

17 | 1 PETER 3:9-12

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

Outline

A Dirt Sandwich?

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Pray and Let God Worry

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Don't Be Overcome By Your Hurt

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Bless Those Who Hurt You

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Rest in the Power of Prayer

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Announcements

1. Welcome Visitors!
2. New Members' class begins Jan 21 at 9:30am. Please let Pastor Matt or Pastor Mike know if you will be attending. It'll be four classes during Sunday school hour in the youth room downstairs (Jan 21, 28, Feb 4, 11).
3. Girls age 13 to college age, there is a new discipleship group. The next meeting will be on Friday, January 19 from 7:30 to 9pm at Living Hope. Vicky Garcia will be leading the study. They will be doing a book study by Dannah Gresh, called, "Get Lost" about getting lost in God's presence Books are \$10. See Vicky Garcia or Cristina Galvan for more details.

What do you do when you are hurting? What if another Christian hurts you? It's going to happen. What do you do? Often we can have all kinds of toxic emotions that cripple us: fear, bitterness, anger, despair. It's not God's will for us to be crippled spiritually. So how do we get out of the quicksand? Peter tells us in 1 Peter 3:9-12. Will you turn there.

Peter addresses what we should do with our hurt in 1 Peter 3:9-12. We will begin with verse 8. Let's stand as we read God's holy sufficient Word.

*Hear the Word of the Lord. **1 Peter 3:8-12**, "Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. 10 For*

(Psalm 34)

"Whoever desires to love life

and see good days,

let him keep his tongue from evil

and his lips from speaking deceit;

11 let him turn away from evil and do good;

let him seek peace and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,

and his ears are open to their prayer.

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

This is God's Word.

A DIRT SANDWICH?

There are many people in the world who lose their optimism when they start to experience the hurts of life. I heard about brother in Christ who didn't know how to handle hurt in his life, in his marriage, in his workplace. He said, "Life is like a dirt sandwich, every day I have to take another bite." **That's not how life should be for a Christian.** Christians have an optimistic view on the Christian life. Peter says, don't stress when you are hurt. Don't worry about returning evil for evil. That's how the world handles things.

Let's be honest. There's a little "get even" button in all of us. We stress about the wrongs and hurts we suffer. Peter says, "Don't stress about these things. Don't hold grudges. Don't return evil for evil." **Don't be a stresser. Be a blesser!** How can you be

a blessing when people are constantly hurting you? Often people get jaded. **How can we be a blessing in a jaded world?**

1. DON'T STRESS (3:9a).

The Bible commands us not to stress about the evil and hurt that touch our lives. “Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing” (3:9). The hurt that occurs in our lives can really twist our souls. It can make us jaded. It can make us skeptical of the goodness of God.

PRAY AND LET GOD WORRY

Yet life is so hard. It is sometimes unbearable. Yet our God is not a God controlled by circumstances. He is the God who controls the storm.

SLIDE David says, “Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken” (Psalm 55:22).

Stress comes in waves. **Martin Luther** said, “Pray, and let God worry.”¹ But it’s so easy to worry and fuss and fester. But when we fester in bitterness, we are really denying the goodness and sovereignty of God.

Do you believe in the sovereignty of God? Do you really? The Christian’s anchor is that the events of this life are all in God’s control. And for the Christian, God is working out every single event, every second of your life, for your good and his praise and glory.

Do you believe that “we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (**Eph 2:10**)?

LIFE IS LIKE WAVES FROM EVERY DIRECTION

Stress comes in waves. Sometimes life is like a calm sea, and then all the sudden it’s an intense storm! Nonetheless, life can sometimes be like the wild waves of the sea. Some of you know I don’t do well with motion. I easily get motion sickness. When I was a teen I was fine, but in my early twenties I went on a few carnival rides, and I realized I can get disoriented easily. Motion sickness is no fun.

Once I had the opportunity to go out into the Atlantic Ocean in the Gulf of Mexico, out through Lake Ponchartrain in Louisiana. It’s great to be on a boat that goes straight ahead, but have you ever been on a small boat in the ocean?

When I’m on land, the waves look so orderly. I see one coming in, and a bigger one behind that. The tide comes in and goes out. It’s so orderly It’s peaceful. Even the gigantic waves bring you a sense of calm as the majestic billows roll.

Not so in the ocean. In a small boat the waves are in no way orderly. The waves come at you from every side.

Life is like the waves that toss you back and forth. Aren’t you glad that Jesus controls the waves of the sea? And when we choose to fix our eyes on him he can command the waves and the wind, “Peace be still!” (**Mk 4:39**).

¹ James Ame Nestingen. *Martin Luther: A Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Books, 2003), 67.

DON'T BE OVERCOME BY YOUR HURT

Don't drown in your hurt! Don't be overcome by your hurt. I don't mean that we must be the kind of people who don't feel hurt, but rather that we must not be wiped out by the hurt.

