

## Bible Study Notes 5/21/2019

### Nothing Shall Offend!

Review of Principles: Law of sowing and reaping; Faith in God; The Power of Agreement

#### Law of sowing and reaping

Galatians 6:7-10 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

#### Faith in God

Faith says, although it may not be seen; it does exist. Faith allows the spiritual to become a natural reality. Hebrews 11:1-3 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Two created domains exist side by side. One is the natural and visible realm, which is discerned by the five senses. The other is the spiritual, invisible realm which can be revealed or made visible through faith.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (II Corinthians 4:18). See also Colossians 1:16.

The ideal that God had in the beginning was that there would be perfect union between the visible and the invisible realms. The visible realm was to reflect the spiritual or invisible realm. He wished for there to be no division between the two. Man himself was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). There was a tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9). It is seen again in the eternal state (Revelation 22:2). Because of the perfect unity that existed between the visible and invisible realms before the fall of man, Adam and Eve could hear the voice of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8). But sin drove a wedge between man and God, a wedge that hides God's face from man and man's voice from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).

The Barrier of Sin Removed -The sin that drove the wedge between man and God was the work of the devil. The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8), and this included a restoration of the relationship between the natural and the spiritual for those who would come through the blood of Christ.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh (Hebrews 10:19-20).

This “holiest” is not a physical building or room; it is a spiritual place of relationship to God. In the invisible realm of the Holy Spirit, there is no sickness, disease, bondage, lack, depression and so forth. All of the woes that have come upon man are the result of sin. Jesus said, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

### The Power of Agreement

”Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them (Matthew 18:19-20).

The unified prayers of the church govern the spiritual world (Eph 3:10). The following quote relates this concept in a figurative way; “The measure of the power of the church today determines the measure of the manifestation of the power of God. For His power is now revealed through the church. This whole matter can be likened to the flow of water in one’s house. Though the water tank of the Water Supply Company is huge, its flow is limited to the diameter of the water pipe in one’s own house. If a person wishes to have more flow of water, he will need to enlarge his water pipe. Today the degree of the manifestation of God’s power is governed by the capacity of the church.”

Genesis 11:1-6; Acts 2:1-12 - The power of unity is a universal principle, not just a church-principle. People working together toward an agreed upon goal are all but unstoppable. In Genesis, God caused mankind to be unable to understand each other. In Acts, He caused them to understand each other, no matter the native language of the hearer. He restored their unity so that “nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.”

Positive Agreement - Acts chapter 2; Negative agreement – Joshua 6 & 7; Acts 5

Spiritual agreement is something different from having the same opinion. It goes much deeper. Agreement among believers begins in the heart of each individual believer before God. It’s a simple matter to find someone who “agrees” with you—someone who has the same opinion of what God should do in any given matter. This kind of agreement, in fact, weakens prayer. Why? Because two people who are drawn together because they have the same opinion will strengthen that opinion in each other. These two people will feed each other’s “arguments and pretensions” and will actually keep each other from hearing from God. Opinions about how God should handle a certain matter are always dangerous. A praying person who is listening to God can know what God wants to do but not how He is going to do it. He wants to “fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Col. 1:9), but “his paths are past tracing out”(Rom. 11:33).

As believers, we have strongholds. Strongholds, as referred to in 2 Corinthians 10:4 are fortresses. Fortresses are erected to defend or protect something within their walls. These fortresses, Scripture says, are built out of arguments and pretensions. Arguments and pretensions serve to protect lies and stubborn opinions. ”For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the

weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

"The weapons we fight with" are prayers—words initiated by God and voiced by believers. We don't tear down strongholds with brute force or our bare hands. We don't tear down strongholds with arguments and reasoning. We tear them down with prayer. When we allow strongholds to exist and protect our favorite opinions, we cannot hear God's Voice. How can you know if you have a stronghold protecting an opinion or an attitude? By how many arguments you need to support and justify it!

