

1Pet 3.9—Doing Good to Our Enemies

Do not repay evil for evil

- I. It's a call to abstain from all resentful retaliation when injured by another. God put a sword into the hands of magistrates, but not into the hands of private men, Rom 13.4.
 - A. Rendering evil for evil is a sinful, unchristian practice and the very opposite of our Saviour's example, Pr 20.22; 1Pet 2.21-23.
 - B. This doesn't mean we can't use the law to disarm a man who's injured us or use the truth to silence a man who's slandered us.
 - C. But it does mean we mustn't seek to vindictively injure him, taking the law into our own hands, Rom 12.17-19; 1Th 5.15.
- II. We all know this to be our duty. It's the doing of it that's hard.
 - A. But if we're to walk in the way of our Saviour, whose life is our example and whose example is our rule, then we must not repay evil for evil, Isa 53.7; 50.5-6.

On the contrary bless

- I. This is the hardest part of the duty; but in this we most show ourselves to be like our Saviour, Lk 23.34.
 - A. It's our duty as Christians to render benefit for injury and blessing for cursing. We're to do whatever we can to promote the welfare of those who seek our ruin—not just to the limit of our resources, but to the limit of God's.
 - B. In other words, we're to do them what good we can, and then pray for them that God might do them what good He will, Acts 7.57-60.
 - C. Paul says the same thing in 1Th 5.15; Rom 12.14, 19-21. And both Peter and Paul are merely echoing our Lord in Mt 5.43-48.
- II. This is not a call to justify evildoers in their sins or to regard our persecutors with the same sentiment and love as our brethren.
 - A. But it is a call to respond to our enemies with that love with which God loves them when He graciously sends rain on their crops and sunshine on their heads.
 - B. It's a call to seek their welfare and never raise a hand against them—except in self-defense or as much as the law may allow and love may warrant.

- C. It's a call to put off all malice, anger, and vengeance and instead put on the fellow-feelings of humanity and the compassion of one who wishes them the same grace we've received.
 - D. And it's a call to take no pleasure in their sufferings but instead to relieve them of them if we can, Ex 23.4-5.
- III. This is a hard saying.
- A. But how else will we proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of the darkness of sin and into the light of His holiness? How else will we testify to the new creation we've become in Christ (1Cor 5.17)?
 - B. As Christians, we're to act and speak, not according to what others are to us, but according to what we are through the Spirit and grace of God at work in us. Neither our rule nor our pattern is taken from the actions and words of others, but rather from the Word of God and the very life of God on display in Christ.

Motives

- I. For to this you were called, cf. Mt 5.43-48.
 - A. Nothing is more clear in Scripture than that the disciples of such a Saviour are to be a forgiving, compassionate, loving, non-avenging, blessing people. How can we call ourselves Christians if we've not learned this most basic of Christ's lessons: to bless and not curse, to forgive and not revenge?
- II. That you might obtain a blessing, 2Cor 4.16-17.
 - A. God will work all our wrongs unto our present and eternal benefit, Rom 8.28; 1Pet 1.6-7.
 - B. No man is a loser at God's hands; and whatever he loses here below will be more than made up in heaven above.
 - C. And if this is so, then what should you make of all your injuries and the cursings of men you face in this life?
 - 1. What are they compared to your inheritance? Can they rob you of even one ounce of it?
 - 2. What if God saw fit to bring upon you all the world's hatred, would it rob you of a single smile from His face?
 - D. Is this not a great encouragement to brave all the world's hell and high water, that you're on your way to a glory and a home and a God that you can *never* lose and that'll make up *all* you lost here?
 - 1. Therefore press on and fear not what man may do to you, for you were called to this, that you may obtain a blessing.