

HOPE TO COPE 4 – “HOPE WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE” (PART 1 OF 2)

INTRO. REPEAT TITLE – WE ARE GOING TO HANDLE THIS TOPIC IN THESE NEXT 2 SECTIONS OF SCRIPTURE IN THE BOOK OF 1 PETER IN THE N.T. IN 2 PARTS. BEFORE WE GET STARTED – WANTED TO PLAY A LITTLE WORD ASSOCIATION GAME.

Keep it clean and think of first thing that comes to mind. Go w. 2nd or 3rd choice if it isn't clean.

Summer

Brad

Carrie

Marco

Electric

Bald

Star

School

Car

Christian?

NOT ALL POSITIVE EH? OF COURSE NO ONE IS PERFECT, BUT LET'S GO BACK TO **1 PETER 2:12.**

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

WHAT IF CHRISTIAN = Trustworthy, best worker, etc

LAST WK. NICK TALKED IMPORTANCE OF OUR CONDUCT IN HELPING PEOPLE GET A CLEAR MESSAGE OF WHO CHRIST IS AND HOW HE MAKES A DIFF. “You can’t fake the fruit” CHANGE STARTS ON THE INSIDE AS WE MOVE CLOSER TO GOD IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. (why we need to be in His word like 1 Peter during the week. (Hold up Bible) - Flipping through Bible = Baptist air conditioning. If no Bible pick one up from Info. Table. Get app.)

WHAT'S INSIDE WILL EVENTUALLY SHOW ITSELF OUTSIDE. IF CHANGE COMES FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT, IT SHOWS. IF NOT. . .IT SHOWS!

V. 16-17 CONVEYS IDEA OF A SERVANT’S HEART AND CHARACTER THAT COMMUNICATES. RESPECT FOR EVERYONE. IN THAT DAY MEANT HIGHER UPS OR SLAVES.

****TODAY – HOW TO HAVE HOPE WHEN DEALING WITH THOSE DIRECTLY OVER US – EMPLOYERS, ETC. ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT ONES!**

- I. **READ FULL PASSAGE – 1 PETER 2:18-25 Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. 19 For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. (18-20 MESSAGE BIBLE- "You who are servants, be good servants to your masters—not just to good masters, but also to bad ones. What counts is that you put up with it for God's sake when you're treated badly for no good reason. There's no particular virtue in accepting punishment that you well deserve. But if you're treated badly for good behavior and continue in spite of it to be a good servant, that is what counts with God."). 21 To this you were called, because**

Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

II.

III.22 “He committed no sin,

IV. and no deceit was found in his mouth.”[a]

V. 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 24 “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” 25 For “you were like sheep going astray,”[b] but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.. (SEE ALSO ISAIAH 53:9-11)

***I REALIZE SLAVERY IS A HARD THING FOR US TO FATHOM IN OUR CULTURE OF EQUAL RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW, BUT STILL GOING ON IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD.**

THIS PASSAGE WOULD NOT BE THE SAME ADVICE GIVEN WHEN DEALING WITH THE MODERN DAY SEX TRADE WITH MINORS, WHICH IS STILL GOING ON IN OUR COUNTRY. THEY NEED TO BE RESCUED. (why we love IJM)

A. BUT THIS TEACHING WOULD BE VERY RELEVANT TO THE READERS THE APOSTLE PETER IS WRITING TO IN HIS DAY.

***MANY IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH WERE IN FACT SLAVES AND SERVANTS.**

***WORD PETER USES IN GREEK IS NOT REFERRING TO A COMMON SLAVE LABORER, BUT “Oiketai”= HOUSEHOLD OR DOMESTIC SLAVE/SERVANTS.**

****SLAVERY BEGAN IN ROME BY TAKING P.O.W.S FROM THE NATIONS THEY CONQUERED. SLAVES NUMBERED IN THE MILLIONS BY N.T. TIMES. THESE COULD BE PRACTICING DOCTORS, TEACHERS, MUSICIANS, ACTORS, SECRETARIES, STEWARDS, ETC. THEY WERE ALL CONSIDERED SLAVES AND THEIR TALENTS WERE USED TO DO THE REAL WORK IN ROME. A TRUE ROMAN CITIZEN CONSIDERED THEMSELVES MASTERS OF THE WORLD THAT DESERVED TO BE PAMPERED WHILE THE SERVANTS CARRIED OUT MOST OF SOCIETY’S WORK.**

***SLAVES WERE NOT ALLOWED TO MARRY, BUT THEY COULD COHABITATE. IF THEY HAD CHILDREN, THEY ALSO BECAME PROPERTY OF THEIR MASTERS. LIKE OWNING SHEEP THAT GAVE BIRTH TO LAMBS.**