### Nothing Shall Offend!

Let us take a look at the wood... "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. - Proverbs 26:20

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Bitterness is something sharp, disagreeable, distasteful, harsh, severe, resentful, or vehement. This is the type of attitude that produces piercing remarks and unpleasant language. It is never appropriate. Some people think they can put aside the spiritual man and give vent to their bitterness, but they cannot do this if they want to be holy.

Wrath is violent anger, rage, or indignation, and the word strongly suggests a desire to avenge or punish. The flesh always wants to get revenge, and it often will do so by a display of feelings or a cutting remark. Perhaps we may disagree on certain issues, but we must not become resentful or vengeful. You may be perfectly correct in principles, but if you allow yourself to become violently angry or wrathful, then you are wrong. The same is true about the other wrong attitudes we are discussing. We cannot allow ourselves to go ungoverned in this manner, but we must learn to control our feelings. Wrath cannot be controlled through our own strength, but through prayer and seeking God. Remember, "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:20).

Anger is a feeling of extreme displeasure that usually results from injury or opposition. The word itself does not suggest a definite degree of intensity nor does it necessarily require an outward manifestation.

If anger is allowed to go uncontrolled, it usually manifests itself as a desire to lash out at someone or something. If controlled and used properly this feeling may be constructive and even beneficial. For example, Jesus displayed anger against sin when

He cleansed the temple of thieves. What kind of anger is permissible and what is not? Paul tells us, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26). Anger that causes you to hurt someone or to sin in any other way is wrong. Anger that you carry in your heart and nurse into a grudge is also wrong. Anger without a cause is wrong (Matthew 5:22). If there is a just cause for anger you must not take the situation personally and must not direct that anger against any individual. Instead, use the emotional force as a motivation to correct the wrong if possible. Then, forgive the other individual involved, and forget about it. Pray until you can forget it. Regardless of the circumstances, temperance or self-control is a fruit of the Spirit and must be displayed (Galatians 5:23). Ministers, what should be your attitude when you teach something that some saints continue to disobey? Your reaction must not be personal anger. They are not rebellious towards you, but they are rebellious towards God. You must be careful and maintain self-control.

Clamour is a noisy shouting, outcry, uproar, or insistent demand. Do you always have complaints? Do you clamour to get your way? Some adults throw temper tantrums and act just as stubborn as small children who fall on the floor, scream, and kick. People who keep the church in an uproar, constantly demanding attention, always presenting demands, or blocking the progress of the church are guilty of clamouring. This attitude and behavior is condemned by Scripture.

Evil speaking comes from an evil heart. Much of it stems from jealousy. How much do you speak evil of people? How much trouble do you cause by evil speaking?

Malice is an active ill will, a desire to hurt others. Malice takes pleasure in causing someone to suffer or in seeing that person suffer. It is usually the result of hate, which is as bad as murder in the eyes of God (I John 3:15). We should hate sin, but not the sinner. We can rejoice when sin is defeated in certain areas, but never in the misfortunes and sufferings of other people even if they are sinners. Love rejoices not in iniquity, but in the truth (I Corinthians 13:6).

Envy and jealousy. These emotions are closely associated with bitterness, wrath, malice and strife. Envy and strife are capable of producing any and every kind of evil (James 3:16). Envy and jealousy consist of a grudging of possessions or accomplishments. They often include spite, covetousness, and suspicion. Envy is a work of the flesh and will keep us out of heaven (Galatians 5:21; James 4:5). This spirit surfaces unexpectedly in places where it should not be. People in the church often get upset when someone else is used more in the church, when someone else is recognized more than they, when someone else gets certain favors, or even when others get spiritual blessings. Beware! This is the spirit of envy.

A root of bitterness. Many times there are people that no one can satisfy. They murmur, complain, are uncooperative, and are self-willed. They cannot accept correction without becoming angry. They are busybodies, they sow discord among the brethren, they are talebearers, and they cause problems everywhere they go. What is wrong? It could be that they have a root of bitterness as described in Hebrews 12:15. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." This passage follows right after the admonition to follow peace and holiness without which no man can see God (v. 14). Taken together, these verses prove two things. First, holiness is essential to salvation. A person can fall from grace if he is not holy. Second, having a proper attitude is one of the most important aspects of holiness. A person can be defiled by bitterness.

