (Paul)
      e) He used a deserter to kick off the early church (Peter).
   2. God uses people with an other centered heart.
      a) Contrast Haman vs. Mordecai.
      b) When the Lord gives you Affluence or Influence, use it to the Glory of God, and for the weak, the doubting, the tempted, & the comfortless.
3. God uses those who seek the good of others, & who speaks Shalom to others.

B. “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God!”
C. So, God preserved the Jewish nation & we would have a Bible & a Savior.

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2 Corrie Ten Boom