



Satan's Deadly Trap – Part 5
Various Scripture
GCSP – 10/17/2009

Allow me to briefly review last week's sermon as an introduction for this week.

Remember that this sermon series is based on **Luke 17:1a** where Jesus says, "**It is impossible that no offences should come**" (NKJV). And offences handled improperly will lead to betrayal, hatred, and deception. You will be in "**the snare of the devil**" and you will be "**held captive by him to do his will**" (**2 Timothy 2:26**).

We must let go of the banana – and if you don't know what I mean by that you need to pick up Part 2 of this series over on the resource table or listen to it on our website.

Un-relinquished offences are strongholds, or fortresses, in your mind. Every time you allow an offence to linger in your hearts and every time you hold unforgiveness for any length of time, you are erecting a stronghold for Satan's use in your life.

Last week we primarily looked at two passages of Scripture that taught us how to deal with the offences in our lives. We saw in **Romans 12:14-21** and **Luke 6:27-36** that we must love and bless and pray for those who have offended and persecuted us.

We discovered that the people who offend us are an enemy in our hearts even if we say we love them and plaster a smile on our face when in their presence. So do you love (agape) those who have offended you? – remembering that this kind of love always chooses to do what is best for them, not you (the opposite of love is selfishness). Do you do good to them and do you pray God's blessings on them?

And beloved, these principles are not suggestions or recommendations for us to consider; they are commands from the Lord. If you want to tear down and destroy the strongholds in your life that are blocking and thwarting God's working and blessing in your life, then you must be obedient in the way you respond to your enemies; those who have offended you.

We saw how we are to rejoice with our offenders when they rejoice and weep with them when they weep.

We saw how easy is it for us to become spiritually arrogant and spiritually superior in our own minds toward those who have offended us. You are not to be **wise in your own estimation** because that's a position of pride; aligning yourself with the sin of Satan.

We saw that we can "**Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.**" There are no exceptions. It is a sin to withhold forgiveness from those who have offended you; your act of unforgiveness is paying back evil for evil.

We also saw that you simply cannot **take your own revenge** because you will be crowding God out of the picture. When you choose to exact your own vengeance you

are assuming God's position in the equation and pushing Him out of the way. Vengeance does not belong to us in any situation; vengeance belongs to the Lord and to Him alone! And the Lord promises that He will repay; He will deal with the matter and the person in His timing and His perfect way.

Think about where your life could be if the very first response to an offence was that you immediately prayed, "Lord, I am turning this over to You right this very moment and I am leaving it in Your capable hands to deal with in Your way and in Your timing." What an effect that would have on your life! Can you imagine how many more of the Lord's blessings would come into your life if you weren't living in the snare of the devil and being held captive by him to do his will?

Finally we looked at the life of Cain in **Genesis 4:3-14**. Cain gets offended by God and the progression of offence, betrayal, hatred, and deception is set into motion. Cain develops a persecution complex. Cain is now living under the belief that everyone is now out to get him. And Cain becomes a vagrant and a wanderer because of this persecution complex.

The application being that people who hold onto offences are spiritual vagabonds. They wander from relationship to relationship, or from job to job, or from church to church.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Romans**.

Romans 8:14

Let's pray.

Let me start with a question: Do all of the Christians you know manifest being led by the Spirit of God? – No. I'm sure we all know brothers and sisters in Christ who are led by their emotions, their circumstances, their offences, and all manner of other things in their life; not the Spirit of God.

So how do we explain this verse? Is it saying that if you do not manifest being led by the Spirit that you are not a child of God?

There are two primary Greek words that are translated as sons or children in the New Testament; one is *teknon* and the other is *huios*.

Let's continue reading in **Romans** and then I will explain the difference because both are used in this passage.

Romans 8:15-17

The word *teknon* is used in **verses 15-17** and the *huios* is used in **verse 14**. The basic definition of *teknon* is on who is a son, or child, by mere fact of birth.

When our children were born they were placed in the viewing room of the hospital maternity ward along with all of the other babies born that day. Now I know the women will disagree a little here, but it's not real easy to tell the babies apart when they are fresh out of the womb, so to speak. At least the guys are not looking at the unique facial characteristics of each baby we're looking for the label that has the name in big bold

letters. When I saw SMITH I could then smile and proudly point and say, "That one belongs to me!" At this early stage in their life, they were my children only by the fact that they came from Connie's womb. They were still too wrinkled and smooshed for anyone but a mother to be able to point out any characteristics that would attribute them to any particular family.

This is *teknon*, the word in **verses 15-17** – we are children of God merely by being adopted into His family.

As my two sons grew, they not only started to physically resemble Connie and I they also began to act like Connie and I. Sometimes we wished they wouldn't if you know what I mean, but as time passed it became more and more evident that these boys belonged to us. Their physical features and their character began making it undeniable that Clint and Jake were Al & Connie's kids.