A root of bitterness is a source of bitterness in someone's life. It is something in the heart which causes all of the outward manifestations we have identified. From this root many types of fruit come forth, none of which is the fruit of the Spirit. The actual root could be a grudge against someone because of an incident, jealousy because of a certain situation, or just something in the heart that never has been surrendered to God. When bad attitudes begin to manifest themselves, check to see if there is a source in your own heart. Cut it out, get rid of it, and you will bear much more enjoyable fruit.

As Christians we cannot judge one another, but we can observe fruit. You do not have to judge if something is an apple tree or an orange tree when you see the fruit on it. The fruit speaks for itself. Likewise, when the fruit of the root of bitterness appears in others it is easy to see. There is no judgment involved in this case. Just avoid participation in the gossip, envy, hatred, and strife that come out of that source. Simply refuse to partake of such fruit lest you be one of the many defiled by that person's root of bitterness.

Forgiveness. In place of all these evil attitudes, we are exhorted to be kind to one another, tenderhearted and forgiving. Forgiveness is based on love and involves bearing the cost of someone else's mistake. It means giving up your rights in certain situations, and ignoring certain things even when you know you are correct. It means swallowing your pride and asking someone else to forgive you even when you feel they should be asking your pardon instead. It means turning the other cheek (Matthew 5:39), literally and symbolically. Most importantly, forgiveness includes forsaking. Some people say, "I'll forgive but I won't forget." They need to pray until they can forsake; that is, until they no longer hold anything against anybody. Other people pretend to forget, but bring up an old grudge at a future confrontation. Or, they may bring up an old mistake in order to gain some advantage over someone. This is not forgiveness. Jesus very plainly taught that God will forgive us only as much as we forgive others (Matthew 6:12, 14-15; 18:23-35). If we want to be forgiven of our sins we need to learn how to forgive our brother when he makes a mistake.

*Christ accepts us while we are still imperfect, we must also accept one another. To possess the kingdom of heaven in its reality is to overcome the obstacles of one another's faults. Outgrowth of love and faith and faith in Christ is love and faith like Christ's. Rom 5:1-10*

### Nothing Shall Offend!

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165).

The true Christian's attitude stands in stark contrast to the root of bitterness and all of its resulting attitudes. Great peace is always the result of loving God and His Word (Philippians 4:7). Peace is one of the results of being justified or counted right in the sight of God (Romans 5:1). True obedience to God will keep us from being offended. His Word teaches that we must not be offended and we must not offend others (Matthew 5:29-30; 13:41; James 3:2). The meaning of the scripture in Psalms is that nothing will be a stumbling block to those who love the Word of God.

How many times have you heard something like the following: "They invited others, but they did not invite me," "They asked others to do something at church, but not me," "They never ask me to do a certain thing," "I was entitled to a certain thing because of my position or age, but they did not give it to me," or "They did not speak to me"? How many times have your feelings been hurt because you were rebuked, you were misunderstood, or you did not get the recognition you thought was due? In all these cases we must remember the scripture, "Nothing shall offend."

Perhaps there were good reasons that you do not know about, perhaps you did not get the true story, or perhaps someone made a mistake. Regardless of the circumstances, we cannot allow our feelings to be hurt. We must forgive people even before they ask and even if they never ask. If you have ever prayed the Lord's prayer you have asked God to forgive you only as much as you forgive others. Regardless of whether custom or etiquette has been violated, and regardless of whether you are in the right or not, you cannot become offended and refuse to forgive if you want to be saved yourself. If we love God, then we will let nothing be a stumbling block to us. No matter what comes, we still will not stumble. This is humanly impossible, but God gives us the power to overcome. Let us not say, "I am offended" or "Someone hurt my feelings," but rather let us pray until we get victory over the situation.