****NOT ALL SERVANTS WERE MISTREATED. MANY BECAME MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY AND WERE DEARLY LOVED.**

*****BUT ONE INESCAPABLE FACT REMAINED - IN GENERAL, SLAVES WERE CONSIDERED WORKING MACHINES. (DO YOU TREAT YOUR EMPLOYEES AS WORKING MACHINES?)**

- **THEY HAD NO LEGAL RIGHTS WHATSOEVER**
- **THE MASTER'S WILL WAS FINAL. TRUE JUSTICE FOR A SLAVE DID NOT EXIST UNDER THE LAW. THEY COULD BE KILLED LEGALLY BY MASTER.**

B. INTO THIS SITUATION COMES THE GOSPEL AND THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING THAT EVERY PERSON = PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

(GALATIANS 3:26-28. So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew

nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.) VERY RADICAL.

***RESULT = IN THE CHURCH SOCIAL BARRIERS WERE BROKEN DOWN. ONE OF THE EARLIEST LEADERS OF THE CHURCH IN ROME = A SLAVE HIMSELF. ARISTOCRATS AND SLAVES COULD BE SEEN DYING A MARTYR'S DEATH SIDE BY SIDE, HAND IN HAND UNDER NERO'S RULE. ("THE KINGDOM OF GOD" WAS ALREADY AT WORK EVEN IN THE MIDST OF GREAT INJUSTICE). SLAVES COULD BE LEADERS IN THE CHURCH, WHILE A "MASTER" MIGHT BE A REGULAR CHURCHGOER OR MEMBER.**

C. THIS BROUGHT A NEW AND REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION TO THE CHURCH AND ROMAN SOCIETY. AS A RESULT 2 CONCERNS AROSE THAT PETER ADDRESSES HERE IN HIS LETTER TO THE CHURCHES UNDER PERSECUTION:

1. IF BOTH SERVANT AND MASTER BECAME CHRISTIANS, WOULD BELIEVERS START SHIRKING THEIR DUTIES AND BE SEEN BY THE CULTURE THEY WANTED TO REACH OUT TO AS

LAZY AND OPPORTUNISTIC? (WHICH WOULD GO AGAINST WHAT PETER TAUGHT IN V. 12) YOU MIGHT KNOW OF BELIEVERS WHO TRY AND DO THIS TODAY W. A CHRISTIAN EMPLOYER. EXPECTING SPECIAL FAVOR.

OR. . .

2. THE NEW IDENTITY/DIGNITY THE CHRISTIAN FAITH BROUGHT TO AN INDIVIDUAL MIGHT CAUSE SOME TO REBEL AND SEEK TO ABOLISH SLAVERY ALL TOGETHER. BUT AT THE TIME PETER AND OTHER N.T. WRITERS ADDRESS THE EARLY CHURCH. . .

a. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SUICIDE – THERE HAD BEEN REVOLTS LIKE THIS BEFORE IN ROME THAT WERE SAVAGELY CRUSHED. THE CHURCH ALONE COULD NOT HAVE PULLED IT OFF.

b. CHRISTIANS WOULD HAVE BEEN SEEN AS SUBVERTING THE GOVERNMENT AND TRYING TO DESTROY THE CULTURE – AS TRAITORS TO THE EMPIRE. THE ROMANS WOULD HAVE WIPED THE CHURCH OUT IN ITS INFANCY.

****THERE ARE SOME SITUATIONS WHERE THERE MUST BE TIME TO WORK ON THE HUMAN HEART AND CANNOT BE RUSHED LEST THEY BE CRUSHED. IT WOULD TAKE SEVERAL GENERATIONS BEFORE THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN ROME BECAME A PRACTICAL/DOABLE POSSIBILITY. IT DID EVENTUALLY COME ABOUT GRADUALLY.**

D. PETER WAS CONCERNED THAT CHRISTIAN SERVANTS SHOULD DEMONSTRATE TO THE WORLD THAT BEING A CHRIST FOLLOWER DID NOT MAKE YOU A DISGRUNTLED ANGRY REBEL, BUT A CONSCIENTIOUS WORKER WHO FOUND NEW INSPIRATION FOR AN HONEST DAY'S WORK.

BIG IDEA: When difficult situations cannot be changed, the Christian response is to be Christlike in the midst of adversity so the gospel can marinate in people's hearts enough for true change to occur.

***BECAUSE THEY HAD THIS FOCUS AND KEPT THEIR EYES ON JESUS WHILE DEVELOPING THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT AND DISCIPLING OTHERS, THEY EVENTUALLY "TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE**

DOWN". (IN A GOOD WAY). AND IT CAN HAPPEN AGAIN, EVEN IN AMERICA!

