

Christ-Likeness

1 Samuel 30:18-25

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 5-20-2012

Introduction

A. W. Tozer said, “Everything in the universe is good to the degree it conforms to the nature of God and evil as it fails to do so.” Let me read that again, because right out of the chute we are going to be challenged on our Christ-likeness when we consider God’s view of the Amalekites. Tozer said, “Everything in the universe is good to the degree it conforms to the nature of God and evil as it fails to do so.”

I. Pictures of how God sees man

A. Amalekites – judgment; man deserves worse than we think

So my first question is, "Do our attitudes conform to the nature of God in His view of sin and sinners?" What’s our visceral reaction to verse 17? It says, “**Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled.**” We have already seen that David was not acting as a rogue terrorist when he did this. He was obeying an explicit command in Exodus 17, where God told Israel not to show mercy to any Amalekite, and in 1 Samuel 15, where God repeated the command to Saul. He wasn’t just rescuing his sons and daughters. Commentators point out that it included that, but he was also obeying a direct mandate from God.

We can soften the ghastliness of this massacre of tens of thousands of men by pointing out that the Amalekites deserved it. They were the blood thirsty Reavers of that day. I think Toby pointed that out on Facebook last week. Thank you Toby. I’ve never seen Firefly or Serenity, but the Wikipedia article on Reavers gave me a pretty good picture of the demonic bloodthirstiness of the fictional Reavers. Most of you probably have no clue what a Reaver is, but there is a different word picture that helped my children appreciate what was going on. It was the gruesome portrayal of the Kali-worshipping Thuggee cult in the Indiana Jones movie, Temple of Doom – a movie that I don’t recommend most people watch. It is gruesome. But if you see the Canaanites as being like that Temple of Doom Thuggee cult, it’s a bit easier to sympathize with this total destruction that God mandated.

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Just as an example, when that Egyptian was left to die by his Amalekite master earlier in this chapter, it's a tiny hint of their utter disregard for human life. If you were in close proximity to the rape, the torture, and the inhumanity of the Amalekites to the neighboring tribes, you might be a little less judgmental of God when He declared perpetual war upon the Amalekites in Exodus 17. I think it would help you to understand why God said that He hated them. But even if they were Reavers or Thuggees, postmodernists would prefer the "nice" approach of locking them up in a psych ward and injecting them full of drugs. Postmodernists can't tolerate the death penalty for even a Jeffrey Dahmer, let alone what was going on here. And yet here's the weirdness of it - those same softhearted people who won't kill a vile Jeffrey Dahmer in this country, call for wars that kill tens of thousands of civilians in other countries. Don't ask for consistency from Postmodernists.

Some of them will object that though the men in this chapter may have deserved death, what about the Amalekite women and children that were killed in chapter 15? And we might be tempted to soften the blow for even that by saying that this was not standing war, and that Israel was not allowed to engage in this kind of warfare with anyone other than the Canaanites who had become kind of a Reaver culture, and that God Himself had judged them in the court of heaven, and that all are sinners, and that Israel was simply the executioner by inspired revelation – which we don't have anymore. Herem warfare is not for today.

And while that is true, my goal today is not to *soften* the punch of God's Word, but to get us to understand that we don't really tend to view people as being as evil as God does. For example, it's pretty hard to soften the punch of God's attitude toward sinners in hell. Even "nice" sinners will be in hell. What do you do with that? All you have to do is to read the book of Revelation and you will see not only God casting people into hell, but also the saints praising God for hell. The first time I read that as a child, it was shocking to me. For example, it not only says "**the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever,**" (Rev. 14:11) but it shows the heavenly saints rejoicing in that torment and saying,

"Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" (Rev. 19:3).

And if you read it in context you will see that the saints in heaven are agreeing that God's judgments in hell are true, and righteous, and good. And the reason they can do that is that they have become fully glorified; they

have become far more Christ-like than we are. I have to admit that I can't rejoice in that because I am far from Christ-like. That's the problem.

