

**General Topics :: Protecting Our Property (and please pray)****Protecting Our Property (and please pray) - posted by graceamazed (), on: 2009/1/30 13:52**

I have a close friend who owns his own business. A few months ago he began having thieves and vandals break in and damage and steal property from him. My friend is a great guy, he is a believer and spent much of the past decade in Mexico working in full-time missions work. My friend is also an avid hunter who owns many guns and has a concealed-weapons permit.

When people began breaking into his business (a manufacturing facility) he started spending the nights at his company in hopes of catching or scaring the perpetrators. Well, after just a few nights he did just that. Being aware that someone was breaking in, he first called the police from his cell phone to report the burglary, then he made a citizens arrest by pulling his gun on the intruder and had him lie on the floor with his hands behind his head until the police arrived and took him to jail. My friend made the front pages of the paper and was very excited that he had thwarted the robbery and had protected his property.

Now, this past week, my friend's business was being broken into again. So, (since it worked the first time) he began last night staying at the warehouse again. Things turned out differently this time though. From what we know, my friend was again alerted to someone breaking in, so he called 911 to report the burglary and, while still on the phone with 911, he had an encounter with the perpetrator(s). The police won't give out much information to the family, but apparently the 911 operator heard someone yelling at him to "put your hands up", then they heard a shot fired. When the police arrived they found my friend had been shot in the head.

Currently, he is in critical condition and "not expected to make it". In my opinion, it's already a miracle that he initially survived being shot in the head at close range. So, I would first of all like those who read this to be praying for him and his family (he has a wife, 2 sons and 4 grandchildren). His name is Jeff.

Secondly, I would like to pose the question, as it's been an issue that I've talked to many people about in recent months (including Jeff): To what extent should we go to protect our property and our family? Perhaps Jeff would not have been shot if he himself did not have a gun (perhaps he would have anyways)? He certainly would not have been shot if he had not put himself in such a situation. But what was he to do...allow people to continue vandalizing and stealing from his company? Or was he right to do what he could to protect his livelihood?

With many people in America getting more and more desperate due to the declining financial situation, I would say that "break-ins" might be on the rise in many places. Should we go to arms to protect ourselves? Or should we submit to God and trust that He is sovereign and can/will stop such people from harming us and our property? These have been questions that I've been mulling over for some time on a personal level, today's events only bring it much closer to home. After all, Jeff and I had this conversation not too long ago, perhaps I should have been more persuasive one way or another.

Re: Protecting Our Property (and please pray) - posted by LoveGodsWay2, on: 2009/1/30 14:29

graceamazed,

I am very sorry about your friend Jeff and I will be praying for him & his family.

As to your question about protecting our families & property, I would personally do whatever it takes to protect my family. My property is different. I wouldn't risk a lot to protect it.

Maybe Jeff wasn't wrong in protecting his business, but erred in his method. How did the thief(s) find him without him seeing the thief(s) coming? Maybe he should have locked himself in a room, called the police & allowed them to engage the thief(s).

Anyway, I'll be praying.

Re: - posted by fuehrerbe21 (), on: 2009/1/30 17:33

i will pray for jeff and his family.

i agree that this is a difficult question. for family, i would be willing to die. property is different, but it is a shame that others would feel it is ok to enter into private property and try to take something that is not theirs.

Praise God he knows the Lord as Savior!

Re: - posted by NoWhining (), on: 2009/1/30 19:28

Our prayers are with all of you, Grace Amazed. I have wrestled with this as well. Once, we had a scary situation happen at our store, and I'm sure they were going to rob us. I knew it, felt it, and kicked myself for being unarmed and not able to protect myself or my wife. But they (3 men) stood around then left. Now I am armed.

One thing I know, and was taught by my first concealed carry instructor, is if you're unsure of taking a human life, then do not carry a gun. Indecision will cost you. It may have happened with Jeff, or it's a good chance Jeff was surprised by a second gunman. May God restore him to his family and friends. Don

Re: - posted by graceamazed (), on: 2009/1/30 22:35

Well, its 9:45 here in Tennessee and Jeff is still alive, but has not improved. It appears that there was a second gunman, as we've found out he had already apprehended one man before he called the police and while he was on the phone it appears someone else came up behind him. Still no arrests have been made.

As for the question of "to arms or not to arms"... I'm sure this is a bit of a subjective question and will vary from individual to individual. I personally have a revolver in the top of my closet (I own 3 bullets to the gun and have never fired it). My hand gun was passed down to me after my grandfather died, otherwise, I probably wouldn't have one. About three months ago there were a couple of houses in our neighborhood that were broken into. Having this in mind, I was wrestling with whether or not I would use the gun should something happen. Within the week my wife and I were both awakened by a loud noise that sounded like it came from our walk-out basement (the obvious place I would think someone would try entering our house). Two things happened immediately, first, I was gripped by a sense of fear (which isn't very common for me) and second, my trust was fully set on getting to my revolver and its three bullets. There was no peace, no call on the Lord, no sense of a Psalm 23 safety, just a full dependence on the safety that my little pistol could bring me. Turns out, no one was in the house, no doors or windows had been messed with and I have no explanation for the noise. I think the Lord might have just caused us to be in that situation to reveal to us what our hope was placed in.

I wrestled with God for most of the next day, until I finally came to the resolution that I would not use my gun, even if I thought someone was in the house. What did I do, I started praying more for the safety of my family and I started making a conscious effort to put my sense of security in the Lord. I'm trusting that He is sovereign and able to frustrate the plans of those who would seek to harm me. I'm not saying this is "the more excellent way", but it was the conclusion that brought me peace.

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2009/1/31 0:40

GraceAmazed, I'll be praying for everyone involved and notifying others to do the same.

Here is a thread which follows a similar theme, and may lend some insight.

(http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id24335&forum44&post_id&refreshGo) I got jumped and robbed

Blessings in the grace of Christ.

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2009/1/31 0:41

edit

glitch.

Re: Thieves - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/1/31 9:21

Hi brother, keep us updated on Jeff, will you?

My prayers ...

Honestly, wrestling with your questions I am so very reluctant and find really no good answer to all of this ... if I could just think out loud, think along with you here ...

It seems that each of us has to decide many of these matters for ourselves, independent ultimately even if we take in a variety of opinion to draw our 'conclusions'. That seems a bit too obvious ...

