

“Unoffendable Love”

Epiphany 7

1) ...to keep God's promises

Romans 12:14-21

2) ...to save sinners

February 20, 2022

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Can you imagine what it must have been like to be Joseph? Consider the circumstances of his life...at the end of everything, he was able to forgive.

Can you imagine being able to forgive your own brothers, who sold you? You were the favorite Child. Your dad gave you this special beautiful coat. You know what it is like to have relationships like that, whether it be with your own siblings, or with those whom you celebrated that, great day here, this last Monday, on Valentine's Day with your significant other or your spouse.

Each of our readings today, deal with relationships and how God wants us to show and practice love and forgiveness.

How do we get that kind of love that doesn't seek to take revenge?

V21 - ²¹**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

- Overcome means defeat or conquer –
- Either You will be defeated by evil or you will defeat or conquer evil with good
- You either hurt them back or want to see them hurt in your heart. if when someone hurts you you hurt them back or you maintain one thing to see them hurt in your heart. you've been defeated by evil.
- Distorts your relationships... It's bitterness. Whenever you stay angry at someone you tend to replay the tapes. You go over and over again in your mind of what they've done to you to justify your anger.

Starting at the beginning of the chapter –

Romans 12:1 – In view of God's mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

So, in other words live as a Christian In view of God's mercy and few of everything that he's done for you, offer your bodies as living sacrifices. Holy and pleasing. This is your spiritual act of worship.

Those verses that follow tell us – **Don't conform to the patterns of this world** and then in verse 9 through 13, right before our lesson its telling us what that love looks like. How it is patient, working with other people. Those types of relationships that we might have.

When someone hurts you. It'd be very easy to complain about, it'd be very easy to do any one of a number of things about it. But as we look at this list here. God tells us what he wants us to do and what he doesn't want us. And that's what I'd like us to think about first. When someone offends us, how do we continue on with that interaction?

How to overcome evil with good...

1. V14 - bless and do not curse - pray for them. It's hard to stay angry at them if you're praying for them.

¹⁴ **Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.**

What is it mean for me to bless someone else? For starters, perhaps we can pray for them. How long can you stay angry with someone or upset and hurt by someone? What if you're praying for them – Lord, I hope that you wake them up and help them come to their senses? God wants us to pray for them, not cut them down in a way that says, "Lord, bless this person...".

¹⁸ **If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.**

2. Don't avoid them - v 18 - live at peace with everyone. It's never loving to let someone to keep on sinning. Guess what? Your not overcoming evil with good. Unless you forgive from your heart, when you confront them it will not be for their good, it will just be to get it off your chest.

We think not only about blessing them by praying for them. But how do we live at peace with someone... It's never lobbying to run away from and avoid the conflict and avoid that problem. Because when we bring it up and share with that person who's

hurting us...it can do one of two things...It can give them validation for what they're doing it – to continue to do it. Or perhaps if it's done in a loving way and it's shared with them, at least let them know what it is that they're doing.

The Apostle Paul goes on to say –

3. Give them what they need. If your enemy is hungry, give him something to eat...

²⁰ **On the contrary:**

**“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”**

Do you see what happens when we show love to someone who has offended us? It's as if we heap burning coals on their head. You may have heard the phrase – killing them with kindness.

We talked about all that evil that takes place on in the world around us. Do you see how people don't like each other and get along? Don't be defeated by it because that evil wants to take over your heart. It might be one of those things where we think...well, I know what's best for them, and I'm just going to give it to them right now.

Don't be overcome by it. Sure, we think about the evil that's in the world around us. But what about the evil in our heart?

The last point that the Apostle Paul makes here –

¹⁹ **Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.**

What's the secret? Leave room for God's wrath. Get out of God's chair. We think we know what they need.

1. look at yourself. You don't have the knowledge to know what they deserve.

2. You don't have the right to serve judgment

It would have been very easy for Joseph to hold a grudge his whole life. “When I see my brothers again, I'm going to get

them back! Look at what they did to me. They're going to get what they deserve. I'm going to repay them evil for evil?

It is so important for us to let go of those wrongs. And to do as the Apostle Paul says here today, to let God do his work. Ultimately, God is the one who will work in the hearts and lives of others, just the same way that he works in our hearts and minds.

Where do we get that power from – to have this type of unoffendable love? Think about Jesus. Think about everything that was being done to him and look at what he did. He didn't do anything wrong. And yet his enemies persecuted him. They led him through a mockery of a trial. They took off his clothes and put on “royal robes,” just so they could mock him. Spit on him. Put on a crown of thorns and push it into his skull.

And there he was, right to the very end, not lifting up his hands in anger or revenge, but stretching out his hands on the cross.

Isaiah 53 says – **He was the lamb led to the slaughter. As a sheep before his shearers...he was silent.**

God exacted his righteous judgment and punishment – not on you and me, but on Jesus. Jesus took on all of God's wrath for me. Suffered and died – for me. When I'm upset, angry, hurting and wanting to get revenge – I find the power for unoffendable love in my Savior on the cross.

Jesus – He forgives our every time that we fail to forgive others. Every time that we take a at other people.

Are you in a relationship where you're having a difficult time forgiving others? Look to Jesus. He's the answer every time. His love...heals me, forgives me, lifts me up, and covers over my wrongs, and those who have wronged me.

Let's pray –

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
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