And that presents a dilemma in our post-modern world. We are tempted to become apologetic for God. By the definition of postmodernists, you are not good if you agree with God's judgments. They think you are not good if you defend the Old Testament death penalty, or the justness of God's destruction of the Canaanites, or if you defend the doctrine of hell. But the irony is that they declare you to be good if you defend grizzly practice of abortion, and if you defend the child snatching CPS agents. But God says the opposite. And I think A. W. Tozer is right when he says, "Everything in the universe is good to the degree it conforms to the nature of God and evil as it fails to do so." He alone is the definition of good and evil. According to the Bible, the reason people hate the doctrine of hell is because *they* are evil. And rather than apologizing for God, we should beg God to help us to hate sin as much as He does, and to hate our own sin as much as He does.

Now before we dismiss this uncomfortable portion of the sermon, I want to dig a bit deeper and point out that God's Word says that apart from His restraining grace, any culture can become an Amalekite culture. Most people question that. They *trust* human nature; they *trust* people in government, and they are *shocked* when they hear stories of police in Tennessee making massive amounts of money by stealing cash from people in out of state vehicles, or stories of police in California having fun beating a homeless person to death. They are shocked by stories of what the Nazi's did. They wonder, "How could anybody do that?" The Germans under Hitler were a very "nice" people; very sophisticated. But within a decade they were justifying Amalekite behavior. Who would have guessed at the millions killed in Russia, Cambodia, China, and other countries? When you look at the torture that these communist governments engaged in, it makes you throw up. People are surprised. But to those who look at life like Christ does, they are not surprised at all when any culture becomes Amalekite. All it takes is God's restraining grace to be removed and human depravity will take us there.

Think about how the Amalekites got there. The Amalekites themselves descended from Esau, Jacob's brother. They were descendants of Abraham and Isaac. They had the revelation of God. Numbers 24:20 not only predicted Amalek's complete destruction, but also said that they had once been the chief of the nations – much like America is right now. God had quickly prospered them. They were once admired. They were on the top of the heap, and apparently went on a downward slide into oblivion because

they cast off all moral restraints – *just like America is doing right now*. We need to be in prayer that our nation repents. If we think America is not in danger of judgment, think about the millions of babies we have slowly tortured and put to death via abortion. There are the beginnings of a Reaver culture right here at our doorstep. We are not that many decades away from becoming a Thuggee culture. That is why it is so critical that we pray for God’s mercy and for Reformation in the church.

But it’s not just cultures that can become Amalek. Scripture indicates that when God’s restraining grace is removed from sinners in history and certainly when it is removed from sinners in hell, all who are outside of Christ will degenerate into Reavers or Thuggees. Don’t feel sorry for those burning in hell. They are Thuggees. It’s not man’s native goodness that keeps individuals from becoming worse. It is God’s restraining grace alone. We would all become Amalekites if it were not for that. And Romans 1 says that the moment individuals or nations are given up unto a depraved mind, they will degenerate into Amalekites very quickly. America is in the beginning stages of being given up, and I believe Reformation of the church is key to any reversal. And so the first thing that a Christ-like person is going to realize is that all sinners deserve worse than they get. Lord, may You conform our thinking to Your thinking in this area.

B. The Egyptian – redemption; God finds and rescues sinners headed toward judgment

But the second picture that I see is a bit happier. It's of this Egyptian who received nursing care from David’s men, and food, and water, and a promise of protection. He didn’t deserve that. He was a pagan and he was a servant of these Amalekites. He admits in verse 14 that he helped the Amalekites burn Ziklag. He said, "We burned Ziklag."

Just as he didn’t seek David, Romans 3:11 says, “**there is none who seeks after God.**” Just as they picked up a person who was unable to move and they brought him to David, Ephesians 2:1 says, “**And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.**” Just as David promised not to kill him or turn him over to his master, God promises us life and plucks us out of the snare of the devil. Just as he was undeserving, we too are undeserving.

To me that is a wonderful word picture of how God finds and rescues sinners who are themselves headed toward judgment. If this Egyptian had not been abandoned by his Amalekite master, he would have suffered the same fate as them. We aren’t saved because we are so good. Quite the

opposite. Ephesians 2:3 says, “**among whom also we all** [including Paul the Pharisee – “we all”] **once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.**” He was saying that our nature was an Amalekite nature or an Egyptian nature. We were all by nature children of wrath, *just as the others*. It was God’s sovereign good pleasure that rescued us from hell and from our sins. And I think David showed Christ-likeness in his attitudes toward that Egyptian. What about us? Do we show mercy to the lost?