This is now one of those 'what if' situations in reverse - Now it's in hindsight rather than foresight. And I am often troubled by these very speculations ... only now it is a brother's life hanging in the balance.

Again, am thinking out loud, this is proving more difficult than I know ... Maybe a jump to something you mentioned;

Quote:
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Brother, fear is not always a bad thing - It's part of our wiring to alert us to danger - *unfounded fear* being altogether different. I don't know about berating ourselves too much in situations ... I would like to think 'both' and I might even wonder if you weren't really praying underneath it all, even if it wasn't cognizant at that moment ... Of course, I wasn't there ... And again, my problem with so much of opinion and speculations ...

I am certain that we all will react differently when that thing, that situation is upon us and I find that your friend did what he thought needed to be done and can find no fault in it or with him. Even yourself ... Now, it is even more difficult to not get into yet another 'what if' but let me just throw this out there ... why not both? *Trust* the Lord and *use* the pistol - If necessary?

It's all tragic and I have been always a bit ... it's always sat a bit skewered to me how far a certain pacifism is taken - I am not wanting to say different in persecution (For the Faith) and that oft, strangely omitted mention from the Lord's own lips to *fl*ee when the inference often seems to be one of *embrace*. "Live by the sword, die by the sword" seems taken all out of context in my opinion - a statement of fact on the one hand and a key element being '*Live by*' ... But there is far too much that is alluded to throughout scripture, even in allusions to or as illustrative of, for instance the verse that came readily to mind reading all of this;

No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

The context being what it is, is it still not derived from the very resistance that it implies?

The other thought is something I recall that Austin Sparks mentioned in a sermon here, a paraphrase of sorts ... That *there is no law except where there is first lawlessness*. The former being the remedy for the latter.

Now that I think of it, the Lord alluded to thieves quite a bit didn't He? And just now the recollection came of my mother and her great disdain for *sneaks, thieves, cheaters and liars* and I can see her eyebrows turned downward and the fire in her eyes, that piercing stare - even a glance when those words were being put to my hearing for something I got caught in, some suspicion that she being a mother and having that extra sense they have, those extra eyeballs in the back of th

General Topics :: Protecting Our Property (and please pray)

eir heads ...

Ah brother, I do not know for certain - There is fault here to be sure and it is on the perpetrators, not on anyone else.

May the Lord restore Jeff speedily.

Re: Protecting Our Property (and please pray) - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/1/31 10:41

So sorry to hear about your friend Jeff's misfortune...Hope he recovers well...

Quote:
-----With many people in America getting more and more desperate due to the declining financial situation, I would say that "break-ins" might be on the rise in many places. Should we go to arms to protect ourselves? Or should we submit to God and trust that He is sovereign and can/will stop such people from harming us and our property?

Brother, this question disturbs many people, especially those of us who preserve food by canning or freezing or who have a well stocked pantry. What if people become aware of our stash of food? Will they resort to violence to get it? And what should our attitude be? Should we give it out knowing full well it may never be replenished? Or should we have the attitude the wise virgins had towards the foolish ones? Too many of us who embrace non-resistance as a lifestyle find this question disturbing. Since it has not happened yet, the only conclusion I come to is that the Holy Spirit will be there to teach us how to respond when this happens. I do not think I am being naive or simplistic but simply realistic: I have no control over the future nor of evil men in our community, but God does and since this is the case, we would do well to rely on him for instructions. If we get harmed, this will not come as a surprise either - He allowed it.

Yes, I see the potential of people running out of food in the days ahead. May we be wise as serpents and harmless as doves..

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/1/31 10:49

Quote:
-----I wrestled with God for most of the next day, until I finally came to the resolution that I would not use my gun, even if I thought someone was in the house. What did I do, I started praying more for the safety of my family and I started making a conscious effort to put my sense of security in the Lord. I'm trusting that He is sovereign and able to frustrate the plans of those who would seek to harm me. I'm not saying this is "the more excellent way", but it was the conclusion that brought me peace.

God bless you brother.

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by graceamazed (), on: 2009/1/31 14:19

As an update on Jeff. The doctors have determined that he is brain dead and has no hope of sustaining life without machines keeping his organs going. It took most of the night for all of the family to come to agreement that this was definitive and that nothing could be gained by having him transferred to another hospital for a second evaluation...there was just too much damage. Jeff had expressed the wish to his wife (in one of those "what if" conversations that you hope you'll never have to remember) that it would definitely be his desire to not remain supported by machines in a situation like this. The family is honoring that wish and he will be taken off the machines some time today.

Thank you all for your prayers and I would ask that you would continue praying for his family:

Wife: Sophia

Sons: Jeffrey and Jones

Four grandchildren, multiple extended family and many, many close friends in the community. Jeff was voted "Man of the Year" in his community last year and had a tremendous impact on many people.

General Topics :: Protecting Our Property (and please pray)

Quote:

-----It's all tragic and I have been always a bit ... it's always sat a bit skewered to me how far a certain pacifism is taken

I know, its hard to tell where to draw the line isn't it. Bit of a slippery slope. If I decide not to have a gun to protect my family because I'm trusting God to protect us, then why do I lock my doors at night? If I won't use a gun, then would I use a baseball bat or physical aggression, and if so, then why not just use the more effective gun? We're not talking about a situation where we've gone to witness about Christ among Muslims and stirred them up to violence and we haven't landed our plane in the jungle (as with Jim Elliot) and initiated a confrontation that could become violent. We're talking about a defensive action of protecting our family. I think the answer will definately be different for every individual and in every situation (I'm not a big fan of getting too carried away with situational ethics, but this is an area that is hard to draw an absolute on).

Quote:

-----I do not think I am being naive or simplistic but simply realistic: I have no control over the future nor of evil men in our community, but God does and since this is the case, we would do well to rely on him for instructions. If we get harmed, this will not come as a surprise either - He all owed it.