SLIDE We must be able to say with Paul in **2 Corinthians 4:8–9**, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed." We will feel the pain when someone hurts us, but we will not be incapacitated by it. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:16, "We do not lose heart."

2. INSTEAD BLESS (3:9b).

We are not to stress and repay evil for evil. Instead we are to **bless**. This is our calling as Christians. "Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing" (3:9).

When we are reviled and hurt, and we feel attacked, it is easy to return the same evil and attack back. It's easy to give tit for tat. It's so easy when we are accused to become defensive. **Instead of stressing, we need to be blessing.**

Don't let the hurt that comes into your life cripple and disable you. If hurt disables you, you will never make it as good disciple makers. All of us should be making disciples. I've known so many Christians that are hurt by their spouse or hurt by their jobs or hurt by their church, and it cripples them. Don't be crippled by the hurt in your life.

SLIDE Instead, bless. This is why David said, "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (**Psa 34:1**). Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always" (**Phil 4:4**). Don't stress. We are to bless God and to bless others, and the Bible says, "to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing" (3:9c). Wow, this is our calling! Bless others instead of returning evil.

DON'T BE DEFENSIVE

We are all good at having a defensive posture in our relationships. The Bible here is forbidding us from a defensive posture. Don't defend yourself, instead, bless the person.

Let me give you some examples of defensiveness and how you can turn stressing into blessing.

GOD WANTS YOU TO MAKE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC

Whenever possible, be a blessing. Be harmonious with the brothers. Let God make beautiful music through you.

A symphony was announced and the featured violinist was, at that time, world renowned. The advertisements announced that he would be performing his solo pieces on a rare violin – at the time, costing an unheard of \$20,000. In today's economy that would be upwards of \$500,000 or more.

The symphony hall was packed and the people were filled with a sense of anticipation. It wasn't long before the master violinist stood and began to play, and what beautiful music it was!

As he began his final piece, he suddenly took his violin and crashed it to the floor, severely damaging the instrument. And with that, he walked off stage. The audience was dumbfounded – shocked. The conductor however, who was in on it, turned and announced with a smile that the Maestro wanted them to know that he was not playing a \$20,000 violin but a \$20 violin. With that, the musician returned and finished his concert on the rare, expensive violin. And few people could tell any difference. The point that he had wanted to make was that the violin was certainly important, but it could only make beautiful music in the hands of a master musician.

I find that analogy to life encouraging because, like you, I'm not a rare violin; I don't know about you, but I'm more like the \$20 version. In fact, the church is reflected in this analogy as an orchestra, made up of many different kinds of instruments. All from redeemed, yet common stock.²

What makes us uncommon is the way the Master – our Lord – plays upon our lives, demonstrating to a world just what he can do. He gets the standing ovation, not us. He receives great glory when we allow him to play his tunes of grace in and through our lives.

MANY TUNES COULD BE PLAYED

Many tunes could be played from your life, and Peter names at least two of them: evil or blessing: “Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing” (3:9).

When evil is done for us, we get to choose which tune we play. Are you going to let the Master play a tune of blessing, or will you lean on your selfish flesh and try to get back at your enemy? We've all thought it haven't we?

- I'm going to give that person a piece of my mind.
- That person needs to be put in their place.
- Let's see how things play out when I stop hanging around that person.

Choose to play a different tune. Play a tune of grace from your life.

LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENT KIND OF STEW

Peter says, there is a better way. You are called to be a blessing. Don't stew on the hurts of life. Move on. Now I love stew. Jill makes the best stew. You've never had that vegetable beef stew till you've had Jill's vegetable beef stew. But, Peter says, here's a different kind of stew that will ruin your life. When someone hurts you and you stew on it, you are missing a blessing. You are called to bless that you might be a blessing.

In your marriage when you are hurt by your spouse, you are called to be a blessing. I'm not talking about abuse. Abuse should never be tolerated by either spouse. You need to call someone if you are dealing with a real constant pattern of abuse. You need call a pastor. You may need to call the police.

But I'm talking about everyday hurts. Misunderstandings. Harsh words. Critical attitudes. Ugliness. Don't add to the stew. Don't return ugly for ugly. Don't return hurt for hurt. Be a blessing like our Lord Jesus Christ. You are called to be a blessing to that person that hurt you so that you may obtain a blessing.

² Stephen Davey. Uncommon and Unexpected (Cary, NC: Colonial Church, 24 Sept 2017), online article. Accessed 3 Jan 2018. <https://www.colonial.org/content/htmlimages/public/documents/general/sermons/20170924-am.pdf>

Now Peter's original hearers are suffering persecution. The government hasn't yet turned on them, but it is about to. Nero is about to come on the scene. Peter says, don't stew about it when somebody pokes you emotionally or verbally. Get over it. Move on. You may need to address it, but usually in that moment of hurt, you are ready to return hurt for hurt. Don't do that. Be a blessing.