C. The women and children – mercy; God delivers His children from the evil one

The third word picture that I see in this passage is the women and children who were taken captive. We pray in the Lord’s prayer, “**Deliver us from the evil one.**” And God obviously showed mercy to these women and children, who were no doubt crying out to God for help. Just as Jesus laid down his life for His sheep, these men appeared ready and willing to lay down their lives for their sheep. They fought against tremendous odds. To that degree, all 600 men had some Christ-likeness. Men, are we willing to suffer and endure hardship for the sake of our wives and children? Or are we selfish as we relate to our families?

D. The 400 – sustaining grace – God enables His children to do that which they cannot

But the 400 also show that God’s grace is not just beginning grace – it is sustaining grace. It enables His children to do that which they thought they could not. And what they did was staggering. Let me quickly give you a review. For the previous five days they had travelled 20 miles a day with all their heavy gear, and on this last day they had travelled 36 miles, the last 16 of which were at a half-marathon pace. And once they arrived at the Amalekite camp at dusk, they fought non-stop from sundown of that day to sundown of the next day. They took their bodies almost beyond a body’s endurance.

But to me it illustrates that God’s grace not only sustains us spiritually. It also sustains us physically. I loved reading through George Whitefield’s journals. Numerous times he was so weak that people had to lift him into the saddle of his horse so that he could travel to the next place that he would preach at. And he was so weak that he had a hard time staying in the saddle. But when he would mount the pulpit, he would pray for

supernatural strength, and God gave it. And people were amazed at the strength and energy that he had. I have experienced this in my body as well.

And it shouldn't surprise us. 1 Corinthians 2 not only spoke of Paul's weakness and trembling in body, but also spoke of God's Spirit empowering his body (vv. 3-5). 2 Corinthians 4 not only spoke of the physical stresses that his body was enduring, but also said two times that the same life that sustained Jesus was at work in his mortal body. Do we have faith to trust God for sustaining grace just as Jesus trusted God to help Him endure almost beyond a body's endurance? If we buy into Plato, we are going to ignore our body as being unimportant. But if we look at Jesus, and His ministry of healing, we will believe that God's grace encompasses our very bodies. Are we Greek in our views of grace or are we Christ-like? The Bible says that God's grace is comprehensive, and it will one day even renew the physical universe, giving us a new heavens and new earth.

E. The weary ones – compassion; God doesn't give us more than we can handle

The fifth word picture is the weary ones. In verse 10 it says that they could not continue. They weren't being lazy. God Himself knew that they could not continue. Though the others weren't too sympathetic, God was; God understood. And David reflected Christ-likeness in his attitudes towards those 200 men in verse 21 when he greeted them. The literal Hebrew is that he asked about their welfare. He was concerned about their welfare despite the fact that he would have himself been completely fatigued. God's compassion showed itself in not giving them more than they could handle. David's compassion showed itself in honoring the fact that they had given their all even though it wasn't as much as he had given. Christ doesn't compare us to each other. He simply asks us to give Him our all.

F. The spoil – provision; God gives exceedingly above all that we could ask or think

The plunder itself shows God's provision, and it shows His attitude toward stuff. He is not hateful of finances or the physical world. And those who are ascetics do not have the mind of Christ. These 600 men would have probably been happy to recoup their wives and their children. But verse 19 indicates that they got back every last thing that had been stolen – which means that God must have moved the Amalekites to only eat and drink the stuff they had stolen from the Philistines. For some reason they didn't touch a thing that they got from Ziklag. God preserved it because He cared. And then verse 20 indicates that in addition to the restored stuff from Ziklag, they

got all the spoils that the Amalekites had gotten from the Philistines. It was beyond anything that they could have dreamed of getting. The verses we will look at next week indicate that it was a staggering amount of booty. But it illustrates the Proverb that the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous (Prov. 13:22).