Thank you for your prayers and for your responses. Your statement here speaks for my heart as well. Did God turn His head the other night and some bad guy was able to murder my friend without Him seeing it...not at all. But was my friend killed as punishment for some grave sin in his life...not out of the question, but unlikely. Is there a possibility that there are greater issues at stake here than the ending of my friends temporal existence and that God is in control and able to bring glory out of this situation...absolutely! Already I am seeing restoration between members of the family that have been estranged and at odds with one another for some time. We cannot know how this situation can fully be used for the glory of God, but it will have an impact on many lives for decades to come. I think again of Jim Elliot...who could have predicted how the tragic death of those men could so impact thousands of people and ultimately lead to the salvation of those who killed them. This is what I have concluded: God is sovereign and He is a good God and all of His ways are good. May this too turn out to the glory of our Lord and the advancement of His kingdom.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/1/31 18:18

I'm sorry brother ...

Sometimes this venue of conversation is sorely lacking - My heart weeps for all more than anything I could say ... but I do concur with you on these other things, just difficult to even address them ... now.

Re: - posted by BVO (), on: 2009/1/31 20:35

Thanks for this request and discussion. I made a lead weighted baseball bat in wood shop in high school in 1980. I carried it behind my seat in the truck until I was involved in a road rage incident outside Baltimore. I pulled my bat, but could bring myself to hit someone with it. I wasn't a believer at the time, but still God protected me that they didn't turn and use my bat on me and that I wasn't damaged badly. I believe for me that I am to defend myself, family and property spiritually and not physically. Where the exact lines of attack, defense, damage, restraint are, I am not sure, but I know God will give me peace to do His will when or if the situation arises. I believe that we do battle differently than the world does based mainly in the sermon on the mount. I hope Jeff recovers and that his family is blessed. Thanks again,

In Christ Love, Barry

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2009/2/1 0:30

GraceAmazed, you must have been writing even as I was. I feel grieved with you for this event but trust that God is wiser than our estimations of things. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." This event worked together very good for your friend, whom we trust is beholding Christ now in peace and joy. It shall work together for good to all of the believers involved, and others who may be called through the event to faith in Christ. We may rejoice in the promises of God who "giveth and taketh away."

I thought about this subject for a while last night, while working by myself in a restaurant where I clean up after hours. Robbery is a reality there, too, as just this year a friend was held at gun point to open the safe.

A thought occurred to me which had not before. Were the Old Testament saints acting out of unrighteous fear when they seized weapons to defend kin and land? Abraham rescued Lot with arms, David slew the Philistines with arms, Samson made arms of anything at hand, and all of these did so in faith. Their reliance was no more upon weapons to defend their lives than our confidence should be in food to preserve health - as the generally appointed means ordained by God. David said, "you teach my hands to make war," while contemning the bloodthirsty. His desire was not for undue violence, but for civil peace and equity, and so, with the exception of his murder of Uriah, his violence was sanctioned by God. The Law itself made provisions to slay an intruder in the night, though one was to act mercifully in the light, if able to see that one's life was not endangered after all.

Exodus 2:22 - "If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him."

That is, no one is guilty of murder for killing such an unexpected intruder, for in such situations one cannot easily discern the force necessary to defend life and property.

Paul's words come to mind, that if a brother would take another brother to court over property, it is better to give up the property and preserve the good reputation of Christ in believers. Yet a higher value is set upon life. God has not only allowed powers to wield the sword for justice, but has ordained them for this ministry, even to terrify. Christians are now here forbidden to take part in civil government, but only to abstain from evil. So much as one's government has granted citizen authority to take arms for necessary defense of self, and for the repulse of evil doers, I find very little to discourage Christians from the use of weapons.

The more I think about it, the more persuaded I am from the whole of scripture that God has ordained Christ's gospel to be spread by the sword of the Spirit, while the stability of society is ministered by the sword of rulers and their deputies, including citizens, who minister justice on behalf of God. The first table is urged by the voice of preaching; the second is compelled by sword of threatening.

These are different thoughts than I had six months ago.

To my mind, the question of conscience remains, "do I lust for violence out of season? Do I take up arms only as a means given by God, as food which must receive His blessing in order to be effective?"

God give us wisdom!

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/2/1 2:21

The purpose for our being brought unto Him is that by our example others would also be compelled to come. It is by our death that others will be brought unto life. If we value our possessions over the life of another, how can we say that we have died so that others may live?

Will it not be our very willingness to give up our food and possessions that others will be won unto Him? Do we not have confidence that He will provide that which we need? Do we not profess that it is more blessed to give than to receive?

These are difficult questions for the times that are now upon us.

My prayers go out to Jeff and his family.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/2/1 12:20

Quote:
-----No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

Yesterday I was pondering this verse - trying to figure out who is who. I had always read this as we are to first pray, and bind Satan, before going forth with the word.

Be then it occurred to me that someone that is in the Lord could also be considered to be a "strong man," but just what would it be that would "bind the strong man." Could it not be said that relying upon something other than the Lord for protection would make us weak - for in so doing, we are turning away from Him, and therefore are no longer strong - which in turn makes it possible for us to be bound by Satan and open to the spoiling of our house?

In other words, by resorting to violence, or some other means of support, are we not forsaking the ways of the Lord, thereby placing ourselves in Satan's realm which in turn makes us subject to his laws and his ways?

Re: - posted by NoWhining (), on: 2009/2/1 21:29

I'm so sorry to hear this, Brother. I'd looked up this post hoping to hear good news. Our prayers are with the family and friends of this good man.

Don

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2009/2/2 0:41

We prayed in Church tonight for everyone involved in this unhappy incident, which demonstrates one of the wonderful aspects of this online community. Setting aside differences to pray for one another is a true demonstration of Christian love.

HeartSong said,

"By resorting to violence, or some other means of support, are we not forsaking the ways of the Lord?"

When the Lord resorts to violence, does He then forsake His own ways? When Samuel slew Agag, or Elijah slew the prophets of Baal, was that a departure from faith, or the peculiar means by which faith worked in those instances? One may say that these operated under the Law, but even Abraham who lived before the Law pursued and fought the men who kidnapped his nephew. And was this a forsaking of faith, or the work of it?

Consulting the New Testament, we find in Hebrews 11:33-34, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness... waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

I am increasingly convinced that we are to be very gracious and merciful, while also holding the sword in obedience to God's ordinance of civil authority. We are not to compel people to believe the gospel through violence, but we are to support violence as the means God has ordained to terrify men from committing gross evil upon others.

HeartSong, may I ask you a question? Do you believe that spanking children is strictly an Old Covenant principle which has no relevance to New Covenant Christians? And is this not a form of restrained violence, suited to subdue their sinful actions? If God has continued to grant parents authority to afflict their children as a means of preventing further sin, why might He not ordain the use of greater violence to restrain the evil deeds of the wicked?