BLESS THOSE WHO HURT YOU

Bless your those who cause you hurt and pain. Hold your tongue. Give them to the Lord. Choose blessing over stressing and bitterness. Speak kindly. This goes in all areas of your life. You need to apply this to your **spouse and children** if you are married. You need to apply this to any **argument** you are currently having. If someone has hurt you at church, you need to bless them. That doesn't mean you don't follow Matthew 18, where it instructs us to get things right and bring up the hurt in order to solve it. But if you bring up the hurt, be ready to forgive and cover it with love and grace.

3. MAKE SURE YOU PROGRESS (3:10-11).

1 Peter 3:10-11, "For 'Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; 11 let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.'"

We are to be pursuing God's peace – God's well-being – in our lives. We are to be in fierce pursuit of Christlikeness. Real peace and transformation and well-being doesn't come from our circumstances. God is above the circumstances, and we need to live there.

Are you progressing in the Christian life, or are you crippled by your hurts? So many Christians wonder why they are not progressing like they want with Christ. It's often because they are trying to change their circumstances or change others. Do you want to see real change in your work place, in your church, in yourself? Then ask God to change you. Make progress in the Christian life.

DAVID'S EXAMPLE

You can't grow when you are crippled by wrongs and hurt. Retribution and stressing about wrongs done to you never give a good return. **Whenever you throw dirt, you are losing ground.** Don't do it. It will take away your progress in the Christian life.

Peter is quoting from **Psalm 34:12-16**. This is a Psalm of David. We find that David didn't stay stuck in his hurt. He progressed. This Psalm was written when David was hiding from Psalm with King (Abimelech) Achish of Gath. Abimelech means "Father King." David was hiding in caves and had to act like a crazy person in order for Achish to have pity on him (**1 Sam 21:1-15**).

The point is, David was experiencing great evil and hurt his own king in Israel. Someone who should have protecting him was doing him harm. What do you do in that situation? What does David do with his hurt? I can tell you this, his focus wasn't on his hurt. It was on his great and powerful and glorious majestic God! Look at what David says.

Listen to his words in Psalm 34, "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

2 My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad.
3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!
4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.”

This is the Psalm Peter is quoting in 1 Peter 3. I love **Psalm 34:8**, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!”

PROGRESS NEVER HAPPENS WITH EMOTIONAL CONCRETE

Here’s the situation: David won’t let the his hurt and harm slow him down. So Peter quotes from David Peter chooses to quotes from David and says, “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; 11 let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it” (Psa 34:12-16. 1 Pet 3:10-11). Look, instead of pursuing the pain and the hurt, pursue peace! Do you desire to “love life” and “see good days”? Then you need to pursue peace. Seek it out. Hunt it down. How?

Does Peter say, in order to really enjoy life, you need to get even. You need to tell that person how you “really feel”? Go ahead and start arguing and fussing and festering about something. How’s that working for you?

No! He says pursue peace. Here’s the heart of the matter. He tells us what you should do when you are hurt. You need to **progress**. Are you progressing in your Christian life?

Pursue peace! How?

WATCH YOUR TONGUE

Do you “love life” and want to see **good**, happy, **days** of progress in the Christian life? Then watch your tongue. Keep it from evil, and in this context, that means slander. It means character assassination. Are you destroying that someone who has done evil to you in your mind or behind their back? Do you have a bitter spirit? It will be spiritual concrete for your life.

Do you desire to be conformed into Christ’s image (**Rom 8:29**)? Do you desire to have a full Christian life and “be filled with all the fullness of God” (**Eph 3:19**)? Then you need to make progress by **controlling your tongue**.

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

“Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him **keep his tongue from evil** and his lips from speaking deceit; 11 let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.” (**1 Pet 3:10-11; cf Psa 34:12-13**).

Your tongue is going to stir up toxic emotions. “Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit” (v 10).

Those who study words tell us that words are important. But one study says how we use those words is even more important. In fact, the researchers concluded that all our communication consists of:

- 7% Words
- 38% Tones
- 55% Non-Verbal Actions

Real progress and maturity in the Christian life can be measured by how you control your tongue.

SLIDE “We all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect [mature] man, able also to bridle his whole body” (Jas 3:2). You are a mature Christian if you control your tongue. This is how you know you are fearing the Lord, living in his presence.

SLIDE Your words reveal your heart. **Luke 6:45**, “The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” Whatever is in your heart is going to come out of your mouth. The measure of your fear of God and your progress in the Christian life is really how you react to the hurts in your life. What comes out of your mouth? Blessing or cursing?