And we need to evaluate our Christ-likeness in our attitude toward tangible goods. It is true that those goods should not grip our soul or they become idols. Christ insists that we should give all to God and act as stewards of our stuff. And we will look at that some next week. But when we have stewardship hearts, He loves to entrust us with more. He is not opposed to stuff. In fact, Jesus said, “...**the meek shall inherit the earth.**” God loves to give exceedingly above and beyond all that we could ask or think, and to doubt that, and to question God’s generosity, is to fail to have the mind of Christ.

G. The sons of Belial – patience; God is patient with tares in His kingdom

The next group, the sons of Belial, shows me God’s patience with tares. And let me explain why I think they were tares. Verse 22 says, “**Then all the wicked and worthless men of those who went with David...**” The literal Hebrew for worthless is Belial. It’s a name for Satan, but also was a term used for those who were unregenerate. You’ve heard the expression “sons of Belial.” Well, that is an expression that speaks of professing believers who are not regenerate. So even though they professed to be believers, they were tares within the church. But look at the way David addresses them in verse 22: “**But David said, ‘My brethren, you shall not do so with what the LORD has given us...**” etc. He addresses them as brethren.

And this is a fascinating passage that relates very much to the Auburn Avenue debate. It also relates to our debate with Arminians who think that people can lose their salvation. They cannot. How do we treat people who are in the church that we suspect may not be regenerate? We treat them with the judgment of charity. We treat them as fellow believers. Until there is sufficient concrete, objective, external evidence to excommunicate them, we treat them as brothers. And even once they are excommunicated, we don’t guarantee that they are heathen and tax collectors. In Matthew 18 Jesus commanded us to treat them “**like a heathen and tax collector.**” In other words, we don’t know for sure what the state of their hearts is. We are to

deal with people objectively and not read their hearts. And to that degree, traditional Reformed people would agree with the Auburn Avenue people.

But where we would disagree is on whether they actually were regenerate, justified, and elect in the first place. And I realize that there are differences of view amongst Auburn Avenue advocates, but at least some of them say that they lost something real. They have lost their regeneration. As some word it, they were branches that were spiritually in Christ and not simply covenantally in Christ (as I would say). We say that they weren't saved in the first place.

And this passage illustrates that. Long before any of these men apostatized, and while David was still calling them brethren, God knew that they were right-then-and-there wicked and worthless men; sons of Belial. They were sons of the devil. Their character had never changed. So this is not just the visible church of today versus the eschatological church of the future (like Auburn Avenue people like to say); this is the visible church of today versus the invisible church of today. They were like the sow in 2 Peter 2:22. It can be washed and made to look pretty among the sheep, but it is still a sow and will eventually manifest its character by wallowing in the mire. 1 John 2:19 words it this way: **“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”** That is a critical verse in this Auburn Avenue debate.

But beyond relating this to the Auburn controversy, I think this illustrates God's patience with the tares. Turn with me to Matthew 13. And with this application the Auburn Avenue people would agree. They will say, "Amen!" Matthew 13, beginning to read at verse 24:

Matthew 13:24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;

Matthew 13:25 but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

Matthew 13:26 But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

Matthew 13:27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, “Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?”

Matthew 13:28 He said to them, “An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’

Matthew 13:29 But he said, “No, lest [and here is the key phrase] while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.

Matthew 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ”

Notice the patience that the farmer exercises towards the tares. He allows them to continue to grow, and he points out that if we are too perfectionistic in who can have in the church we will cause the genuine wheat to suffer. Look at his explanation in verses 36 and following.

Matthew 13:36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”

Matthew 13:37 He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

Matthew 13:38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*.

Matthew 13:39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

Matthew 13:40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.

Matthew 13:41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,

Matthew 13:42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13:43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

What the Auburn Avenue people are reacting against is hyper-revivalistic approaches that want to exercise church discipline so strictly that no tares can survive in the church. This is what Baptists and Anabaptists have striven for – a church in which the regenerate alone can exist. The problem is that we can’t see the heart. We can only deal with people objectively as they relate to the covenant. And perfectionistic ecclesiology ends up tolerating only people who completely measure up to some artificial standard. But when you do that, no immature Christians can feel comfortable there. It’s not a safe environment in which immature Christians can grow - at least in churches that are consistent. I think that is what verses 29-30 is emphasizing. It says that if you try to pull up all the tares, you are going to pull up some good wheat with it. And I can sympathize with Auburn Avenue’s overreaction to having a hyper-revivalistic church.