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/2/2 1:31

Hi Michael,

Quote:
-----HeartSong, may I ask you a question? Do you believe that spanking children is strictly an Old Covenant principle which has no relevance to New Covenant Christians? And is this not a form of restrained violence, suited to subdue their sinful actions?

I believe that it is required that we spank our children - but only in love. Somehow I don't think that doing it in the form of "restrained violence" qualifies. From what I understand, spanking is not designed to subdue their sinful actions, but rather it is to release them from their guilt, which breaks the grip of Satan.

In the Old Testament, the battles were fought in the flesh, for the Spirit of the Lord had not yet come to dwell in man. In the New Testament, the battles are won in the Spirit.

Hebrews 11:39-40 goes on to say:

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

The only offensive weapon in our list of armour, is the Word.

The Lord has shown me again, and again, that when I fight back in the flesh, be it an unkind word, or a sinful thought, I am defeated. Why should it be any different on a larger scale - that being resorting to violence?

Here is something that I read in my devotions this morning:

Matthew 6:19-21

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Re: - posted by graceamazed (), on: 2009/2/2 8:04

I have found some of the most radical statements in scripture to be these from Matthew 5:

vs.39 - "But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 - If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41 - Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 - Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you."

I know we must look at the full counsel of scripture, but I did want to enter these scriptures into our thoughts on this issue. Especially this idea of "do not resist an evil person." Prior to Christ, I was a person who was very confrontational and prone to get in fights over rather small issues. This was one of the first areas that the Lord dealt with me on. Over the years, I have found myself in many situations where I sought to live by this idea of not resisting an evil person and I would have to say that at these times that I have seen God move in ways that I don't believe He otherwise would have. Many times (not always, but many times) I have seen the path of nonresistance act as a catalyst for change in the life of the "evil person" or aggressor.

Re: Defense - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/2/2 9:23

Hi All,

Had some mixed feelings about continuing these things in light of the sobriety that has transpired. Part of that is a general sobering tone as a friend of the family, a brother in the Lord 'lost' his own father Saturday night - Poor choice of a word, he is only lost temporarily to those that remain ...

Maybe it is just to keep the family in mind and in prayer as first importance, the questions and discussions at first I thought might be better treated separate - But on second thought, they were part and parcel and everyone has been very mindful ...

Quote:

-----I have found some of the most radical statements in scripture to be these from Matthew 5:

I agree brother and I wanted to take a fresh look at it again, though I still had my own preconceptions ... My tendencies seem to keep drawing other verses that in turn draw in other considerations. Some commentary on this;

Mat 5:38-41 -

An eye for an eye ... - This command is found in Exo_21:24; Lev_24:20, and Deu_19:21. In these places it was given as a rule to regulate the decisions of judges. They were to take eye for eye, and tooth for tooth, and to inflict burning for burning. As a judicial rule it is not unjust. Christ finds no fault with the rule as applied to magistrates, and does not take upon himself to repeal it. But instead of confining it to magistrates, the Jews had extended it to private conduct, and made it the rule by which to take revenge. They considered themselves justified by this rule to inflict the same injury on others that they had received. Our Saviour remonstrates against this. He declares that the law had no reference to private revenge, that it was given only to regulate the magistrate, and that their private conduct was to be governed by different principles.

The general principle which he laid down was, that we are not to resist evil; that is, as it is in the Greek, nor to set ourselves against an evil person who is injuring us. But even this general direction is not to be pressed too strictly. Christ did not intend to teach that we are to see our families murdered, or be murdered ourselves; rather than to make resistance. The law of nature, and all laws, human and divine, justify self-defense when life is in danger. It cannot surely be the intention to teach that a father should sit by coolly and see his family butchered by savages, and not be allowed to defend them. Neither natural nor revealed religion ever did, or ever can, inculcate this doctrine. Our Saviour immediately explains what he means by it. Had he intended to refer it to a case where life is in danger, he would most surely have mentioned it. Such a case was far more worthy of statement than those which he did mention.

A doctrine so unusual, so unlike all that the world had believed. and that the best people had acted on, deserved to be formally stated. Instead of doing this, however, he confines himself to smaller matters, to things of comparatively trivial interest, and says that in these we had better take wrong than to enter into strife and lawsuits. The first case is where we are smitten on the cheek. Rather than contend and fight, we should take it patiently, and turn the other cheek. This does not, however, prevent our remonstrating firmly yet mildly on the injustice of the thing, and insisting that justice should be done us, as is evident from the example of the Saviour himself. See Joh_18:23. The second evil mentioned is where a man is litigious and determined to take all the advantage the law can give him, following us with vexatious and expensive lawsuits. Our Saviour directs us, rather than to imitate him rather than to contend with a revengeful spirit in courts of justice to take a trifling injury, and yield to him. This is merely a question about property, and not about conscience and life.

Albert Barnes

Joh 18:23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

Being mentioned there and another that comes to mind, Paul;

And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he w

as the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. Act 23:2-5

Not to camp on those two at all but maybe to amplify it a bit - Paul stated; *to be smitten contrary to the law* which gives some impetus to Barnes comments. Rather than develop all this just here, I wonder about all the other statements in scripture that come to mind, even if just derivatives, such as;

1Ti 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Those provisions are also protection, care, providing safety and a readiness to lay down our own lives, which raises another consideration itself - 'Laying down' being not necessarily in a passive form.

Within all of this as Barnes points out is where all these things turn on - *Personal* revenge, things that are trivial and can be taken by turning the other cheek, lawsuits and suffering loss and so forth (to certain extents). I would confer that this does have a spiritual connotation at its core.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/2/4 23:12

Quote:
-----1Ti 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Those provisions are also protection, care, providing safety and a readiness to lay down our own lives, which raises another consideration itself - 'Laying down' being not necessarily in a passive form.

Knowing that in our own strength we have no power over the evil one, it would seem that our only hope in providing protection would be to call upon the strength of our Lord.

Romans 12:17-21

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Have you ever said something really nice to someone that is expecting you to say something mean? It really disarms them - it is as if they do not have the equipment to deal with such a thing.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/2/4 23:50

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you ...

