

# Love is Not Resentful

1 Corinthians 13:5

**BI: To love is to resolve not to keep a record of how others have wronged you, no matter how badly it hurts.**

On January 8, 1956 a news story broke that stunned the English speaking world. Five young men serving as missionaries in Ecuador had been speared to death by the savage Indian tribe they had been trying to reach with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Ed McCully, Roger Youderian, Pete Fleming, Nate Saint, and Jim Elliot were determined to locate the Waodani tribe in the thick Jungles of Ecuador and tell them about the Savior. After Nate Saint spotted the tribe one day from his airplane, the men made plans to make contact. This they did, and excitement grew as the prospect of meeting them face to face moved closer to becoming reality.

Eventually, after Nate Saint found a place to land their plane on a sand bar on the Curaray River, they did in fact make contact. One day a small group of Waodani approached the young men in a very friendly manner. In fact, one of the men (whom the missionaries affectionately named George) was even given a ride in the airplane. Gifts were exchanged, smiles shared, and all seemed well.

But on the morning of January 8, a larger group of Waodani warriors arrived on the beach with spears. It became evident that this was not to be a friendly encounter. The missionaries had long since resolved that if they were ever attacked, they would not take life in order to save their own. By the time the encounter was over, all five missionaries were dead.

This is truly one of the most amazing missionary stories of the 20th Century. A few years before his death, Jim Elliot had written in his journal these words, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." This became the rallying cry of hundreds upon hundreds of young men and women around the world who gave their lives to serve as missionaries all over the earth. Their testimony also became the impetus for the giving millions upon millions of dollars to support the work of the great commission.

But the truly amazing thing about this story in my mind, is not about what these five young men did that day on the beach. What is truly stunning to me is what their wives did after their husbands were murdered. What did they do? Some of them left the comfort of their homes at the mission and moved into the very village of the tribesmen who killed the men they loved. As a result, a church has been established among those people, the New Testament has been translated into their language, much of Waodani tribe has placed their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, some of the men who murdered Jim Elliot and his missionary brothers eventually became the spiritual leaders of their tribe and were given the opportunity to baptize the children of the men they had killed.

Now, I ask you; what happened in the hearts of Elizabeth Elliot and Rachael Saint that empowered them to walk into that jungle, and become instruments in the Redeemer's hand to bring the gospel to the very men who had shattered their lives? Answer: **Love**. The only thing in the universe that has the power to energize people to do what these

women did is love. Love for God that is expressed in love for people... even one's enemies.

How can this kind of love be described? Paul says it this way (1 Cor. 13:5), Love "does not take into account a wrong suffered."

As we continue working our way through 1 Cor. 13, we come to the end of verse five where we read "Love does not take into account a wrong suffered." Now. If you haven't experienced the conviction of the H.S. yet in our study of this passage, get ready!

You see, its easy to say the words, "I love you." Talk is cheap. Just because you *say* you love someone doesn't mean you actually do love them anymore than *saying* you're the Queen of England proves you're a royal! The real test of love, the real test of whether or not we are living out the greatest commandment is the test of 1 Cor. 13. The real test is, are you willing to give to others (no matter who they are) whatever it is you have that they need because God wants you to?

In this case, the test of love is the test of whether you are willing to *NOT* allow our right to justice, keep you from meeting the needs of someone who has done you wrong.

In the GK, the word for "wrong suffered" is *kakos*. It is sometimes translated "evil" or "malice." The verb in this phrase, which is translated "*take into account*", comes from the word *logizomai*, which literally means "to keep a list" or "to calculate." It is a word used to describe what a bookkeeper or accountant would do. An accountant keeps lists and records of what is spent and what is owed.

In a sense, all of us are by nature moral accountants. We tend to keep track of who has hurt us and how much it has cost us. When we see someone who has done us wrong, or when we hear their name our minds immediately fly to the accounting file where all of that person's wrongs are tallied up. But this is not love. I can say I love you all day long, but if in my heart I keep a secret record of the ways you have wronged me, my declaration of love is a hypocritical fiction.

Years ago I heard Dr. Wayne Mack describe a time when a woman came to his office for counsel with a great big file of all the ways her husband had sinned against over the previous decade or so. That was inconceivable to me. At least until the day I saw it with my own eyes. One day a woman from outside the church came to me hoping I would help her divorce her crummy, no-good husband. When we sat down, she reached into the great big bag beside her chair, drew out a large three-ringed binder and said, "Here it is! Here is the record of all the reasons I have to divorce my husband." To which I said, "I have no interest."

Now you may think these are extreme cases, but the reality is that apart from the divine work of the H.S. in our hearts, we all keep records of wrong. All of us have a history of resentment. All of us are capable of engaging in this most insidious form of un-love.

But God hates a resentful spirit. Consider the following Scriptures.

Rom. 12:17 "Never pay back evil for evil."

Rom. 12:19 “Never take your own revenge.”

Eph. 4:26 “Never let the sun go down on your anger.”

Eph. 4:31 “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you.”

Alexander Strauch warns: “If we refuse to let go of emotional hurts, if we enjoy nursing old wounds, if we feel compelled to get even with our enemies, we will be devoured by bitterness, and unforgiveness. We will be miserable examples and ineffective leaders for Christ” (*Leading with Love*, p. 72)

Being hurt by others is actually an opportunity to practice the great commandment, to care for your enemy, to “heap burning coals on his head,” to overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:14, 19-21). It is an opportunity to suffer for the Lord’s sake and to imitate God’s forgiving love.

On the day the wives of the five missionaries in Ecuador were told how their husbands died, a reporter who witnessed their reaction to the news gave the following account:

The widows believed that their husband’s death was not the meaningless tragedy it appeared to many. No thoughts of revenge crossed their minds; on the contrary, they felt with an increased sense of urgency the need to bring their message of love and redemption to the Aucas.

Elisabeth Elliot later wrote,

It gives me much more personal desire to reach them. The fact that Jesus Christ died for all makes me interested in the salvation of all, but the fact that Jim loved and died for the Aucas intensifies my love for them” (Ibid, p. 74).

Beloved, before we take part in the Lord’s table this morning I am concerned that there are some wives who are embittered against their husbands over past hurts and blatant failures to love. There are husbands embittered against their wives because you feel like you have been disrespected and judged. There are children who are embittered against your parents because of perceived hypocrisy. In fact, truth be know, you are keeping a record of past sin. In your heart, you want them to pay.

It’s time to let it go. It’s time to forgive. It’s time to stop the resentment and bitterness that goes with it. It time to stop keeping a record of wrongs. It’s time to repent of your own sin against the Lord and against the one who wronged you. It’s time to begin obeying the great commandment. It’s time to love.

Will that be easy? No. It won’t. But isn’t that the point? Deitrich Bonhoeffer would remind us that “When Christ calls a man, he bids us come and die.” We die to our own rights and privileges. We die to our own agenda and our own interests. We die to self worship and an insistence that we get our own way. You may say, “That’s crazy! That’s not natural!” and you’d be right.

It's not normal in this world. But that's biblical love such a powerful thing. By the power of the H.S. you *are* capable of doing what seems to the world to be impossible. If you have the H.S. resident inside of you, "You can do all things through Christ who gives you strength."

Do you want to make an impact on your world? Do you really want to make a mark on the lives of the people who are closest to you? Then learn to love. And our text for today reminds us that...

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This is the kind of love that shows the world what God is like. This is the kind of love that brings reconciliation and freedom where there was once only war. This is the kind of love that Jesus Christ deserves.