QUESTION: SO IS THE BIBLE CONDONING SLAVERY. . .AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING? NOT AT ALL!

- **1 CORINTHIANS 7:21-23. Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you— although if you can gain your freedom, do so. 22 For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings.**
- **PHILEMON 15-17. (Paul is writing Philemon concerning a runaway slave, Onesimus) "Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever— 16 no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord." (Says later to "welcome him as you would welcome me!")**
- **GALATIANS 3:26-28 (WE LOOKED AT ALREADY)**

- **1 TIMOTHY 1 - LAW WAS CREATED FOR A WHOLE LIST OF SINS INCLUDING “SLAVE TRADERS”, LIARS, MURDERERS, ETC.**

-EVENTUALLY WE SAW SLAVERY ABOLISHED IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA, AND EVEN JIM CROW LAWS OF SEGREGATION IN RECENT GENERATIONS WITH DR. KING THROUGH WHAT AMOUNTED TO A RELIGIOUS REVIVAL. EVEN OUR OWN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE REFLECTS GOD’S VIEW OF HUMANITY. THAT’S WHAT FUELED OUR FREEDOM. DIDN’T COME FROM EVOLUTION BY THE WAY! We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. . .

(THIS WEEKEND WE HONOR THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES TO MAKE THIS DECLARATION A REALITY!). {PRAY FOR THOSE IN PAST AND MILITARY NOW!}

II. HOW DO WE APPLY THIS? WHAT LIFE LESSON IS BEING TAUGHT – LOOK FOR BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR LIFE IN BIBLE TEACHING. IT’S A LIFE BOOK, NOT A HISTORY BOOK.

A. THERE'S A FOCUS ON TRANSFORMATION OF THE HEART TO DEAL W. DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES THAT STARTS WITH US.

BASICALLY - If you are dealing with a difficult employer, don't be a difficult employee.

DOESN'T MEAN YOU DON'T STAND UP FOR WHAT IS RIGHT IF IT IS A HILL WORTH DYING ON, BUT YOU HANDLE IT TACTFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY. "IN HIS STEPS". MATT. 18 – GO TO INDIVIDUAL FIRST. THEN HR IF NECESSARY AND BIG ENOUGH.

YOU CAN DEVELOP A NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD WORK:

- 1. Do all in the name of the Lord – COLOSSIANS 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**
- 2. Give glory to God in all you do – 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 - So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.**

***IDEA = WE DON'T JUST WORK FOR A PAYCHECK OR TO SATISFY A BOSS, BUT TO BE ABLE TO PRESENT OUR WORK AS PART OF A LIFESTYLE WE WOULD PRESENT TO GOD, AND THOSE WHO NEED GOD WHO ARE WATCHING US.**

IT CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN OUR MOTIVATION. DR. KING TAUGHT THIS – WHETHER STREET SWEEPER, ETC.

***BUT WHAT IF MY BOSS IS A TOTAL JERK? I GUESS YOU WOULDN'T KNOW. YOU WORK IN A CHURCH WHERE EVERYBODY IS SUPPOSED TO BE NICE!**

***ILLUS. FIRST CHURCH AS A 22 YEAR OLD YOUTH PASTOR. . .**

- HAD A DEACON THAT MADE IT HIS MISSION TO MAKE LIFE MISERABLE. . .TELL STORY

- HAD TO WORK THERE SEVERAL MONTHS AFTER THIS UNTIL OPENING AT ANOTHER CHURCH. LOVED THE KIDS I WORKED WITH

AND OUR SPONSORS AND GOD MADE THE WHOLE SITUATION TOLERABLE UNTIL THEN AND I WAS ABLE TO FINISH WELL. STILL FRIENDS W SOME OF MY GROWN UP KIDS FROM THERE. NEVER SPLIT THE CHURCH OR TOOK REVENGE AND DIDN'T DROP OUT OF MINISTRY OR CHURCH. WHY?

- **BECAUSE I WASN'T WORKING FOR *THEM*. I WAS WORKING FOR *GOD*. HE WAS SHAPING ME THROUGH ALL THIS AND WORKING ON THEM. LET HIM BE YOUR FOCUS.**

***I STRUGGLED AND SHED SOME TEARS, WAS IN AGONY THROUGH SOME OF THIS, BUT FORGAVE LATER. AT THE SAME TIME, ONCE I HAD A CHANCE FOR FREEDOM, I TOOK IT. GOD CAN TEACH US, BUT IF IN ABUSIVE SITUATION AND YOU HAVE A CHOICE, DON'T HAVE TO STAY AND BE ABUSED. IT WAS PRETTY TOXIC AND I DID NOT SEE CHANGE ON THE HORIZON. SO I RESIGNED WITHOUT HURTING THE CHURCH.**

III. WHY SHOULD WE DO WHAT THIS PASSAGE SAYS?

BECAUSE CHRIST SUFFERED AT HANDS OF UNJUST PEOPLE FOR OUR VERY SOULS. BECAUSE OF THIS, PEOPLE STILL FOLLOW HIM TODAY. HE ENTRUSTED HIMSELF TO GOD AND BECAUSE OF HIS WOUNDS, OUR SOULS CAN BE HEALED.