Brother do you think this (Romans 12:17-21) is more of an emphasis on repayment more than ... restraining or refraining someone? I think this is very much the same emphasis that even the Lord was often getting at in other places ... When it is a matter of personal satisfaction over having to do that which you might otherwise hate to do.

'Laying down' being not necessarily in a passive form.

What I had in mind when I considered the two together (1 Tim) was to stop someone from causing harm ... It would be the flip-side of *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you*. If it be not possible, what then?

Avenge -

G1556

ἐκδικέω

ekdikeō

ek-dik-eh'-o

From G1558; to vindicate, retaliate, punish: - a (re-) venge.

General Topics :: Protecting Our Property (and please pray)

Quote:
-----Have you ever said something really nice to someone that is expecting you to say something mean? It really disarms them - it is as if they do not have the equipment to deal with such a thing.

True! Like how you put that, it perplexes ...

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/2/5 2:35

Quote:
-----If it be possible, as much as lieth in you ...

Strong's G1537 - *ek*
Root Word (Etymology)
"a primary preposition denoting origin (the point whence action or motion proceeds), from, out (of place, time, or cause; literal or figurative"

Let me try to say this another way. As I read Scripture, it is becoming increasingly clear to me that whenever we take things into our own hands, we are taking the matter out of the hands of the Lord, and thereby put ourselves into a position of having to pay the consequences for whatever it is that we try to accomplish in our own flesh.

Somehow when we resort to "self" defense, verses relying upon God to be our defender, we step out of the realm of the Kingdom of God (at least in that matter) and subject ourselves instead to the laws of the world - and in doing so, the consequences thereof.

Here is a verse that indicates such a thing:

Acts 26:32 - Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

To me, the statement, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." is a precept that can be applied in all situations.

Satan, being all evil, is actually empowered by any evil that is used against him. It is only goodness that defeats him. Since there is no goodness to be found in him, he can not understand goodness and therefore can not stand against it.

John 1:5
And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Re: - posted by graceamazed (), on: 2009/2/5 7:31

Quote:
-----An eye for an eye ... - This command is found in Exo_21:24; Lev_24:20, and Deu_19:21. In these places it was given as a rule to regulate the decisions of judges. They were to take eye for eye, and tooth for tooth, and to inflict burning for burning. As a judicial rule it is not unjust. Christ finds no fault with the rule as applied to magistrates, and does not take upon himself to repeal it

crsschk,

Thanks for sharing this thought from Mr. Barnes' commentary. I would like to find some time later to look further into that idea as it is applied throughout scripture.

As I think through New Testament scriptures that might add to our discussion here, I would like to bring up the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews. Chapter 10:34 reads, *"For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one."* Now these Christians might have had their property taken from them on account of their faith and practice, but their property was still unjustly taken from them. Should we differentiate between our responses based on whether our suffering is because of our faith or simply because someone is being evil towards us?

Another passage that comes to mind, as it might pertain to how we should deal with unjust treatment is (sorry this is long, but it's all so good I didn't want to leave any out) 1 Peter 2:18-23, *"Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrow when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;"* I know those scriptures cover a lot, but my favorite part from this passage in 1 Peter is the end of the quote which says *"but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously"* We read about many situations in which the religious leaders were seeking to kill Jesus, but their plans were frustrated again and again. When it came time for their plan to succeed (as ordained by God), Christ did not try resisting them, but submitted to the righteous judgment of "The Judge of All the Earth."

Later in Peter, chapter 4, verse 19, something similar is said, *"Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right."* This was the clincher for me on the issue. If I am careful to leave my life in the hands of my good, sovereign God, then I am invincible until He should choose for me to die. I haven't given over to complete pacifism though, remembering that there are times that Christ fled from the mob or didn't go into areas where they were seeking to kill Him.

It is a delicate balance for me to find on this issue and I believe it elicits a subjective response for each person in different given situations. It should reinforce our need to be constantly walking in the Spirit and being led by Him and not our fleshly responses in life.

Perhaps someone is allowed to break into my house with the intent to harm me, but the Lord's intent is not for them to harm me, nor for me to kill them, but for a far more radical experience to take place. I've never been put in this situation, but I have had people set on inflicting physical harm on me since I've been a Christian and (in that situation) I had a complete peace about not defending myself. In this situation the "evil person" stopped just short of actually hitting me, started to walk away, ran back again to hit me...started to walk away and again ran back to hurt me. Three times they came at me with the intent to hurt me (which they could have done, as they were physically superior to me), but each time they were stopped and couldn't follow through. Yet I say, I had a peace the entire time that I was to not defend myself, rather allow them to do what they wanted. I just kept hearing the Spirit say, "Let him hit you and then show him love." Within days I had an opportunity to talk with them about the situation and about the Lord.

I've found it in moments like these, when a person is set on harming us or defaming us, that we often have the greatest opportunity to affect their lives with our unnatural responses.

Defending the defenseless - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/2/5 9:24

Quote:
-----Somehow when we resort to "self" defense, verses relying upon God to be our defender, we step out of the realm of the Kingdom of God (at least in that matter) and subject ourselves instead to the laws of the world - and in doing so, the consequences thereof.

Here is a verse that indicates such a thing:

Acts 26:32 - Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

Ah, but Paul *did* indeed appeal unto Caesar and for his own sake primarily or ... ?

"Self" defense or "Other - defense" ? The perspective I am forwarding here has the 'self' all but forgotten.

Quote:
-----Somehow when we resort to "self" defense, verses relying upon God to be our defender, we step out of the realm of the Kingdom of God (at least in that matter) and subject ourselves instead to the laws of the world - and in doing so, the consequences thereof.

I am not so sure about that. Again, the hypotheticals and 'what if's' even as I must use them for illustration still bother me ... Reason being that experience seems to almost always dictate something a bit different at the *moment* the circumstances dictate, where our head/heart is at and a multitude of variables that cannot be scripted before hand - My perspective is one of, why not both? I guess I just do not see such a clean separation that we are necessarily leaning on the *flesh* or that it is a either/or - The flesh or God as defender. *Trust* and appealing to the Lord in the *moment* - If prayer is a continual (without ceasing) and is in a sense under our breath, what is an exasperation but an exhaling of "Oh Lord" in whatever circumstance that needs not associated verbiage, but contains everything of 'what to do'. It may be as you forwarded earlier - a kind word when the opposite is expected - It may be to take a bullet to spare your wife, your child, even a perfect stranger - It may be to smack a rapist over the head with a frying pan if you found him in your home about to ...

