

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Handled Properly

Bill Brinkworth

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Mat. 5:44-45

It started out innocently. A "Hey, J." was shouted to the passing neighbor. However, the dog that was walking with its owner started barking at D. and got closer and closer. The animal's warning bark turned to a quick nip on D.'s leg.

"Owww!" was D.'s natural cry. "Your dog bit me!"

"Oh no, he didn't," was J.'s defensive retort. More harsh words ensued.

Now D. was angered as his word and pain were questioned. The argument between the two neighbors escalated. D. took the moment to point out some of J.'s other damages to his property.

Back and forth the argument went. Hurtful things were surely said by both parties. Finally, one of the men walked away in disgust and the argument stopped.

After rehashing it with himself and his wife, D. was even more convinced that he was right and that the neighbor was entirely wrong. He thought about it for hours and even the next day. D. was very troubled over the matter. Thoughts about his Christian testimony to the neighbor and how he had reacted troubled D. He could not get any peace as he mulled over what had happened. He knew he was right, but his reaction could have been better.

As conviction troubled him, D. thought how to remedy his situation. The neighbor was definitely in the wrong, but D.'s reaction certainly was not Christ-like. Soon he found himself composing a letter apologizing for his actions.

“Dear J.,

“I want to apologize for my actions the other day. It was wrong of me to lose my temper and say the things I said. I am a Christian, and that behavior is unacceptable ...”

“Sincerely,

“D.”

Included with the letter was a gift certificate for two at a local restaurant.

Five weeks later a letter appeared in D.'s mailbox. It was from J., and it read,

“Dear D.

“... I have returned your gift certificate. I cannot accept it, as I had wronged you also. I hope we can continue to be good neighbors and put this behind us”

The matter was smoothed over because one man humbled himself, and made it as right as he could. No one this side of Glory knows how D.'s handling affected that man, his girlfriend, others that he may have shared the situation with, and others that scoffed at the way D. handled it. A good, Christian testimony had been etched in others' minds.

Although many Christians have arguments with others, few get it right, as did this neighbor. I never heard all the details about how J. reacted. All that does not really matter anyway. The important thing is that a man saw his error in a situation and attempted to get it right. If more would value their Christian testimony, obey the convicting “voice of the Holy Spirit”, and handle their actions more Christ-like, Christianity would be a better example than it is to so many today. Thank you D. for your example!

Read a related article at:
<http://www.devotionsfromthebible.com/ephesians/lets-go-out-to-the-tree/>

“Doing an injury puts you below your enemy. Revenging one makes you even with him. Forgiving him sets you above him.” — Benjamin Franklin

What Can be Learned

Philips, 1871

“What can Jesus Christ do for you now?” said an inhumane slave master, when in the act of applying the lacerating whip to an already half murdered slave.

“Him teach me to forgive you, Massa,” was his reply.

“The best way to get even is to forgive and forget.”

God Both Forgives and Justifies

Dr. H. A. Ironside

When God forgives through the risen, glorified Jesus, He not only forgives, but He justifies us. It is impossible for an earthly judge to both forgive and to justify a man. If a man is justified, he does not need to be forgiven.

Imagine a man charged with a crime going into court, and, after the evidence is all in, he is pronounced not guilty, and the judge sets him free. Someone says as he leaves the building, “I want to congratulate you. It was very kind of the judge to forgive you.”

“Forgive? He did not forgive me; my actions were justified. There is nothing to forgive.”

You cannot justify a man if he does a wicked thing, but you can forgive. God not only forgives, but He justifies the ungodly, because He links the believer with Christ, and we are made “accepted in the Beloved.”

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” *Mat. 6:14*

“If I Had Known!”

D. L. Moody, 1877

When I was East a few years ago, Mr. George H. Stewart told me of an instance that occurred in a Pennsylvania prison, when Governor Pollock, a Christian man, was Governor of the State. A man was tried for murder, and the judge had pronounced sentence upon him. His friends had tried every means in their power to procure his pardon. They had sent deputation after deputation to the Governor, but he had told them all that the law must take its course.

When they began to give up hope, the Governor went down to the prison and asked the sheriff to take him to the cell of the condemned man. The Governor was conducted into the presence of the criminal, and he sat down by the side of his bed and began to talk kindly to the prisoner. He spoke to the man of Christ and Heaven, and showed him that although he was condemned to die on the morrow by earthly judges, he would receive eternal life from the Divine Judge if he would accept salvation. He explained

the plan of salvation, and when he left him he committed him to God.

When he was gone the sheriff was called to the cell by the condemned man. "Who was that man?" asked the criminal, "who was in here and talked so kindly to me?"

"Why," said the sheriff, "that was Governor Pollock."

"Was that Governor Pollock? O Sheriff, why didn't you tell me who it was? If I had known that was him, I wouldn't have let him go out till he had given me a pardon. The Governor has been here, in my cell, and I didn't know it," and the man wrung his hands and wept bitterly.

My friends, there is one greater than a governor with you today. He sent His Son to redeem you and to bring you out of the prison home of sin. He is waiting to forgive all your sins.

“The discoverer of the role of forgiveness in the realm of human affairs was Jesus of Nazareth.” — *Hannah Arendt*