*****BECAUSE OF YOUR WOUNDS AND CHRISTLIKE RESPONSE, OTHER PEOPLE'S SOULS WHO ARE WATCHING YOU CAN BE HEALED!!!**

PLUS WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE TO LOOK AHEAD TO. (SPIRITUALS SUNG BY SLAVES IN U.S.) THAT WAS THE BIG IDEA OF THIS WHOLE LETTER DURING PERSECUTION.

IF YOU HAVE A DIFFICULT, UNREASONABLE, INSULTING BOSS. . .

- 1. DON'T ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO THEIR FOLLY IF YOU WANT THEM TO LISTEN TO YOU.**

PROVERBS 15:1. A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger

2. **GET TO KNOW TERMS LIKE **Conscientious** AND **Initiative**. SEEING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE AND DOING YOUR PART WELL – WITHOUT HAVING TO BE ASKED. GOT THROUGH TO MY PARENTS THIS WAY.**

JUST BEING A FAITHFUL WORKER TODAY IS A HUGE WITNESS THAT WILL MAKE YOU STAND OUT. IF YOU SEE A BAD SYSTEM IN PLACE, HELP MAKE IT WORK BETTER. BE PART OF THE SOLUTION IN A HUMBLE WAY. TRIED THIS W. A COUPLE OF OTHER SR. PASTORS I WORKED FOR, AND I BEGAN TO HAVE THEIR TRUST AFTER THAT.

3. **Stop blaming – to blame is to B LAME!**

Own your mistakes and learn from them. A good leader is a good learner. (Christian brother did this with bosses and had a good result.)

****All this means not just working out of duty, "faithfulness" is a fruit of the Spirit. Jesus says to go the extra mile. Then if you invite your boss to church, do you think they would be more likely to come? If you shared the Bridge Illus., do you think they would**

be more likely to listen? We know service communicates!

4. Pray for them

It's hard to keep someone on your hit list when you put them on your prayer list.

You will develop a burden for them and you can start going to work as a missionary. That is what Peter is getting at.

Remember Peter is writing to Christian slaves in Rome who have no way out, but a death sentence and no rights. He says instead of being miserable, try this! Trust God to work on your behalf as you do. He is the Shepherd and Overseer of your soul.

CONCLUSION:

I NEVER HAD TO SEEK REVENGE ON SOME OF THOSE DIFFICULT LEADERS AT MY FIRST CHURCH. LOVED THESE PEOPLE AND KIDS, BUT EVENTUALLY THE CHURCH IMPLoded A FEW YEARS LATER. DOESN'T EXIST ANYMORE, AND BUILDING THEY BUILT WAS REPOSSESSED BY BANK AND PURCHASED BY ANOTHER CHURCH.

THE ENGINE IN THE BUS BLEW UP WHILE THE DEACON WAS TAKING A GROUP TO SLO (NO ONE WAS HURT). I DIDN'T DO IT!

PLUS STUFF I'VE GONE THROUGH CAN HELP OTHER STUDENTS AND PASTORS W. "STANDING STONE." TRUE OF YOU TOO.

JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD THAT LAYS HIS LIFE DOWN FOR THE SHEEP. SHEPHERDS ARE FAR SIGHTED. THEY KEEP THE SHEEP FROM FALLING OFF CLIFFS ALONG NARROW PATHWAYS AND FROM BEING DESTROYED. JESUS WILL WALK THROUGH THE VALLEYS WITH YOU IF YOU LET HIM. (END HERE?)

"OVERSEERS" (GK. EPISKOPOS) = PROTECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY, GUARDIANS OF HONOR AND HONESTY – GOD IS GUARDIAN OVER OUR SOULS.

- IN HIS LOVE HE CARES FOR US**
- IN HIS POWER HE PROTECTS OUR SOULS FROM PERMANENT DAMAGE**
- IN HIS WISDOM HE GUIDES US.**

TURN TO HIM FIRST IN "IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS" AND YOU WILL HAVE A BETTER OUTCOME.

PRAY

**NEXT WK. WHAT IF DIFFICULT PERSON IS YOUR
SPOUSE? WHAT IF THEY ARE A NON CHRISTIAN?
JOIN US NEXT WK. IN U HALL. 1 Peter CH. 3**