To be honest I think I am a bit concerned when these things become a bit too ethereal -

Quote:
-----To me, the statement, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." is a precept that can be applied in all situations.

And is righteousness not also doing that which is right? Overcoming evil with good is precisely what law enforcement does to protect the rest of the citizenship from harm, from perpetrators, from law breakers, murderers, etc. etc.

Maybe to put this all another way, it seems there is a sort of reverse martyrdom at least in the mind where all things are to be taken without response, without defense, without concern or care - If I might parallel it, when the Lord said to *flee* persecution it would say; 'no, we shall stay and suffer for it'. It is frankly to deny the Lord's own principle and if I dare say so even what He meant about having a sword - To defend is not incorrect nor a sin, what are we to say that even the Lord Himself stood to defend the woman caught in adultery rather than to let the stones fly and rain down upon her, even though according to the law it was a seemingly just penalty? Is not the whole principle unraveled right there, those ready to cast the stones having that *vengeance* built in, not *reluctance* nor even the hint of their own conscience accusing them?

Paul Washer made mention of very similar things recently and he is right - The gist of it is to stand by and do nothing in the face of evil, of (in his illustration) a group of men attacking his wife, not only did he take indignation at the perpetrators but more so at the ones standing by and doing nothing about it. Remember;

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1Co 6:9,10

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. Rev 21:8

(Other versions translate *fearful* as *cowardly*)

Effeminate

G3120

μαλακός

malakos

mal-ak-os'

Of uncertain affinity; *soft*, that is, *fine* (clothing); figuratively a *catamite*: - effeminate, soft.

Fearful

G1169

δειλός

deilos

di-los'

From δέος deos (dread); *timid*, that is, (by implication) *faithless*: - fearful.

Note that, ***faithless***

Re: Defending the defenseless - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/2/5 13:57

There are so many things being addressed here that it is hard to know where to start. In my own mind it is difficult to segregate them, and then when the thoughts of others are added, it is easy to get lost amongst treasury of His unfathomable ways. It is kind of like being in a cavern filled with precious jewels with only a small flashlight to guide the way.

This all seems to be hinged upon action (or reaction) and intent (for myself, or for others). The point that graceamazed has brought forward is of course the essential point. That being that only in Him will we be able to do what is right. This takes training which can only be accomplished by obedience.

Quote:

-----Overcoming evil with good is precisely what law enforcement does to protect the rest of the citizenship from harm, from perpetrators, from law breakers, murderers, etc. etc.

The problem here is that the evil has not been overcome. Some vessels possessed of evil have simply been put behind bars. This does not actually protect the people from evil - it only contains some evil vessels.

Quote:

-----Maybe to put this all another way, it seems there is a sort of reverse martyrdom at least in the mind where all things are to be taken without response, without defense, without concern or care - If I might parallel it, when the Lord said to flee persecution it would say; 'no, we shall stay and suffer for it'. It is frankly to deny the Lords own principle and if I dare say so even what He meant about having a sword - To defend is not incorrect nor a sin, what are we to say that even the Lord Himself stood to defend the woman caught in adultery rather than to let the stones fly and rain down upon her, even though according to the law it was a seemingly just penalty? Is not the whole principle unraveled right there, those ready to cast the stone?

es having that vengeance built in, not reluctance nor even the hint of their own conscience accusing them?

The call to "overcome evil with good" is not saying to stand by and do nothing - it is telling us to do good. That the evil will be overcome by doing good.

Jesus response to the woman caught in adultery was to stand up and *defend* - but notice that he took no action to *offend* - for example He didn't grab a frying pan :)

I would contend that there is nothing effeminate about standing up for another without fear (this being evidenced by having no need for a weapon other than the Word). Only in His strength can such things be done.

Quote:
----- . . . experience seems to almost always dictate something a bit different at the moment the circumstances dictate, where our head/heart is at and a multitude of variables that cannot be scripted before hand

Awhile back, when Satan was continually bothering me, I asked the Lord to show me how to deal with this. Later, when I went for a walk, I heard a noise behind me, and as I turned I saw a mangy dog running towards me with the hair on his back standing straight up. When I fully faced the dog, he suddenly tucked his tail between his legs and started to run off. When I asked the dog what the problem was, he looked back over his shoulder and screamed as if I had hit him.

I made no offensive move whatsoever, nor did I try to run, and by this the Lord showed me that He is capable of protecting me in all things if I will but only face the problem, and stand in Him.

Re: At what expense - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/2/6 10:18

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Rom 13:1-4

Quote:
-----The problem here is that the evil has not been overcome. Some vessels possessed of evil have simply been put behind bars. This does not actually protect the people from evil - it only contains some evil vessels.

Is certainly does protect the people from evil and evil vessels - Empty all the prisons and you would soon have total anarchy. Of course there is a limitation and *evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived* but even the opposite approach if you will of a non-'violent' "doing good" is not giving the connotation any more finality, that is not the meaning intended by *overcome*.

Quote:
-----Jesus response to the woman caught in adultery was to stand up and defend - but notice that he took no action to offend - for example He didn't grab a frying pan :)

He took every opportunity to offend, right where it cuts to the core, offending their consciousness as He often did to those who were ready to cast him over a cliff ... Look, I can see where this is all going and the dragging back and forth into fixed nodes of violent or non-violent response, what sort of pacifism or contrarily, *offensive* response ...

Quote:
-----I would contend that there is nothing effeminate about standing up for another without fear (this being evidenced by having no need for a weapon other than the Word).

And I do not know that was ever implied but ' *having no need for a weapon other than the Word* ' is the sort of ethereal notion that might sound good in the comfortable confines of static minds, neither am I necessarily supposing these things all have that to do with weaponry ...

I am not speaking about angst or retribution or retaliation but about having to do things that take courage, more so than we might even have, given the situation. It is actually even what is in part happening here, things being misconstrued or the fear of some fallacious idea in others minds of what a "Christian" is *supposed* to do or be and that to take decisive action when it is called for is washed out in a sort of dreamy idealism. There are times when this ideal falls apart and is contradictory - As in the illustration used of standing by while a mob assaults someones wife or anyone for that matter. Apply this same logic here, the 'weapon of the word', will your mere presence, a mere word stop fools bent on doing their damage? I am often a bit taken back when we want to measure what the Lord was capable of and did and although we have a measure and certain responsibility, we are and never will be *as He in fact is*. It is all a bit too grandiose. There are times we may be called upon to do that seemingly paradoxical thing, that is what I am appealing to.