This is *huios*, the word used in **verse 14** – the ones who are children of God not only by adoption but by the fact that they have taken on the characteristics of their Father.

So to put it simply, *teknon* means babies or immature children and *huios* means grown or mature children. So when Paul says, "**For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God**", he is saying that the mature children are the ones who are being led by the Spirit – the immature are not, or at least are much less likely to be. So in this aspect you can indeed be a genuine child of God but not be living a life that is led by the Spirit of God.

Immature Christians will most often react to their circumstances by leaning on, or being led by, their emotions and their intellect; they have not yet learned to fully trust in God and consistently be led by the Spirit of God when faced with a difficult situation. If you find yourself in this category more often than not then you are a *teknon* instead of a *huios* and God desires that you grow.

Now when you look at a passage like **Matthew 5:44-45a**, which is a parallel passage to what we studied last week in Luke, some clarity will begin to come to your understanding. Jesus says, "**But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven...**" The Greek word in this verse is *huios*.

So in other words, Jesus is saying that when you stop hanging on to offences in your life, and you turn them over to God immediately, and when you love and pray for those who have offended you instead of being bitter and spiteful and vengeful, then you will be a child of the Father; a child who is displaying the characteristics of his or her Father; a *huios*. If you choose to hang onto that offence you will remain a *teknon*. This is the difference between a mature and an immature Christian.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **1 Peter**.

How many of you want to immediately step in and help when your children are struggling? How many of you know that there are times when you must let them struggle if they are going to grow?

After our son Jake left our home and moved back to the Chicago area, he made several poor decisions and choices for his life. As much as I wanted to step in I knew I had to let him learn on his own. Even in the face of criticism from our family, Connie and I had to let him fall down and learn from his failures. He was an adult and no longer living in our home and we would have done more damage than good by trying to force him to do things differently. We gave him our advice at every opportunity but ultimately he had to choose what he was going to do.

Let me quote **Hebrews 5:8** before we read in **1 Peter**. Speaking of Jesus it says, "**Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things He suffered.**" I can't tell it to you any straighter than it already says; Jesus, in His humanity, learned obedience through the suffering He experienced. And beloved, it is the same for us.

How many of you have suffered from unfair treatment in this life? Every time you are treated unfairly you have the chance to pick up an offence or you have a chance to allow God to defend you. And here's the painfully obvious bottom line: It's one or the other. If you choose to walk into Satan's trap and pick up that offence, you forfeit the right to have God defend you until you come to your senses and escape that trap.

1 Peter 2:20a

In other words, if you are suffering because you have done something wrong you are not a martyr, you are getting what you deserve. There is no inherent value in patiently enduring suffering that you deserve. If lights are flashing in your rearview mirror and you are being pulled over to the side of the road, don't bind Satan, you are getting a ticket for breaking the law.

There are two kinds of persecution: Self-inflicted persecution and persecution for righteousness' sake. Self-inflicted persecution is simply getting what you deserve for wrong behavior – and you can rid yourself of this easily enough by choosing to behave righteously.

1 Peter 2:20b

Persecution for righteousness' sake is when you are genuinely mistreated while or for doing the right thing. When you endure this you will find favor with God and He will defend you in His perfect way and in His perfect time.

1 Peter 2:21-23

I don't know if you got what this says: **You have been called for this purpose.** You have been called to suffer unjustly and to patiently endure it just like Jesus did. And the key is at the end of **verse 23** where it says that Jesus entrusted **Himself to Him who judges righteously.** Jesus left His vindication for unfair and unjust treatment in God's hands.

Inversely you have not been called to take matters into your own hands. You have not been called to take offence. You have not been called to get upset at your offender. You have not been called to call up your friends and talk about the offender. You have not been called to look for the opportunity to get even.

1 Peter 3:8-9a

We saw last week in **Romans** that we are not to return evil for evil. We saw last week and this week how Jesus commands us to not return evil for evil in **Luke** and **Matthew**. And now Peter is telling us the exact same thing; don't **return evil for evil or insult for insult, but** (give) **a blessing instead**. Why? – **For you were called for this very purpose**.

Some Christians have a hard time determining their calling in life. Allow me get you started on the right path; although God does indeed have some other specific callings for your life you can begin by knowing that you have been called to unjustly suffer for the sake of righteousness and you have been called to bless those who persecute and insult and offend you.

But I have some good news:

1 Peter 3:9b

The next time you get offended and treated unfairly, you can dance and you can sing and you can praise and you can shout for joy, because you have just been set up to receive a blessing from God! - IF, you handle it correctly.

