

Traveling Light – **“Letting Go of Bitterness”**

We know this world is not our home – we are created for more.

The problem is as we travel through life we accumulate so much stuff that weighs us down, holds us back that really does not matter.

- We underestimate the impact that stuff has upon us in keeping us from the best the Lord has for our lives.

Heb. 12:14-15 **“We are to make every effort to live in peace with everyone** and to be holy...see to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that **no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.**”

- Granted, there are many in your life and mine that make it hard to live at peace with and fulfill this scriptural mandate.
- One of the greatest tools the enemy uses to destroy relationships and poison hearts is what the Bible calls **a root of bitterness**.

What do we know?

- Our God wants us to love.
- Our enemy wants to kill love and intimacy in relationships.
- Our God wants us to grow in trust, but the enemy wants to steal trust and leave us bitter.

The enemy will do everything possible to plant a seed of offense into the hearts of people that will grow up into a root of bitterness:

- Small seeds when a close friend does not respond to a call or text or – un-follows you.
- Someone you value – lies, talks bad about or deceives you.
- It’s the person who is always critical of you, everything you do they scrutinize and find fault and try to correct you. Raise your kids, spend your money, where you go to church, how you give to God.
- The person who takes advantage of you, misleads you, betrays you – you realize there is a seed of bitterness that is growing into a root of bitterness.

Key thought:

**YOU CAN’T CONTROL WHAT PEOPLE DO,
BUT YOU CAN CONTROL HOW YOU **RESPOND!****

Jesus, in Matt 18, the chapter about dealing with offences said:

V.7b tpt “Troubles and obstacles to your faith are inevitable, but great devastation will come to the one guilty of causing others to leave the path of righteousness.”

The Problem with Bitterness:

1. Bitterness has a dangerous root.

Heb. 12:15 “See to it that...no bitter root grows up to cause trouble.”

The word “root” was chosen by the Holy Spirit to convey a picture of every tree that has a large span and grows mighty and provides shade and/or fruit – has a root system invisible underground that is significantly larger than the tree itself.

- The live oak tree with its massive limb span has a root system that ranges up to one linear mile underground to support the tree.
- When you allow yourself to be offended, what you cannot see beneath the surface of your soul is the root of bitterness is growing deeper and deeper.
- You can't get out of this life without experiencing: Disappointment, being let down, hurt, lies.

1Cor. 13:5 NLT “...love keeps no record of being wronged.”

- Bitterness keeps detailed logs of the offences ... they lied to me, they let me down.
- Bitterness will keep growing and growing & the longer you allow it to grow – the deeper it grows and the harder it will be to kill.

BITTERNESS HAS A DANGEROUS ROOT

2. Bitterness Produces a poisonous fruit.

Heb. 12:15 “See to it that...no **better root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.**”

- Not just you, but **MANY**.
- One person who nurses an offence that allows it to live in their soul will cause collateral damage to widespread people.
- One bitter person can destroy the unity, love, and trust of an entire group.
- We know this; some of us have experienced it.
- It can divide a family, a workplace, and friendships.

Bitterness is the hardest sin to see in the mirror!

- Its because you feel justified in being bitter.
- “The only reason I feel like I feel is because of what they did.”
- Justified to take on the offense of a close friend or cause or issue.

You have taken as a companion/friend – bitterness and you don’t know how to live without it.

Some of you are able to come to church, and celebrate Jesus in your hearts and hate someone simultaneously! **AMAZING**, we don’t see the need to get that right with God and the person[s].

1John 2:9 NLT “If anyone claims, I am living in the light, but hates a fellow believer, that person is still living in darkness.” V. 11 – “still walking in darkness.”

1John 3:15 NLT “Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don’t have eternal life within them.”

If you’ve truly experienced the love of God and are walking in that love – you can’t hate anyone.

We sometimes have the tendency to freely receive God’s love, mercy, and forgiveness for ourselves, but withhold from extending the love and mercy and forgiveness to others.

Some of you have a problem with you
Some of you are angry at God

**WE CANNOT HEAL FROM THAT WHICH
WE ARE UNWILLING TO ACKNOWLEDGE**

To be healed, delivered, set free from bitterness, anger – we have to re-visit the place, time of hurt and acknowledge it and release those who have inflicted offense upon us.