I do grasp your previous experience with the mangy dog, have had experiences of all sorts of 'unexplainable' interventions that can leave me only wondering, but I do not know that these things are transferable, as a sort of case study towards application.

A poor illustration for the larger scale I am more or less appealing to but maybe something of the intangible I am after.

Awhile back a friend of the family, my wifes side, a situation erupted over of all things, a cat. I have gone at length here over my own four-legged family member, having more than a soft spot for her, an 'animal lover'? Sure, I guess so, the term having some exaggerated implications at times ... Somehow this stray cat had become dear to a few of them and in particular a certain friend of theirs that had some issues, drugs/alcohol. He was living in their garage at the time, fallen on hard times. Coupled with that was the non-help of one of my wifes friends where this was all taking place, a "Christian" who had some rather odd ideas about getting outside help, doctors or in the case, veterinarians. My wife tolerated this all to a certain extent with certain promises and what not but finally exploded and was livid when she finally saw what she only before had been hearing. This cat had apparently been in a very nasty scrap before hand and due to all this sentimentality, all these spurious notions they had just left the poor thing alone, feeding it and thinking it would just ... miraculously get well. Even the mother there had similar notions. For my part, listening to the whole matter from my wife, to be honest I figured she was exaggerating, probably embellishing it a bit, she is certainly an animal lover. I did not have very much association with these people (just a matter of course, no other reason) and really the last thing I wanted was to get dragged into it all, but my wife insisted and despite my reluctance I went over there, expecting a confrontation (again not at all to my disposition or liking) and was just as aghast to find my wifes exaggerations, if anything were *underplayed*. This cat had literally, half of his face missing, down to the flesh ... It was constantly crying, in great pain and suffering, his tail was mangled, it was one of the most incredible things I have ever seen. It was now quite diseased from the exposure. A part of me wanted to slap them silly for their sheer stupidity, "*Are you all out of your God given minds?*" Then things got even more interesting when the aforementioned man with the substance problems wanted to contend over the cat with me about taking it to the vet. I choked down real hard on the indignation and if you will 'applied' or tried my best to reason with him to take the poor thing to the vet at my expense, even, and in all honesty ready to fork over whatever it took to restore him, surgery, whatever, it mattered not at all, I would have taken out a loan if that's what it took. But he was not about to part with this cat despite it's incredible condition. "*If I hand him over to you, you will kill it.*" On and on it went, others jumping in with their ... worthless two cents, my wife coming apart at the seams, screaming and yelling, the mother, a big brouhaha, a big ordeal. Finally, the man let go of him, with one last caveat; "*If you don't bring him back, I will kill you. I will hunt you down ...*"

We got him to the vet and *they* were livid. They wanted to know just *who* this cat belonged to and how they could have so mistreated and not brought him in. "Animal cruelty", charges and the like. I am recollecting this now and it must have occurred to me on the way that this was all possible. Now enter in the next situation I found myself in with this ... Would I spare them, despite their foolishness? "Cover" their sin so to speak? I told my wife to say nothing and let me handle it before we got in there. I did not have truly a set idea even as we approached the door, I was praying underneath it all ... Lord, help me here.

I lied and protected them. It cost me something in the paradox of conscience, in the mixed emotions of indignation and stupidity, in the slight grasp of sentiment still underneath it all. The man in the poor condition, it was still 'his cat' somewhat, I understood all that and due to the whole combined situation, the possibility of them facing serious charges (the family there) ... *I did what I had to do* and took it all upon myself. That's not a 'bragging' it is just what I felt needed to be done in that moment, in the situation, all of it happening in motion not in preconceived idealism.

I told them that it was a stray that we happened upon (and believe me it was extremely difficult to choke that down) and they were frankly suspicious, asking a lot of follow up questions; "Where?" "When?" and I think they began to realize that I was in fact protecting someone ... a kind of tug of war of conscience.

There was nothing they could do for him, nothing at all, it was too late. Now I had to give the consent to have him put down. Not my cat but it might have just as well been. It cut hard, harder than I could have even imagined, *despite* his condition. Who am I am to make such a decision, to take a life, even if it is 'just a cat'?

I apologize if this is all a bit too graphic, it is reality and that is what I am trying to inject into this whole discussion, remembering it's very origins, what this all had to do with from the first post. The second guessing, the original reluctance, the death threats that lingered for a very long time afterward, looking over my shoulder ... The lie. The original stupidity that caused all this ...

You see, I don't see this as so black and white but as filled with *tension*. Was I right? Was I wrong? Indifferent? Hardly, but it is not that at all. It's ... to do the *hard thing* come what may and live with the consequences. I find the Lord often puts us in perplexing situations, difficult ones, even this whole extrapolation above, all the interior intangibles I could hardly speak of ... the thread of prayer that I mentioned elsewhere, that continuum that is *constant*. It's not bravado nor well thought out intentions for a 'what if' situation. The after effects; The second guessing and everything that has a shelf life all its own days, weeks and months after the fact. It can be nerveracking in the back and forth, the self justifying or the self depreciating, whatever it is.