When someone mistreats you unfairly you have a choice set before you; the choice is bitterness or blessing. Why, why, why do you, or would you, choose bitterness? Do you now see and realize how many blessings you have forfeited in your life?

There was a pastor in Dallas, Texas by the name of Pastor Al believe it or not. He had a church of about 5,000 and one Sunday he preached a sermon along these lines and after the service one of his church members who worked for a major insurance company approached him.

He said, "Pastor, I was passed over for a deserved promotion to vice president this week, and the only possible reason is because I am black. I have legal recourse and I had determined in my mind to pursue this very thing tomorrow; but after hearing this sermon, you have messed me up."

The pastor asked, "Do you want to handle it your way or God's way?" He replied, "I want to handle it God's way, that's why I'm talking to you." Pastor Al said, "Good, because I'm going to pray for you and God is going to judge this case and keep you from being offended."

They talked for a little longer and then this man went home. The next morning he marched right into the office that should have been his and congratulated his new boss and assured him that he would be his best worker and would support him in any way he could.

Several weeks passed (how many of you know that God always takes care of things but it is always later than we think is appropriate?) and then this man was contacted by a different major insurance company asking if they could have lunch together. He told them he wasn't interested in their job offer because of the roots he had established and

the cliental he had developed through the years, etc., but if they wanted to buy him lunch he would be there.

He went to lunch at the appointed time and this company tried their level best to convince him to come and work for them, but he wouldn't budge. Finally, they asked him to go home, talk to his wife, and spend the next week determining what he wanted to be paid to make the switch. He wrestled with this all week but he didn't want to make the change. So finally he told his wife he would shut them up for good by writing down a salary that was three times what he was earning at his current position.

The next week came and he showed up at lunch again and had another conversation with the big wigs of this other company. They finally asked him if he had come up with a salary figure and he began to reach into his pocket when they said, "Wait, we want to show you our offer first." They slid the offer across the table and he just stared. They wanted to pay him four times what he was currently making. But because he was silent for so long, they thought it wasn't enough so they increased it a lot more and added some additional perks and benefits. Finally he calmly told them that he would like to go home and pray about it with his wife, and they said fine.

As they were praying that night, this man relates that He sensed God saying to him, "Son, you turned this case over to Me, you didn't take up the offence, this is My judgment, this is My vindication; take the job!"

This is what Peter is trying to tell us. The blessings of God are set up for you when you choose to handle offence properly by blessing those who persecute you and do evil to you and insult you, and turning it over to God for Him to handle in His way and in His time.

1 Peter 3:13-14

Who can harm you when you leave it in God's hands? The answer is nobody! When you get this principle cemented into your life there is absolutely nothing anybody can do to you!

I have watched good friends and other people I know squander their lives in a pool of misery, wandering through life like Cain with a big persecution complex on their back because they take offence at every corner and wonder why God isn't doing anything about it. They struggle in everything they do and even though they won't admit it, they are becoming bitter with God. What they don't see and understand is that they are the ones who pushed God out of the picture by picking up the offence. You can't have it both ways! You either pick up the offence or you bless your offenders and let God vindicate you – God won't vindicate you as long as you hold on to the banana!

Are you getting this? This is kingdom living free from offence. Who can harm you when you live in this way? Who can send you into a depression when you bless those who curse you? Who can shatter your world when you love those who persecute you?

1 Peter 4:1

Do you know why most believers are so easily offended? - Because they are not armed to handle unjust suffering. And because they are not armed, they react instead of

respond, or react instead of act. They become in essence paralyzed at the shock that anyone would unjustly persecute them and their first reaction is to strike back or shrink back, but either way they harbor evil and revenge and bitterness in their hearts toward their offender.

Airline pilots are put through a rigorous training regimen on a bi-annual basis. They are put into these flight simulators and they are given every conceivable scenario that would cause that plane to go down. They are so conditioned to handle crisis they are almost on auto-pilot, if you will excuse the pun, when crisis hits. They know to flip this switch, pull that lever, etc. Even when a plane does go down and crash, more often than not when the black box is recovered, the voices they hear on the recorder are relatively calm until the very end.

The pilots are armed to handle the offence if you will. Most Christians are not armed. They have never patiently endured and they have never properly handled the trials and tribulations that come into their lives so they are destined to repeat their heartaches and bitterness again and again instead of being blessed.

2 Timothy 3:7 says concerning those who choose to not grow spiritually, they are **"always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."** Meaning they are in their place every church service but they never apply what they are learning; and apart from consistent application of the truth you are never actually learning the truth.

Physical growth is a function of time. Intellectual growth is a function of learning. Spiritual growth is a function of suffering for righteousness sake and patiently enduring just like Jesus Christ did, and allowing God to vindicate and bless.

When offence comes your way and you handle it properly, God is setting you up to be blessed and He is setting you up to grow.

Let's pray.