But I think that at least some Auburn people have gone on a pendulum swing too far in the opposite direction. They impute far too much to being baptized and being in the church. They impute far too much to language that gives people the benefit of the doubt, like David was doing here. We must at least say that tares don’t turn from genuine wheat to being tares on the Day of Judgment. They are tares right now, though we can’t always recognize them. Secondly, when a professing believer starts acting like a tare, we would say that it is perfectly appropriate for us to do like David and say, “Stop doing that. Stop living like the world. Stop acting like a tare.” And while we can have patience with people and try not to accidentally pluck up

genuine wheat in our eagerness to have a pure church, we must not allow the tares to dictate what the church will look like. Christ's attitude toward tares is patience, but not naiveté. In this passage David allowed the word to dictate, not the tares. And commentators point out that this sharing of spoil was already part of the law of God. He wasn't doing anything new.

H. David – transformation; a Christ-like man

Point H - most commentators see David as being a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. David had by this time become so Christ-like in his attitudes that he was able to lead sinners to more and more maturity. So point I was looking at God's attitude toward sinners. That's the vertical dimension. I want to look at the same characters again from a horizontal perspective, and show them as marvelous word pictures of what the attitudes of man to man should be.

II. Pictures of man's relationships to man

A. The Amalekites – the arrogant who abuse others (Ex. 17:14-16)

Exodus 17 sets up the Amalekites as symbols of all the arrogant humanists who find it their joy to abuse others. And though we can't intervene like David did, there is a place for intervention to protect babies from murder, and spouses from abuse, and to protect others from tyranny, slavery, and hurt. I am pretty old fashioned in believing that we cannot ignore the evils going on in culture. Unfortunately, I have met pastors (including Reformed pastors) who don't believe in the cultural mandate, and who will do nothing to oppose abortion, or political tyranny, or bad economics, or any of the other Amalekite abuses in society. But I believe that Jesus does call us to be salt and light.

Christ-likeness does not buy into the two-kingdom theory that relegates most of life to the secular world. Christ-likeness does not ignore the Amalekites as the fundamentalists have tended to. It does not escape from the Amalekites like the desert monks tried to do. It does not mix Amalekite and Christian cultures like Thomas Aquinas and other synthesists have done. It does not adopt and celebrate Amalekite culture like liberal church has done. Instead, it seeks to completely replace everything Amalekite with Christ's grace and Christ's Law-Word.

B. The Egyptian – the desperate who need others

The second is the Egyptian who was desperately in need of help. Proverbs 24:11 says, "**Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and**

hold back *those stumbling to the slaughter.*” He doesn’t just call us to do that for fellow believers. He calls us to do that for Egyptians. Deuteronomy 23:7 says, “**you shall not abhor an Egyptian.**” Leviticus 19:34 calls us to love those Egyptian unbelievers as ourselves. Our cultural activities are designed to benefit unbelievers. We should help an unbeliever who is stranded on the side of the road. We should help an unbeliever at the Crisis Pregnancy Center. You help unbelievers in politics as you seek to bless the whole culture with Biblical politics, Biblical economics, Biblical social theory, and Biblical cultural activities. Christ-likeness must imitate Christ in his parable of the Good Samaritan.

C. The women and children – the abused who feel used

And then there are the women and children – the abused who feel used. I don’t even like to think of what the Amalekites had in mind for these women and children. But from archeology, I can take a pretty good guess. And I’m not going to share it here. It’s pretty awful.