This life of faith, to me, has all sorts of these paradoxes even on that great issue of faith itself. Charles Siemon comes to mind, this tension, this 'both' of the matter, if I could draw off of it a bit;

~~~~~  
But the remarkable thing about humiliation and adoration in the heart of Charles Simeon is that they were inseparable. Simeon was utterly unlike most of us today who think that we should get rid once and for all of feelings of vileness and unworthiness as soon as we can. For him, adoration only grew in the freshly plowed soil of humiliation for sin. So he actually labored to know his true sinfulness and his remaining corruption as a Christian.

*I have continually had such a sense of my sinfulness as would sink me into utter despair, if I had not an assured view of the sufficiency and willingness of Christ to save me to the uttermost. And at the same time I had such a sense of my acceptance through Christ as would overset my little bark, if I had not ballast at the bottom sufficient to sink a vessel of no ordinary size. (Moule 134f.)*

He never lost sight of the need for the heavy ballast of his own humiliation. After he had been a Christian forty years he wrote,

*With this sweet hope of ultimate acceptance with God, I have always enjoyed much cheerfulness before men; but I have at the same time laboured incessantly to cultivate the deepest humiliation before God. I have never thought that the circumstance of God's having forgiven me was any reason why I should forgive myself; on the contrary, I have always judged it better to loathe myself the more, in proportion as I was assured that God was pacified towards me (Ezekiel 16:63). . . . There are but two objects that I have ever desired for these forty years to behold; the one is my own vileness; and the other is, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: and I have always thought that they should be viewed together; just as Aaron confessed all the sins of all Israel whilst he put them on the head of the scapegoat. The disease did not keep him from applying to the remedy, nor did the remedy keep him from feeling the disease. By this I seek to be, not only humbled and thankful, but humbled in thankfulness, before my God and Saviour continually. (Carus, 518f.)*

([http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?mode=viewtopic&topic\\_id25079&forum34&start0&viewmode](http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?mode=viewtopic&topic_id25079&forum34&start0&viewmode)

flat&order1) Spurgeon - Mueller - An Important Series ~ Piper's Biographies

**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/2/6 11:28**

Quote:

-----You see, I don't see this as so black and white but as filled with *tension*.  
-----

It is the black and white that creates the tension.

**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/2/6 12:21**

Actually,

It is the *mixing* of black and white that creates tension.

**Re: - posted by run2win, on: 2009/2/6 14:33**

It's not so much black and white as it is darkness and light. The presence of the light of Christ in the world through His church is, in itself, a restraining force over evil (see 2Thess2:6-7). How can darkness prevail if the light cannot be extinguished? It is the one true power over the black darkness. And we, the believers, are called to be lights in the world, both individually and corporately, as the Holy Spirit bears witness of Christ in us: "and you shall be My witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

As we lift up Christ, He will draw people to Himself and save them from their sins. How do we accomplish this if we are standing in the way? As a cloud obscures the sun, Self must be blown aside--taken out of the way, that the glory of Christ might be seen in us and demonstrated. Look at Matthew 5:15. I cannot let my worthless little bushel be what others see, I must remove it that others might enter into the presence of the Light which abideth in me--if I place Self over Christ, not only will I all but cancel out the light, I could easily start a fire!(factions, dissensions, arguments, etc.---ugggh!) The bushel (which would have been woven of reeds) placed over an open flame is a picture of a foolish action. The question is, "Who would do such a thing?" The illustration proclaims this: Christ must have the proper place in my life. The bushel is like the old man--dry, dead, but wanting to hold on to everything--a matter of control. In this picture, the bushel is turned upside down; in this position, it can no longer hold anything, but it tries to maintain control/stay in power when it is placed over a candle. Yikes! Hope there is a fire extinguisher handy! In this illustration, Christ reveals that when He enters the life of the believer, His proper place is in the new man/creature, which is pictured by the candlestick, which properly lifts the light, which is Christ, above Self and holds it there in the place of highest honor. Now I must ask: Which illustration most reflects my life as I carry on in this world? "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

Back to my opening thought: As long as we are here, our call is to give the Spirit full freedom to restrain through His work in us. One way is to speak the truth in love. I think the crux of the message of nonresistance is this: not letting personal attacks brought against us by evil men, which we must endure with the help of God's grace, stand in the way of our opportunity to see their pressing personal need for the Savior. Love is active--it acts--and sometimes it is very costly. There is always a choice involved. In this simple phrase, "See in this a chance to die," Amy Carmichael recognized that she could choose to lay her life down that Christ might be lifted up--this demonstrates the deepest kind of love, because it reflects on what Christ endured for our sake--what a small thing to present to Him--and what a powerful message, because it is so supernatural. I like that. There is power in remembering our call to sacrifice self. Wow. Every encounter, good or evil, is a chance--an opportunity--to make a choice--to die. Visual here: Atticus Finch (To Kill a Mockingbird)--unflinching in the face of his adversary, reaching in his pocket, taking out his handkerchief, and wiping the spittle off of his face. Certainly nothing to what Christ endured for us--but that was a powerful image through action.

Agonies!! I am tested in this daily!!!

O God, all souls are Yours! I confess that I have missed so many opportunities! Increase my faith, I pray, break me free from the power of Self and empower me with Your Holy Spirit. Let me lay my Self upon the altar of Thy will, and when Self rises up in defense when provoked, let me choose to put it to death for the sake of Christ and of His name and His gospel, that I might be a defender of the true faith, always tempered with Your love, with gentleness and respect. Keep the cross ever before me. Remind me of what real love looks like--drops of blood, pools of blood, torn flesh, bruises, nakedness and shame--and of its power to save and to transform lives. Train me and strengthen me in this area where I so often fail You. I pray in Jesus' name.

Here's another way of thinking about it. When someone comes against me personally, I can say, "Toss the bushel--it's not worth it," and thereby choose to display Christ in His full glory on the lampstand of my new heart. That's the only way He can be lifted up, and that is His desire and His command on my life--no matter what it costs me personally.

The battle rages on and will continue until the end of the age. This is a reminder to us all to stay on our faces and on our knees before the Lord, that He might open the blind eyes and unstop the deaf ears, beginning in our own nations. We are to be a city set on a hill--no hiding allowed! Are we living lives that place Christ visibly before men? He is the Lord of the nations, the Lord of hosts, and He is the Desire of the nations.

Light always conquers darkness. Mercy triumphs over judgment. We must not fail in our mission to take the gospel into the world, for as the believers increase, so does the light increase throughout the land--and light always overcomes the darkness and brings glory to God.

"...the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining." 1John2:8b

**Re: - posted by graceamazed (), on: 2009/2/17 20:14**

I thought it would be worth giving an update to those of you who kept up with this thread a couple of weeks ago.

This past Friday, the police apprehended the two men who were responsible for the shooting death of my friend that I mentioned in the opening post. One of them was on the TBI (Tennessee Bureau of Investigation) 10 most wanted list and had recently escaped from the jail in a neighboring county. He had been on the run and camping out in some local woods for the past month or two. Anyhow, the ballistics from the gun he possessed matched with the one used against my friend and they got a full confession out of him.

I just wanted to thank everyone who might have been praying for this situation. I know that finding these men has brought closure to a lot of the family and friends.