If you really want to be free, in this season of fasting and praying: Ask God to reveal anything in your heart that may be growing beneath the surface of your soul that needs to be excavated and healed by the Holy Spirit.

How Do We Kill A Root Of Bitterness?

1. Eph. 4: 31-32 “**Get rid of all bitterness**, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice [desire to cause injury, pain, attack on another].
Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ - God forgave you.”

1. You kill bitterness with **COMPASSION**.

- This probably is building some tension in you right now as you realize this scripture is telling you to have compassion when you really want to see revenge.

The laws of heaven are **OPPOSITE** of our human nature”

- Jesus said if you want to be great – **than serve others.**
- If someone strikes you or takes from you – **you don’t strike them back or take from them.**

If you want to kill the root of bitterness in you – love and offer compassion.

Rom. 12:21 Kingdom principle – “Do not be **overcome by evil**, but **overcome evil with good.**”

Jesus said if you’re going to be a follower of His:

Luke 6:28 NLT “Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”

Do the opposite of what your natural and human instincts tell you to do!

THE GREATEST FORM OF COMPASSION IS TO PRAY FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS DONE SOMETHING TERRIBLE TO YOU

- God, I pray for them to experience You, soften their heart, I pray that they would know Your love.

PRAYING FOR SOMEONE ELSE MAY NOT CHANGE THEM – BUT IT WILL ALWAYS CHANGE YOU!

We kill bitterness with compassion.

2. You kill bitterness with **FORGIVENESS.**

- You're listening to this thinking: Pastor, you have no idea what they did to me or to someone I love.

You're right, I don't but God does!

Paul writes: Eph. 4:31-32 "Get rid of all bitterness...be kind and compassionate to one another, **forgiving each other, just as in Christ – God forgave you.**"

How do I do that?

**YOU ARE NOT BEING ASKED TO GENERATE SOMETHING
BUT TO PASS ALONG WHAT YOU HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED**

How did Jesus and the Father forgive you? – **Immediately, Fully, Unwaveringly,
Generously, Unconditionally.**

He hung on the cross – not to pay His debt, but to pay yours and uttered three words
IT IS FINISHED

So that you and I could be free and forgiven.

The reason we live in this perpetual cycle of bitterness is because we compare sin:

- What we've done against what others have done and justifying that we haven't sinned as bad as someone else, so I have a right to carry this.

Sin is an archery term meaning: "To miss the mark or bullseye or the mark of God's righteousness."

- How much is a miss? If you don't hit it correctly, it is counted as a miss.

"Look at the mile they missed the mark by, but look at my millimeter."

In the eyes of God, the mile and the millimeter are the same.

When we miss the mark, it is sin and the penalty of sin is separation from God because He is Holy and Righteous.

The mile and the millimeter both need the blood of Jesus!

We must recognize that we have been freely given – how dare we withhold it from someone else.

How do you take the steps to forgiveness?

When someone has offended you and you're struggling with bitterness, you are holding them in captivity to your emotions, thoughts, keeping your love from them, trying to make them suffer.

Forgiveness is **choosing** not to hold the offense against them any longer. You may have to choose now, later, again and again. But it will be a choice you choose to make.

Everything in you wants to remind them of what they did to you, but forgiveness chooses not to.

- You choose to release them and treat them as though they owe you nothing.
- You choose not to hold this against them each day, each time you remember them.

If you will choose this every time and practice every day, there will come a day when you aren't bitter.

With the choices of those little moments of forgiving and releasing, you discover one day that the emotions of bitterness are now only facts.

It will only be a part of history, but not something that is effecting your emotions.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you today?

Are you willing to make the choice today to let go of the bitterness, release the person[s]?

So that you can receive what the Lord has for you:

Acts 3:19-20 "Now you must **repent** [change your mind] and turn back to God so that your sins will be removed, so **times of refreshing will stream from the Lord's presence**. And He will send you Jesus, the Messiah, the chosen One for you."

Are you willing to go public today so the enemy can't keep you in darkness?

You may be saved and on your way to Heaven today, but you are not free!

You can relive and rehearse it – but you need to release it today.

I encourage you to be courageous today.