But believe it or not, this is not just an ancient problem. America has a lot of helpless women and children who have experienced all kinds of abuse. Sexual slavery in America is huge. Exploitation of children in America is huge. The family is under attack from every angle. In fact, many Amalekites have succeeded in infiltrating every level of civil government. HSLDA came into existence because of Amalekites. That legal organization has protected homeschoolers from Amalekites who want to kidnap children from their homes and put them in foster care because of so-called truancy. But there is a new organization that I highly recommend that is willing to protect all family rights. It's not a replacement of HSLDA; it adds to it. What do you do if Amalekites want to take your children because of Biblical discipline, or because using a midwife at home is illegal, or because you don’t want to vaccinate your children, or because CPS demands to inspect your refrigerator because it was reported that you use raw milk, or because a doctor reports your child to the state because he or she is “underweight,” or a hundred other Amalekite pretexts to kidnap your children. What do you do? I believe you should join Heritage Defense before any trouble happens. It's like an insurance policy. It’s a great organization recommended by Doug Phillips, R.C. Sproul Jr., Voddie Baucham, and others. And they are willing to aggressively take on the Amalekites on these kinds of issues. In fact, it is the only organization that is set up to defend the family on such a broad range of issues. The yearly fee is very reasonable. We need an organization like David and his 600 men to rescue women and children from the

Amalekites of our own day. Even if you don't have a family, you might want to support Heritage Defense financially. Actually, that's exactly what many people in Judah did. They are listed in verses 26-31. They helped David, and David in turn helped them. Anyway, the website is heritagedefense.org.

But we can be the 600 ourselves who hear the cry of women, children, and other defenseless around the world. It's not just the unborn who are under attack. Hospitals in Omaha have knowingly engaged in euthanasia upon the elderly, against their will. And I can tell you some horror stories that will send shivers down your spine. We are getting to a place where it will not be safe to go to a hospital, and where the police will be a potential threat instead of community servants. Police departments in California, Tennessee, and other places are already using the national Indefinite Detention Act as an excuse for unbelievably abusive and unconstitutional actions – even theft.

But there are helpless Christians in other countries who are suffering terribly. The church needs to once again become a rescue mission. Though we can't all travel overseas to help the helpless, we can support organizations that do – organizations like FrontLine Fellowship, Operation Mobilization, and Voice of the Martyrs. Technology has enabled us to adopt an orphan in another country. There is an organization that is trying to help hunt down the African warlord Kony, who has killed, raped, and enslaved so many children in Uganda and other African countries. These are organizations we can support. In fact, it might be great to start a letter writing party once a month. Christ-likeness is not theoretical. It ministers to those who have suffered from man's inhumanity to man.

D. The 400 – the church militant that expends itself for others

Then there are the 400 who are a wonderful demonstration of the church militant, expending themselves for others. I wish there were more of these kind of spiritual navy seals who were willing to take on tough projects, to get involved in society's culture wars, and to expend themselves for their families. It would be wonderful if our whole church were filled with such Navy Seals. Like Jesus, they were not simply pew sitters who waited for others to minister. When there was a need, they were there. They weren't saying, "Let the church do it." They recognized that the church is the people.

E. The weary ones – the wounded who need to recuperate

But point E gives a balance on this. This deals with the weary ones who had already expended themselves as far as they were able, but for one reason or another have collapsed in a heap and could not go on. And our own could be wounded via a nervous breakdown, or a divorce that took them out, or financial collapse. The church should be a place where the wounded can feel safe and don't have to take the attacks of the sons of Belial, who told them here, **“Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart.”** Their attitude was, “We don't need you if you can't keep up. Get out of here.” Our church must have Christ-likeness in ministering to the weary ones and doing as David did – seeking their welfare, and lifting them up even if they have not been able to contribute as much as others. That too is Christ-likeness.

F. The sons of Belial – the thick skinned who can't sympathize

And then there were the thick-skinned soldiers who thought everyone should be as tough as them. It was easy for these men to feel sympathy for the women and children, but they had zero sympathy for the 200 who couldn't take another step if it meant their life. And we all know people like this who can sympathize with one group, but they can be really hard on another group. But David even ministered to them, fought side by side with them, and shared the booty with them. Isn't that interesting? He didn't make them leave, did he?

And I see this as being an aspect of Christ-likeness. John and James were called sons of thunder for a reason. They were hard to get along with. They were the ones who wanted God to destroy two cities for failing to extend hospitality to them. Peter had his rough edges. Jesus loved them anyway, and ministered to them anyway. Interestingly, Jesus even ministered to Judas. He called Judas His friend. May we be like David and be willing to fight side by side with the Joabs of the church. While Joab and Abishai, the sons of Zeruah frustrated David from time to time, David wouldn't be anywhere without them. He needed them. And they needed him. That's what the body is about. We need to love even the tough curmudgeons who might join us.