We need to be progressing in the Christian life. Progress in the fruit of the Spirit. Self-control is part of the Spirit’s fruit. Are you able to bless when you are hurt? That takes the unction of the Spirit. Keep “growing in grace” in your walk with Christ (**2 Pet 3:18**). Keep progressing.

4. BE SURE TO REST (3:12).

1 Peter 3:12, “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

We need to rest in the Lord when we are hurting. The saying goes, “Hurting people hurt people.” May that never be true of God’s people.

HOW CAN I REST IF I’M HURTING?

How can I rest when I am hurting? You say, Pastor, ok then what exactly is Peter teaching us? That’s a great question. I’m glad you asked. I think he is giving us several ways to respond when we are deeply hurting.

REST IN THE POWER OF GOSPEL LIVING

1 Peter 3:12, “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous.” The all loving God’s eyes are fixed on you. God’s eyes are on you as you reflect the love of Christ to the world. The Bible says, you are his “masterpiece.” He wants you to love like he loves. “We are his workmanship [masterpiece], created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10). Be like Jesus. Love those who hurt you. When Jesus was nailed to a cross by his enemies, he treated them with love. He cried out, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34). God’s eyes are on the righteous. Live out the Gospel. Live out the life of God in you. He’s watching and guiding your every step.

Pursue peace with people. Pursue people that they may have peace with God. You say, “Pastor how do I seek peace and pursue it?” Bless those who hurt you. Know that your testimony of love is so much more powerful than bitter or harsh words.

SLIDE “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ 20 To the contrary, ‘if your enemy

is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:19-21).

According to theologian F.F. Bruce, Paul is likely referring to “to an Egyptian ritual in which a man testified publicly to his penitence by carrying a pan of burning charcoal around on his head.”³

Our good and kind response to evil is a power expression of evangelism! It can bring people to repentance. Return love and goodness for evil.

REST IN THE POWER OF PRAYER

Pray. When you are hurting, the first thing you need to do is pray. Peter says, “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer” (3:12a). Ask God to give you a love for those who hurt you. Anyone can love their friends. It takes God’s supernatural power to love those who hurt you. Ask God for a supernatural love for the one causing your pain. Believe that God is going to work in them. You need to rest in the reality that the Lord is compassionate, and he’s not ignoring your pain. He hears you. Rest in that fact. He knows you.

REST IN A COMPASSIONATE HIGH PRIEST

Our high priest, Jesus, is touched your pain and hurt. “His ears are open to your prayer.” We have a high priest that is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” in every way like us, yet without sin (**Heb 4:15**). Jesus was hurt. Jesus was reviled. Jesus was slandered.

Jesus was hurt by men and women. He was strung up on a cross. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (Jn 1:11, KJV).

“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence” (Heb 5:7).

If Jesus was brought to tears because off the sin of humanity, so we will also be brought to tears and hurt by people.

Look over at 1 Peter 2:23. “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” (1 Pet 2:23).

Don’t stop trusting God when you are hurt. Remember God has a purpose for every pain and hurt in your life. Don’t be overcome by it. You have a compassionate high priest!!

REST IN A SOVEREIGN GOD

Rest in the sovereignty of God. “But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil” (3:12b). Do you really believe God is sovereign? It may not look right now like his face “is against those who do evil.” It may look like he’s blessing them. Not true. **The Scriptures teach us that Christians have suffering today and joy tomorrow. The lost may have joy today, but they will have suffering tomorrow.** God is a just God.

³ F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 6, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 229.

One day all of us are going to stand before a just and holy God. For Christians, there is no condemnation. Jesus will do all the talking for you on Judgment Day. You see Jesus is our Advocate, our lawyer, both now, on Judgment Day, and forever (**1 Jn 2:1ff**). He is our “Mediator between God and man” (**2 Tim 1:5**). But for the unbeliever, there’s no hope. You have to be your own lawyer. Every wrong that is done will be made right. It’s a hope for the Christian but a warning for those without Christ.

Do you know Christ today? Come to him! He will be your Advocate. There’s no better lawyer than Christ.

Conclusion

Ava’s Favorite Game – IMITATION. How can I be a blessing in a jaded world? I need to be like Christ. You know I have a five year old daughter, and we love to play games. One of Ava’s favorite games is called imitation. She makes a funny face or a funny voice and I have to imitate her.

She might say, “I love you” in a really high voice. Or she may make the silliest face you’ve ever seen. And in that game, it’s my job to imitate everything she does and says. She loves it.

Something that every Christian loves is to imitate Christ. When he was reviled and hurt, he blessed. When he was crucified, he entrusted himself to God. He was willing to turn the sin and hurt of all mankind into a blessing. We are called to do the same thing! We are blessed to be a blessing!

We are blessed with every blessing in Christ, aren’t we? We are blessed with God’s love and kindness. Let’s generously distribute that kindness to others, especially when they hurt us.

SOLI DEO GLORIA