G. David – the secure in Christ who seek to live by grace despite what others do

And of course it is David that I would like all of us to try to imitate as we are able. We have seen earlier in the chapter that David was so secure in Christ that he was able to live by Christ's grace even when everyone was against him, and even when others were not modeling such graciousness. And I believe it was in part because he interpreted the pain that he was experiencing as coming from the hand of a loving God – and both Psalms 25 and 69 acknowledge that. It was because he refused to get bitter even though he felt like an injustice had been done to him. It was because he was moved by God's Spirit to think about the needs of others before his own. It was because he was not overcome by evil, but overcame evil with good. And we have looked at other factors that helped him to thrive when others did not thrive – factors like faith, hope, love, and a God-centered focus. But ultimately, David's goal in life was not comfort, but conformity to the image of Jesus Christ. And Romans 8:28-29 says that this is God's goal for every one of our lives. It says,

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

And what is His purpose? He says in the next verse. That we might...

Romans 8:29 ... be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

He is saying that everything He brings into your life is designed to produce Christ-likeness – everything. Everything God brought into David's life in this chapter was designed to produce Christ-likeness. Allow these providences to accomplish that great and glorious purpose.

Conclusion

Carole Mayhall tells the story of a sculptor who had fashioned a magnificent lion out of stone. When asked how he was able to get such a wonderful, life-like, statue, he responded, "It was easy. All I did was to chip away everything that didn't look like a lion." Well, for most of us that's not so easy. But that is indeed what God is doing in the lives of those that He sanctifies. He is chipping away at everything that doesn't look like Jesus. And 1 John says that in glory He will have succeeded, for we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is.

And so, brothers and sisters, my exhortation to you is to seek to be like Christ whether you are thinking about sin or righteousness, whether you are ministering to your wives and children or ministering to a dying

Egyptian. Be like Christ when you are facing the culture wars with the Amalekites, and seek to be like Christ when you are frustrated with sons of Belial within the church. Seek to be like Christ whether you are a leader like David or a follower like David's men. Seek to be like Christ when you feel discouraged and overwhelmed with the 200 or whether you feel on top of the world after a victory like the 400. Try not to be perfectionistic and try not to be apathetic. Embrace the God of judgment and embrace Him also as the God of grace. And since God's plan is conspiring to conform you to the image of Christ, and since Christ died to make it possible, and since the Spirit of God was given to you to do the work of transformation, there is no reason why you cannot grow day by day into the likeness of Christ. May it be so, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Christ-Likeness

1 Samuel 30:18-25

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 5-20-2012

Introduction

- I. Pictures of how God sees man
 - A. Amalekites – judgment; man deserves worse than we think
 - B. The Egyptian – redemption; God finds and rescues sinners headed toward judgment
 - C. The women and children – mercy; God delivers His children from the evil one
 - D. The 400 – sustaining grace – God enables His children to do that which they cannot
 - E. The weary ones – compassion; God doesn't give us more than we can handle
 - F. The spoil – provision; God gives exceedingly above all that we could ask or think
 - G. The sons of Belial – patience; God is patient with tares in His kingdom
 - H. David – transformation; a Christ-like man
- II. Pictures of man's relationships to man
 - A. The Amalekites – the arrogant who abuse others (Ex. 17:14-16)
 - B. The Egyptian – the desperate who need others
 - C. The women and children – the abused who feel used
 - D. The 400 – the church militant that expends itself for others
 - E. The weary ones – the wounded who need to recuperate
 - F. The sons of Belial – the thick skinned who can't sympathize
 - G. David – the secure in Christ who seek to live by grace despite what others do

Conclusion



CPC – Defending the Defenseless



Headline: Social Services Kidnaps Children – Employees Living Lavish Lifestyles off Funds



Headline: Gary E. Anderson, former supervisor with Child Protective Services, sentenced to 10 years after pleading guilty to first degree child rape and molestation



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